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A CIVIL ACTION

Student Protection Act II debate puts dialogue before discord

by Jim Radosta

About 50 people attended a forum focusing on the Oregon Citizens Alliance's latest proposed state ballot measure Feb. 12 at Mount Hood Community College.

The Student Protection Act II would prohibit public school instruction that approves, promotes or endorses homosexual or bisexual behaviors. Unlike 2000's similar Measure 9, it includes exceptions involving AIDS education, suicide prevention and teacher termination.

What made the two-hour evening forum—as well as a one-hour afternoon session—different from most debates was the relatively respectful tone maintained throughout. Words such as “love” and “human worth” replaced rhetoric such as “perversion” and “recruiting.”

OCA representative Jeff Hakalmazian saw the forum as an opportunity to have a healthy discussion with people whose views differ. “It’s not a chance to sling mud at each other and get angry,” he said.

Hakalmazian supports the act because he’s “tired of other people’s values systems being rammed down my throat.” He then invited everyone in the audience to attend his church “with an open heart and an open mind.”

“I am not a bigot,” Hakalmazian said. “I don’t hate anyone who’s gay. I don’t hate any-

one who’s in favor of gay rights. I don’t have any issue with that.”

Jeremy Bowen, president of OCA Underground, “a group of young activists dedicated to political change through political action,” insisted the 2000 measure failed only because the opposition outspent the Yes on 9 Campaign by a 10-to-1 margin. “The reasons that we lost were out-and-out lies on the other side,” he said.

Bowen emphasized the health risks of homosexuality. He cited the increased risk of rectal cancer, syphilis and AIDS among gay men.

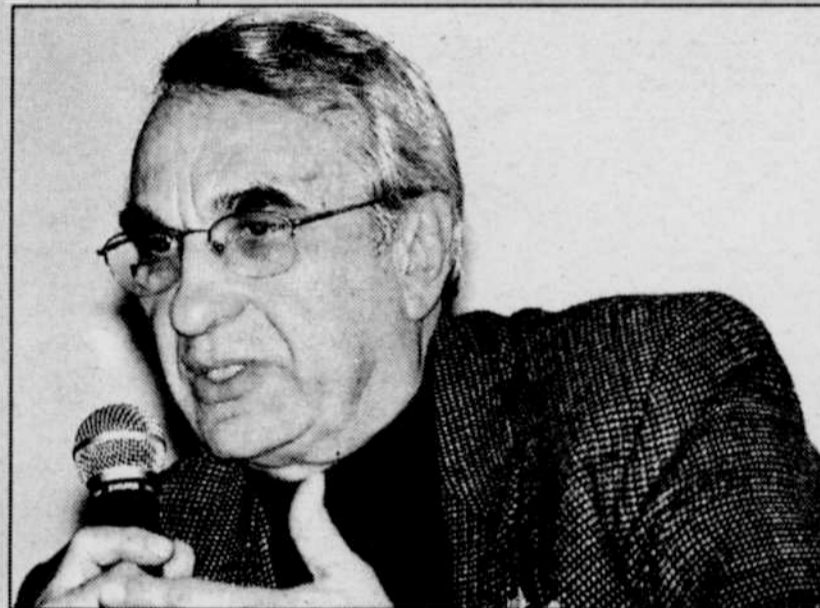


PHOTO BY MARY DAVIS

Lou Beres, Oregon Christian Coalition executive director, said Lon Mabon was unable to attend because he was at his mother-in-law’s funeral in California

“The average life span of a homosexual individual—male—as of 2000...was about 45 years, when the average life expectancy of a straight male was 75 years,” he said. “That’s a lot of time



PHOTO BY JIM RADOSTA

Jeremy Bowen, OCA Underground president, emphasized the health risks of homosexuality

lost off of a male homosexual’s life.”

Lesbian mother Melissa Brown, a Mount Hood forensics student, asked the OCA supporters to put themselves into the shoes of a sexual minority. “The heterosexual, Judeo-Christian value system is pushed upon you...multiple times on a daily basis, from everything to the way that you are treated in a restroom to the way that you go about gaining your employment,” she said.

