

Monologue

Vetoing VDT bill ignores health hazards

By Shelley Ball
Editor In Chief

The bill is known as SB57, and its purpose is to set state guidelines concerning the use of video display terminals (VDTs). The measure calls for the state Accident Prevention Division to form standards insuring all VDTs purchased by state and local governments are regulated to help reduce eye and muscular strain.

Even though the bill was passed earlier in February by the Senate 27-1, it is currently facing a lot of opposition in the House. Surprisingly enough, it has been reported the biggest opposition toward the bill comes from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association.

It is surprising because the newspaper industry is one that has greatly benefitted from using VDTs. The amount of time that has been saved in writing, editing and setting copy

for publication is truly amazing. (We at *The Print* are just beginning to realize the amount of time saved with the recent acquisition of our own computer.) And yet the industry is firmly against legislation that sets up safety guidelines for those who work with computers on a frequent basis.

For example, the *Oregonian's* Fred A. Stickel, president and publisher, has been reported as saying this bill would hurt Oregon's business climate and that overall it is unnecessary, unwarranted legislation. Others opposing the legislation support this belief as well.

Are we to conclude, then, that instituting safety guidelines for users of VDTs is unnecessary?

Perhaps some opposed to the bill don't consider eye strain to be an important health hazard, but it cannot be denied that this is a growing problem. The fact there is legislation that has already been passed by the Senate pro-

ves it is worthy of concern. Even some of us at *The Print* have experienced some eye strain from using our computer. The question of what the long-term risks to a person's health are by prolonged staring at the VDT screen needs to be answered.

It's also been argued that passage of SB57 could force state and local governments to spend more money for VDT equipment, and the pace of technology would be slowed. Opposition to the bill seems to be less concerned with worker health than with worker efficiency.

And as far as technology is concerned, passage of this bill may force electronics companies to improve their products in order to keep their sales up. One proponent of the bill, Sen. Margie Hendriksen, has been quoted as saying state governments could save money through the bill by helping businesses steer clear of equipment that

"lowers workers' productivity and leads to compensable claims."

Perhaps the manufacturing activities of electronics companies should be monitored in order to push them along in producing equipment that reduces current health hazards.

SB57 is one attempt at a solution for the health problems that exist in using VDTs. Businesses that don't like the idea of being regulated in this area should become actively involved in the search for a more acceptable solution. Putting stricter regulations on computer companies to produce safer equipment, for example, would keep those business using the equipment free from direct government supervision.

While the fate of SB57 is uncertain at this point, the main idea of the bill, that of setting up safety guidelines for users of VDT's must not be thrown aside and forgotten.

Community Corner

By Fritz Wenzel

A-MAIZE-ING BUT TRUE

It would be a pretty difficult task to get through the day lately without seeing a nervous Midwestern politician or a weathered farmer talk about how they need the government to help them out, but I think we should consider this recent scientific report before we help the farmer who grows corn.

The report, which appears in a reference book in the College's library, says that "corn is a menace to the national health. Statistics show that, of all the people born between 1800 and 1850 who ate corn, not one is living today; all have died. The figures show further that of the people born between 1870 and 1920, an overwhelming number have died, and among those who are still living many show signs of physical weakness: loss of hair and teeth, poor vision, and diminishing vitality."

Now, this is startling new information that the Food and Drug Administration has not even had a chance to act upon yet, but the report also explains how corn is affecting the youth of America: "Statistics show that of all juvenile delinquents arrested between 1970 and 1980, 84 percent had eaten corn at one time or another. Scientific studies support these statistics."

Finally, the report offers conclusive evidence of corn's detrimental effect on society when they cite the following research: "In a carefully controlled experiment at one of the country's eminent universities, fish of all sizes and kinds were put into individual bowls of creamed corn, rather than water. Every single fish died." I guess the ma-cob moral to this report is that if you eat corn, disaster may be stalking you.

COMMON JOBS

The position of college instructor is the 11th lowest-pressure job in the United

States, according to the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. It is slightly more tense than the work that a packer or wrapper in a shipping department does, but more relaxed than an auctioneer. A conclusion about the intelligence required in all three jobs could be drawn, but instead I'll say (mainly because finals week and grading time is coming) that the instructor is like an auctioneer in that he/she gets the most out of other people's stuff, and like a packer in that he/she prepares valuable packages to be sent out into life.

THINKING A-HEAD

On the subject of jobs, are you sure you are getting the right help while at college? Will you be able to step right in and be effective and successful without going through an overly-long training period? If you are interested in any of the following fast-growing careers, you should think again about your education. (After reading this column, you may begin to wonder about mine).

Hog Head Singer: A hot field that demands a cool head able to handle hairy situations. Involves searing hair off of slaughtered pigs' heads. There is room for advancement. For instance, Cyndi Lauper's hairdresser got her start this way.

Wood-Club-Neck Whipper: This exclusive position is a biggie for those who frequent the cocktail circuit, but you may find that after the first couple of belts it will be impossible to pronounce your title. The work involves wrapping nylon cord around the neck of a wooded golf club during the process of manufacture. The field is diminishing due to the tremendous popularity of (paradox of paradoxes) metal woods, and also because it is so hard to find someone to twist the club while you are wrapping.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

In response to your article in the Feb. 27 issue of *The Print*, you really did open a "can of worms" with me and, I'm sure, many other people on this campus. Especially, your statement that "those who support the idea of illegalizing abortion should be ashamed of themselves." I am not ashamed of opposing abortion. I'm not ashamed of wanting the murder of innocent babies stopped.

I think abortion is blatant murder--worse than the holocaust--it is capital punishment of innocent babies. Criminals are afforded better treatment under the law, but because women choose not to use proper precautions, they choose to eliminate a mistake! None of us asked to be conceived, but once we are conceived, we have a God-given right to a chance to live!

Talk about child abuse, I don't think you can find any worse child abuse than abortion! The aborted babies are not even given a proper burial, they are just dumped in garbage dumps. Is human life so worthless? I don't want the blood of these innocent ones on my hands and I don't want my tax dollars going toward paying for these abortions.

Perhaps if we made abortion illegal, people would take better precautions to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Psalm 139 states it so beautifully, "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous--and how well I know it. You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion! You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your Book!"

I wonder how many women who have had abortions think about it years later and wonder what their child would have looked like?

You have your opinion, Shelley, and I have mine.

Joan Nixon

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