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Speak out

Freedom of choice

TO THE EDITOR:

Measure 9 is back. Unfortunately, whichever way the vote falls, it likely will be a hollow victory.

The best way to keep such measures off the ballot in the future is to give Oregon parents the opportunity to place their children in the schools of their choice. Measure 9 would prohibit instruction in public schools that encourages, promotes or sanctions homosexual or bisexual behavior.

This obscures a fundamental issue: Who should control what your children are taught in school? Certainly not voters.

Let me note, my father was gay. He taught me to respect people, even if they thought homosexuality was wrong.

We all are entitled to our opinions. The problem starts when we try to force our beliefs upon others.

That's what Measure 9 is about. The alternative that respects divergent beliefs is school choice; that is, parents can select the school that works best for them, and funding follows the child.

Parents who want their children to learn about homosexuality in school could enroll them where it is discussed. Likewise, parents who prefer that their children not hear about homosexuality in the classroom could enroll them where it is not part of the lesson plan.

Many of the political battles being waged today would be diffused if individuals had more latitude in making decisions for themselves and their children. Oregon's Measure 9 is one such battle.

If we continue to politicize our curriculum, we will continue to polarize our communities. The solution is choice.

KURT T. WEBER

Cascade Policy Institute Vice President

Give me Libertarian, or...

TO THE EDITOR:

Trying to decide which presidential candidate to vote for? Here are some points that might be of help.

Al Gore says he believes fully in a woman's right to choose. He doesn't believe, though, in a woman's right to choose to get out of the Social Security system—or to choose to smoke marijuana to relieve the pain of glaucoma or chemotherapy.

George W. Bush says he believes in the strict construction of the Constitution. Where in the

Constitution does it give the federal government the authority to spend my money on federal education boondoggles or to take my money and give it to charities of his choice?

Gore says he believes the Constitution contains a right to privacy. Does that mean he'll stop Treasury agents from searching our bank accounts, looking for suspicious transactions? Will he end federal asset forfeiture, stop monitoring e-mails and take that ridiculous V-chip out of our television sets?

Bush says he wants to give taxpayer money to children to attend private schools. Won't that mean federal regulation of private schools—turning them into clones of the government schools?

Gore, when asked about his participation in fund-raising scandals, says he won't answer such questions because they are "personal attacks." Does that mean he never should be held personally accountable for anything he does in office?

Bush hasn't proposed the elimination or reduction of a single government program, regulation or law. So why does he refer to himself as the candidate of smaller government?

Are you sick and tired yet? Looking for a candidate of consistency and a party of principle?

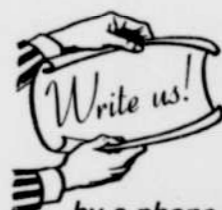
Vote Libertarian! The goal of the party and its presidential candidate, Harry Browne, is to empower you to make your own decisions without the government interfering at every turn. The Libertarian Party, founded in 1972, is the party of personal freedom and personal responsibility and will be on the ballot in every state in the union for the third consecutive time—the first time this has happened in 80 years.

Vote for a party that believes YOU know best how to run your own life. George Bush, Al Gore, Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan differ only in the varying degrees in which they want to run your life.

Harry Browne wants you to be able to pursue your own dreams—no matter who or what you are. Vote Libertarian.

ROBERT HANSEN

Libertarian Party of Oregon
Fund-Raising Director



just out
Welcomes letters to the editor

Letters must be accompanied by a phone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters and letters without sufficient contact information will not be published.

just asking This issue, Just Out asks readers: "What do you think about the efforts being made to ban smoking in bars?"



KATHRYN MCINTYRE
Salem
law student
(and nonsmoker)

"It sucks. Why else do you go to a bar? Why don't we just take out the alcohol?"



JAMES A. RAE
Portland
educator

"I support that 100 percent—and actually not only in bars but all public places. Keep it in your own home!"



ANNETTE LEONARD
Eugene
research assistant

"I'm all for it. Smoking in public places should be restricted. I want to be able to go to a bar and not have to inhale other people's smoke."



BEC WILLIAMS
Eugene
fitness consultant

"I think that it's a good thing, but I think there should be a place that smokers can go, like smoking bars. Smokers are people, too, and that's what we forget."