

**MEASURE 17**

# People 18 to 20 can vote, can't be legislators



**Erinn Lerten**  
Opinion Editor

An 18-year-old in Oregon can run for attorney general or state treasurer. A 19-year-old can run for the mayor of Portland and, as Jake Oken-Berg proved in 2000, grab 27 percent

of the vote.

Society accords 18- to 20-year-olds adult status in nearly every endeavor except buying and consuming alcohol. Thousands of 18- to 20-year-old Oregonians demonstrate an adult grasp of citizenship and duty. They work, sign contracts, attend school, pay taxes, drive responsibly, qualify for credit and vote regularly. Any number of 20-year-olds may soon be enlisted for a war in Iraq. However, unlike 17 other states, including Washington and California, 18 to 20-year-olds are prevented from running for the Oregon legislature.

Measure 17 would amend the Oregon constitution by lowering the age of eligibility to serve in the Oregon Legislature from 21 to 18. Portland, Grants Pass, Coos Bay and Pendleton permit 18- to 20-year-olds to run for school board and city council. It seems only logical that they should be allowed to hold state office as well.

The idea of lowering the minimum age to serve in the Oregon Legislature has caught on with some of Oregon's most prominent political leaders: Governor John Kitzhaber supports the measure, as do former governors Mark Hatfield, Neil Goldschmidt, Victor Atiyeh and Barbara Roberts. Governor hopefuls from both parties, Ted Kulongoski and Kevin Mannix also support the measure.

The arguments against Measure 17 sound a lot like echoes — was it truly 30 years ago? — against letting 18-year-olds vote. And their ring is just as hollow.

If maturity were a requirement, a lot of lawmakers would be out of office. Indeed, it's probably not fair to compare young adults who may be well-suited to public service to their elders who showed themselves so spectacularly ill-suited to the task during the past five special legislative sessions.

Some may question whether an 18-year-old

**The average age of the Oregon Senate is 58.**

**The average age of the Oregon House is 51.**

**Twenty percent of the state legislature is 65 or older.**

has the life experience necessary to serve in the state legislature. Age alone has never been a good indicator of a person's

In 1976, the last time such an audacious suggestion was on the ballot, the initiative was crushed 70 percent to 30 percent. Based on history and the voting record of 18- to 21-year-olds, Measure 17 may walk like an equity issue and talk like an equity issue, but it seems destined to drown like a sales tax campaign.

ability to carry out a position of responsibility and contemporary politics offers many examples of leaders with years of "life experience" performing their work irresponsibly.

Age alone should not be a measure of whether a person is qualified to serve in public office. Measure 17 does not guarantee 18 to 20-year-olds a seat in the legislature, and it doesn't mean that the legislature will be overrun with 18-year-olds anymore than it's overrun with 21-year-olds now (there are currently no Oregon legislatures in their early 20s and only a handful in their late 20s); what it does is allow voters to decide which candidate is best qualified to represent their community, regardless of age. The success of Measure 17 will send a message to the youth of Oregon that they are welcome in all aspects of the political process.

# Health Care Plan bad timing, too costly

Creates Health Care Finance Plan for medically necessary services; creates additional income, payroll taxes



**Daisy Bain**  
Editor-in-Chief

Measure 23, health care for all of Oregon, is a great idea. Everyone in Oregon could benefit from having health care. If it was the right plan.

Unfortunately, Oregon is in a highly fast paced

down fall economically, and it doesn't look like it's going to get better anytime soon. A risk measure 23 supporters seem to ignore is job quantity. Health care insurance is big business. If Oregonians go to a single pay method, insurance companies will be forced to move out of the state, taking the jobs with them. At a time that Oregonians cannot afford such a risk, businesses will be forced to pay a higher payroll tax to pay for

the new health care system. Most small businesses have a hard time paying current tax rates, which will force prices to rise. Suddenly, the cost of living rises in Oregon.

It's not just business owners that will be paying the load for healthcare. Up to an eight-percent income tax increase will be forced if this measure passes. Only those under 150 percent of the poverty level would be exempt from any payments.

How many programs does the government need to help the lazy? The more the government gets involved, it seems the less people have to look for jobs. Under this new plan, everyone will be covered. Even Joe Shmoe who has been living in mommy's house for the past thirty years, and has never held a job in his life. Employers use the health care business as a benefit to their employees. It's part of what makes a career so attractive. Why make it that much harder to keep

employees happy?

The government will be controlling the health of Oregon. Do we want our health care decisions to be based from the lowest bidding doctors? Will the highly skilled specialist move to another state to insure proper payment for their services? It's a scary thought, but one that deserves to be looked at.

The new plan will be monopolizing about three million people. I bet Bill Gates wishes he had that kind of monopoly authority. People deserve a choice.

A few years ago, I had a medical crisis of my own. I was fresh out of high school with no insurance. Somebody mentioned to try the Oregon plan, and I did. My experience was a good one. They took care of me. While the system is not perfect, at least it's there.

Instead of risking the livelihoods of so many Oregonians, we should be working to straighten the wrinkles out of the current system.

# Vote-by-mail for dummies: the process made simple

**Frank Jordan**  
Copy Editor

The 2002 Oregon General Election is on Nov. 5 and in this vote-by-mail election, the voters of this state will be asked to select our next governor, a U.S. senator, all five of our U.S. representatives, fifteen state senators, all sixty of our state representatives, as well as many county and city council and mayoral elected positions. Not to mention 12 statewide ballot measures and many local bond levies and school levies.

If you did not register to vote by Oct. 15, however, it is too late for

you to register to vote in the Nov. 5 election. For those of us who did register in time, your ballot should have already reached your place of residence. If you have not received a ballot, you will need to contact your county elections office and have them send you a ballot.

Once you have filled out your ballot, place the punch card in the secrecy envelope provided. Then place the secrecy envelope in the white (with colored edge) envelope and seal it. You must sign the white envelope on the line provided on the outside, or your vote will not be counted. Attach sufficient first-class postage to the envelope and drop it in the mail. The ballot must arrive at the county elections office by 8

p.m. on Tues. Nov. 5 or it will not be counted (Postmarks do not count).

If you do not wish to mail your ballot, there are several drop sites all over the Portland Metro area that you can take your ballot to. All public libraries in Clackamas County have drop boxes to place your ballot, and the county elections office is at 825 Portland Avenue in Gladstone. There is also a drop box in the Associated Student Government office in CC140 here on campus. The Multnomah County elections office is located at 1040 SE Morrison Street in Portland. The Washington County elections office is located at 3700 SW Murray Boulevard, Suite 101, in Beaverton.

Election information websites

Federal Election Commission:

[www.fec.gov/elections.html](http://www.fec.gov/elections.html)

Rock the Vote: [www.rockthevote.org](http://www.rockthevote.org)

Project Vote Smart: [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)

The legal voting age wasn't lowered to 18 from 21 until 1971

In 1998, a presidential election year, only one in five American 18-to 24-year-olds chose to vote.

**MEASURE 23**