

opinion

Shield law protection

House Bill 2418 is not just a bill asking for protection of Oregon newspapers and media reporters. It also asks for citizen protection.

The bill would amend the six-year-old shield law in Oregon which now states, "no person connected with, employed by or engaged in any medium of communication to the public shall be required by a legislative executive or judicial officer or body, or any other authority having power to compel testimony or the production of evidence to disclose . . . sources . . . or unpublished information."

The new amendment would include "by means of search warrant, subpoena or otherwise" after the word "evidence" in the current law.

This bill would insure that confidential information gathered from sources for use in an article or broadcast would remain confidential. It would prevent law enforcement officers from busting into a pressroom to confiscate material to be used in an article. This tactic of confiscation has been used before, but passing of the new bill amendment would make it against the law.

As it stands now, the bill has passed through both a legislative sub-committee and the House Judiciary Committee and will be coming up on the House floor soon. If approved by the House, it will go to the Senate for approval.

Approval of this measure is of great importance to citizens outside the media field. A confidential source who actually may fear for his personal safety if his identity became known would be safer under the new law.

We support this bill and hope the House and Senate see the importance of such a law to be placed on the books.



feedback

To The Editor:

Your editorial regarding reinstatement of the Draft ("Draft, Anyone?", March 7) doesn't really state clearly whether or not you oppose resurrecting the Draft or enacting some form of national service, but it does leave the definite impression that you don't.

I believe that some sort of national service ought to be required of every American when he or she is graduated from high school.

The service could be in the form of military service or, for those whose personal conviction would make military service difficult, another kind of

commitment, such as working in a mental hospital, or with retarded persons, or on an Indian reservation, or in a ghetto, or in any one of dozens of other occupations which are always in need of talent.

With such a national mandatory national service program in effect there surely would be enough young people who would choose the military as their commitment that armed forces quotas would be satisfied.

A strong national defense program, including sufficient manpower, is necessary to protect the United States and its assets.

More important than having

enough soldiers, however, is the need for America's youth to get out of its collective rut by experiencing service of a humble nature. Perhaps I sound like a supercritical, over-zealous adult, but I believe that today's youth are spoiled and have had things too easy for too long.

In a few years, this crop of late 1960s and 1970s youth—my generation—not only will be our country's leaders, but also will comprise the backbone of America's work force. They had better get their act together!

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guest shot

By Kevin Marcott
For The Print

It seems that in recent years the United States has had an increasing amount of energy-related problems to cope with as a result of the energy crisis, contrived or not.

We currently find ourselves in a situation where our dependence on foreign oil has increased our dependence on nuclear power in an attempt to offset our dependence on foreign oil, all while the power companies are attempting to

keep Americans dependent on their services for the sake of high profits. What all this adds up to is a "Catch 22" situation for Americans and a dilemma of what to do with nuclear waste. The problem is serious enough that both the power companies and the State Department are shuffling their feet on the issue.

Just how serious is the problem? Consider this:

At the present, there is an estimated 5,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel waste in the United States. Within five years there

will be 10,000 tons and by the end of the century, 100,000 tons. Depending on the type of fuel used, the nuclear waste has a half life (a period of time after which it's considered non-lethal) of anywhere from 1,000 to a million years. The average is around 20,000 years.

At the present, there is no known method of safely disposing of these waste materials, and opinions vary significantly as to what to do.

Currently, these waste products are being buried at various sites around the country. According to a U.S. Geological Survey, when six of these sites were inspected they were all found to be unacceptable because of geological characteristics of those areas. One such site at Maxi Flats, Kent., was closed in December, 1977, because radioactive rainwater had seeped from the area.

Thirty-three states have passed laws governing the burial of nuclear wastes and four states have halted building any new reactors until a method of safe disposal can be developed. In the West Valley area of New York, one nuclear reactor was shut down when it couldn't dispose of the 600,000 gallons of highly

radioactive waste it has produced. The company involved asked the state to take over the site, and the state in turn asked the federal government to take over the site.

While opinions vary concerning what to do about the nuclear waste problem, one thing is quite clear: everybody seems to be passing the buck.

Gus Speth, a member of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, put it this way, "I find it amazing that a problem this distressing and obvious has been swept under the rug."

In addition to the nuclear fuel waste, there is another form of waste involved: the nuclear reactors themselves. They have an operational life span of only 40 years, but can't be dismantled and disposed of for at least 100 years. There are also 21 commercial fuel fabrication plants, 20 uranium mills and 300 Department of Energy facilities out of use because of the situation. Americans, through taxes and electric rates, are footing the bill for all this waste.

While there are no easy solutions to the problems of what to do with nuclear waste, there are alternatives that could effectively reduce the amount of

nuclear waste produced while at the same time effectively reduce the American people's dependence on the power companies.

What are these alternatives? The many forms of solar, geothermal and wind power, all of which have not been sufficiently explored or put to use. If the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on out-of-use energy facilities would have been spent on research and development of these other sources, our present situation might not be so precarious.

Franklin Roosevelt once said that dealing with the State Department is like watching an elephant become pregnant. Everything is done on a very high level, there's a lot of commotion, and it takes 22 months for anything to happen. This is one situation where the elephant just can't seem to conceive.

What can you do about it? Let your Congress know that you want some alternatives, because technology is available that could reduce your dependence on the power companies by as much as 25 percent. That's not only good for you, but for the environment, as well.

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