

★THE CLACKAMAS PRINT★

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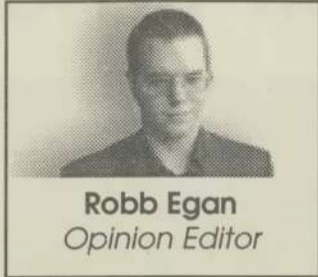
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Tax reform: the quest for more funds following failure of M28



Robb Egan
Opinion Editor

In a letter recently published in *The Clackamas Print*, one Oregon City business owner expressed his belief that charging a sales tax would be the only fair and effective way to collect taxes.

With the surprising defeat of Measure 28, Oregon legislators are facing a serious crisis; funds are needed, but where to get them?

Many of M28's opponents have argued that a reformation of our admittedly inefficient tax system is the only way to bring our flagging economy back on track.

Specifically this involves slashing funds entirely for many pro-

grams in order to save a few.

The big three of the tax world are sales tax, income tax and property taxes. Each tax has its advantages and disadvantages. As it stands now, Oregonians pay both income and property taxes (Californians pay all three). Following is a gross oversimplification of each tax, as well as a few theoretical plus points and drawbacks.

Now, sales tax is simply a tax paid by consumers for the purchase of goods and sometimes services. The positive side of a sales tax is that in theory it taxes everyone equally, including tourists from other states or countries, and is therefore the most "fair."

However, the rather ugly truth of an Oregon sales tax is that the majority of the burden would fall primarily on lower income families, many of pay rent rather than owning their own homes. With a sales tax, renters would have to pay additional non-deductible tax on the rent they pay.

Additionally, Oregon currently receives a significant amount of business from out-of-state consumers who would rather hop across the state line and avoid paying taxes on goods. For example, Portland generally does over \$100 million more in retail sales than Seattle, despite Seattle's larger population and higher per capita income.

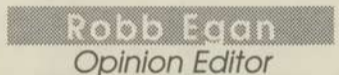
Income tax is the taxation of money earned by a citizen or business. The advantage of income tax is that the amount owed is adjusted to take into account income level, dependents, and deductions such as property taxes and interest on home loans. This means that after adjustments high-income earners might end up paying a higher percentage than low-income earners, as they can afford to pay more while still living quite comfortably. Many believe that this makes income tax "unfair," and that taxes should be the same for everyone, all people being supposedly equal according to the law.

Property tax is, in the eyes of many, the most complicated and controversial of the three. Simply a tax on land owned, our property tax has the benefit of affecting everyone who owns land in Oregon. Even out-of-state and foreign citizens have to pay taxes on any Oregon property they own. Also, unlike sales tax, property tax is deductible from income taxes.

Sadly, property tax is based on the value of property owned, and the value of any given property can change radically in a relatively short time. Additionally, counties and cities levy their own property taxes on landowners, making a considerable amount of scratch after the smoke clears.

Whatever the future holds for Oregon taxpayers, it's not too far-fetched to speculate that any radical changes made to our tax structure will certainly prove so costly and time-consuming that it will be quite some time before any additional funds can do any good.

Stop denouncing our nation's protectors



Robb Egan
Opinion Editor

As the United States continues its inevitable stumble towards a war with Iraq, more discussion of the military in general arises. And let me say, I'm a little disappointed and even a bit discouraged by what I've been hearing.

After the events of Sept. 11, there was, for a time, a great deal more pride and respect displayed for the

men and women who devote their lives to the cause of freedom.

Unfortunately, with war looming just over the horizon, people have started slipping back into their attitudes of disparagement and disdain for military-minded individuals, hoisting signs and putting down those who might end up giving their lives in battle.

Americans as a whole have become far too complacent in their attitudes, thinking that because

something is happening on the other side of the globe it can't possibly affect us, and therefore we shouldn't be sticking our noses into it. We have developed a self-righteous perception that we are above the horrors and sacrifice of war, an attitude that is ultimately undeserved. We wave our banners touting equality, personal freedom and civil liberties for everyone, and yet most people seem unwilling to fight for the causes they believe in.

Any man or woman who devotes their life to protecting others is okay by me. Those with the courage of their convictions, who fight to protect the rights we all hold so dear, will always be welcome at my table.

Whether we believe in a war with Iraq or not, it's still important that if and when our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are sent to war they do so with our love and support, and that we never forget those who fight and die so far away from home.

How will a tuition increase affect your future education plans?



Stephen Braker
"I'm on scholarship so it won't affect me."

"Greatly, because my tuition is dependent on my paycheck."
Genesis Rosas



Justin Miracle
"Won't affect me due to a tuition waiver, and I will be transferring after Spring term."



"It would make it a lot harder, since I have to pay my own way through school."
Becky Hall



photos by CORY PRICE Clackamas Print



Do you have something to shout about?
Letters to the editor are always welcome.
Drop letters by B-104 or send to
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