



FACE OFF



Tax raise can help many

Tax hike not the answer



Ben Maras
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

There isn't enough money to fund schools or medical programs, yet the man who wanted to be known as the "Education President" spends \$87 billion to wage a bloody pre-emptive war in the Middle East.

It's the same sad story we've grown familiar with over the past several years. What are citizens forced to do? Let our programs be cut, so that schools deteriorate to embarrassing levels; proper medical care is only a dream; and we end up in one of the deepest recessions in history.

In light of this, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2152 (HB2152) to raise taxes in order to fund educational and social programs. Before we start grumbling about raising our already unfair tax burden, realize that in comparison to other countries, we have an exceptionally low tax rate.

If this is true, what's so bad about taxes? Even Adam Smith, the founder of capitalism, supported taxes, providing it was fair to the people.

"Every tax ought to be so contrived as both to take out and to keep out of the pockets of the people as little as possible," Smith wrote in his book "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations." In short, Smith believed that taxes need to take as little away from the citizens as possible, while giving them the most benefit.

Although this bill would be the largest tax increase in Oregon's history, the majority of the

burden doesn't fall on the middle-class family. The tax increase is progressive; the majority of the increase will be allotted to households making more than \$100,000 annually.

Even if the tax hikes were averaged, it would only cost the average family \$132 per year. That may seem like a lot, but break it down and it comes to a miniscule \$11 a month. Ask the average couple if they would pay that much to give their kid a good education; they would undoubtedly answer that they would gladly pay much more.

Most of the tax increase, however, is aimed at businesses. Remember when PGE/Enron, one of the biggest corporations in America, paid just \$10 in income tax last year?

Built into HB2152 is a section that raises the corporate minimum tax, meaning no longer will huge corporations pay a measly \$10 while the proletariat struggles to fulfill their part of the tax infrastructure.

Don't like the idea of paying a little more in taxes? The other option is to let the proposed alternative cuts in programs go through. The main two victims of the cuts would be the health industry and the elderly, not to mention the educational system that continues to suffer.

Italian philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli once said that the antidote of corruption is education. Maybe by investing in education today, we can fight corruption (the kind that paid \$10 on income tax) tomorrow.

The ball is in our court. Enough signatures have been gathered to put the tax increase up to a vote in February. Do we want to cower down and let society be cut down by the bourgeoisie, or is it time for the average citizens to take charge of the country, pull society up by its bootstraps and strive for a better tomorrow?



Pete Ford
OPINION EDITOR

A tax increase proposal has become almost standard nowadays when there seems to be a lack of money, but raising taxes once again is not the answer to solving the government's money issues.

For those who don't have answers regarding the government's poor budgeting and their depleting funds, however an \$800 million hike just seems to be the immediate solution.

Oregon Legislature's House Bill 2152, the largest in the state's history, will not only enact a temporary tax increase, but a permanent one too. This is not something most would feel excited about.

Though the bill was created with positive intentions and will be on the ballot in February, there is a strong possibility that the money could be misused. For example, our federal government has a \$354.8 billion defense budget, a pretty hefty sum of money that isn't always used in the most positive ways.

We have wasted well over \$100 billion just to develop different versions of our national missile defense system. We frivolously spent \$7.6 billion on two advanced fighter jets designed to combat advanced tactical aircraft and penetrate enemy countries with integrated air defense systems. Yet we are more threatened by those with the capability of building bombs in their basements than our most sophisticated adversaries, all of whom don't even possess these specialized air defenses.

Will these multi-million dollar fighter planes help us? No. But we are going to throw billions of dollars after these defense contractors anyway.

This is what makes me feel that this tax increase will become nothing more than a statistic and a loss of money for those it affects.

The government should simply transfer the \$0.8 billion from the \$354.8 billion spent on defense to the school's fund to take care of education problems. That "0.8" is equal to \$800,000 million, the same amount which the tax hike looks to raise, and that way it isn't just consumers who have to pick up the slack caused by poor financial planning.

It is okay to tax things like cigarettes and alcohol, but tapping once again into the pocket-books of the American public because the government didn't plan ahead very well is just as bad as someone asking a relative to pay off a huge credit card debt.

I can't remember the last time taxes dropped, if they ever have. Just like the postage stamps that were once just a quarter, then jumped nearly a dime to \$0.33, and finally rose to its current rate of \$0.37. Once costs start going up, they keep going, with no intentions of coming back down.

It is much more gratifying to donate money to your own school or your children's school, than to throw it into one large pool and let the government officials distribute it where they see fit.

It's not hard to see that the priorities of our federal government are not where they are supposed to be, and until they are and it is certain that the money is being well spent, a tax increase of this magnitude should not be supported.

Dethroned 'King of Pop' fails to save face through legal turmoil



Jesse Lamond
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Everybody's favorite million-dollar freak is back in the limelight, and this time Michael Jackson is a changed man ... or woman ... or whatever he is.

Actually, there aren't many changes from the last time the public eye was on the self-appointed "King of Pop" and once again charges of child molestation are being brought against the white-gloved wonder. The previous incident a decade ago involved a 12-year-old boy who wouldn't testify after being paid over a million bucks by the singer. The latest case involves an undisclosed,

under-aged person and undisclosed charges. Wow, that's helpful. How does the news get a half-hour spot out of that?

Very predictably Jackson paid his \$3 million bail and left within hours of entering the Santa Barbara jail. Some authorities are hoping his Teflon-like layer of money that keeps things from sticking to him will wear thin and they can finally nab him this time around for the prison sentence he deserves.