Also arguing against the act was Michael Sanchez, a member of Mount Hood’s Queers and Allies Student Organization. He said he has made good friends and met wonderful people through the campus club.

“This group may no longer exist because of the Student Protection Act because the school might be held liable for condoning homosexual or bisexual acts,” Sanchez said. “I feel this violates my First Amendment right of freedom of association because I’m no longer allowed to associate with this group.”

A TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE

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The couple have avoided paying Stauffer by illegally shuffling money between several OCA organizations so they appear to be broke. They also returned donations made to an account with a court-ordered freeze on it.

“For over 10 years the Mabons have hid behind the law and played an elaborate corporate shell game as part of a willful campaign to avoid paying Miss Stauffer what she’s owed,” co-counsel Thane Tienson said. “With the arrest of the Mabons imminent, the OCA’s illegal shell game is finally falling apart.”

The Mabons also have tried to use a number of desperate technicalities to weasel out of the case. The couple claimed that their proper Christian names weren’t on documents and that Oregon judges are impostors because their oaths didn’t match the state constitution word for word.

“The Mabons essentially have ignored the orders of judges,” Foster said. “Anybody on the street knows that you can’t do that. And yet the Mabons...have basically argued that they are above the law, and I think that what they’re going to find out here is that they’re not.”

The arrest order was lifted, however, when Stauffer’s attorneys discovered Feb. 11 that the document summoning the Mabons had told them to appear at 11 a.m. instead of 8:30.

Another hearing has been scheduled for Feb. 20, Foster said.

Mabon, who refuses to grant interviews with *Just Out*, admitted to KATU-TV that he wouldn’t have shown up regardless because he believes all judges are fakes. “I don’t believe that I’m getting due process from the state of Oregon, and that’s why I’m objecting, you know, to the jurisdiction of the Multnomah Circuit Court,” he said.

Mabon issued a press release Feb. 10 outlining his dispute with the warrant. He accused Cinniger of a vast left-wing conspiracy to keep the press and public from knowing the time and place of his court appearance.

“My consent to their false oath, in part, creates a parallel false jurisdiction; a fictitious jurisdiction that is empowered, fueled and maintained by my consent to their fictitious oath,” he wrote. “Therefore, I will not proceed even one inch before any so-called judge who does not have a signed constitutional oath of office on file with the Oregon secretary of state according to Article VII (Original) Section 21—where every ‘i’ is dotted and every ‘t’ is crossed, every word is exact and every comma in place. Then, and only then, will I consent and proceed. Because then, and only then, are my God-given rights guaranteed by a signed contract. By the way, why are they fighting so hard to not take, sign and transmit the right oath to the secretary of state?”

Upon their arrest, the Mabons would have

been forced to pay a security bond of \$100,000. According to Tienson, the money ensures they will continue to appear in court.

Stauffer, 33, told *Just Out* she was “in shock” that the Mabons finally were going to be held accountable for their actions. She called the ruling a victory for the entire sexual minorities community.

“It’s clear that the Mabons would rather go to jail than have money go to a lesbian,” she said. “It’s also clear that their anti-gay rhetoric is not just superficial.”

Mabon responded to Stauffer’s demand for an apology by telling KATU: “I’m not gonna apologize to her. She should apologize to the state of Oregon.”

Measure 9 would have amended the Oregon Constitution to define homosexuality as “abnormal, wrong, unnatural, and perverse.” A similar effort was defeated in 1994.

In 2000, another Measure 9 was floated to prohibit public schools from “encouraging, promoting or sanctioning” homosexuality. Voters rejected it 53 percent to 47 percent.

Mabon was slated to attend a Feb. 12 forum debating the Student Protection Act II, a watered-down version of 2000’s Measure 9 that might appear on the fall ballot. Lou Beres, Oregon Christian Coalition executive director, said the OCA chairman was unable to make it because of his mother-in-law’s funeral in California.