As with any world-shaking event, the media is persistent in giving its viewers a heap of facts they just have to know about this misunderstood man that I for one would rather ignore. Let us recount some of the best-known facts.

Born Michael Joseph Jackson in 1958, the pop star grew up in Gary, Ind., with his eight brothers and sisters.

Michael was one of the first major "child stars" in the music industry and received a lot of attention performing with his brothers in The Jackson Five during the 1960s. He later had a successful solo career, selling millions of albums worldwide.

The best known of his albums is probably "Thriller," which sold an estimated 45 million copies and still ranks as the most-sold album of all time. It's also noteworthy that the song "Billie Jean" was the first song MTV added to its normal play list that was sung by a black (at the time) artist.

Indeed, those were the days. It's hard to believe that the cute little boy with an afro and pimpin' dance moves morphed and mutated into some sort of hellish Steven Spielbergian monster.

Maybe nobody else has noticed, but MJ looks scarier now than he did in full

werewolf makeup in his 1984 Thriller video.

Lately, things have gone downhill for Mr. Moonwalk and some are left wondering, "Ye gods, what the hell happened to that guy?"

The truth of the matter is, nobody really knows but Michael Jackson. His reasons for becoming the only person on earth uglier than Aerosmith's Steven Tyler will remain a mystery until he dies.

That might be for the best, as the general populace probably shouldn't know the eccentricities of a man who is reported by E-Online to have had six mannequins that he would dress up and interact with. According to the website, Jackson explained that he liked to "imagine talking with them." This seems about right considering that "normal" humans, at least those over the age of 12, don't seem to interact with him much.

Michael Jackson is unusual largely because of a desire not to grow up. The singer's zillion dollar ranch "Neverland" is named for the mythical place that Peter Pan runs off to and the star has been quoted in an interview as having said, "We can fly, you know. We just don't think the right thoughts and levitate ourselves."

A statement like that would be very profound if it came from the Dalai Lama, but it loses some of its depth when spoken by the same guy that said, "I'm not calling myself Jesus; I'm comparing the stress and pressure to Jesus."

Sure. Jesus lived in abject poverty and had thousands of loyal followers; he was persecuted by the Roman Empire and nailed bleeding and naked to a splintery wooden

cross. Sorry, Jackson, but Jesus of Nazareth crucified on the cross beats your getting decked by a pet monkey named Bubbles.

Jackson lives in his own little world, covering his ears at things he doesn't want to hear and pretending that the world is innocent and carefree. Come on, one of his songs is called, "In the Closet." How clueless can he be? Madonna was to sing backup on the track but was dismissed when she came up with some "additional" lyrics, prompting Jackson to call her a "heifer." Madonna wisely retorted that she would "rather look like a cow than a space-alien drag queen."

The harsh comeback hasn't persuaded Jackson to lay off regularly tweaking his body. He's been at it since his first nose job in 1979 and, given enough time, he may very well look like Peter Pan and would nicely compliment Morph, his favorite X-Man. Morph is a huge, pale-skinned, burly guy very much like the type I can only hope and pray the world's leading male pop diva will be encountering in prison by the end of the year.

If a 40 year-old homeless guy were to run around your house screaming and pretending he was an athletic young boy in green tights that could fly you away to a "magical place," you would probably whip out the stun gun and zap senseless his shuddering carcass while the police came to cart him off to rehab.

When he invades my living room every night through the idiot box, it's like having my intelligence raped. Please, stop paying attention to this person known as Michael Jackson. He is no longer worthy of the media's attention, and giving him screen time will only encourage his outlandish and perverse behavior.

Chiefs' Weekly Column It's beginning to look a lot like Xmas



Cyndee Mady
CO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

'Tis the season where holly, jolly visions of sugarplums dance through the air, while the scent of chestnuts roasting on an open fire waft through the silent night.

That's right folks; it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

Everywhere you go, people are hustling about their daily lives, busier than usual in the flurry of holiday preparations. Though task lists are cumbersome, people throughout the world radiate a genuine aura of joyfulness. A transformation emerges overnight, as individuals begin to look one another in the eye, smile and

extend holiday wishes during this most wonderful time of the year.

Could it be that every year, for just a small moment in time, one relives his or her childhood? A time when the age of innocence, trust and the belief that Santa Claus will hurry down the chimney with a bound and gobble up the carefully-placed cookies—was still a reality?

Maybe it's the idea of buying gifts and wrapping them with love for the people who have made a difference in our lives that brings a warm fuzzy to the season. It could be the act of watching a child's face light up like a tannenbaum, as he whispers all I want for Christmas in Santa's ear; that sends a sentimental shiver down one's spine.

Whatever the reason, a joyful and triumphant air abounds in the days surrounding this

beloved holiday.

So what happens during the other 11 months of the year?

Why do strangers embrace one another during the winter wonderland of the noel, yet direct their heads towards the pavement, in an attempt to avoid eye contact the rest of the year?

Are we all so wrapped up in our daily routines that we can't extend a simple kindness to those around us? Why not just think of a few of our favorite things the rest of the year? Let the "Bah, humbug!" mentality rest in peace with the miserly version of Ebenezer Scrooge.

One needs to hear words of good cheer all throughout the year. So, come all ye, faithful citizens, let nothing you dismay—for tidings of comfort and joy are possible everyday.

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The Clackamas Print is a weekly student publication and is distributed every Wednesday except during finals week.