

The opinion of The Clackamas Print editorial board

ASG should end bar on candidacy

Constitution addition stifles democratic process, breeds apathy, low voter turnout

The following is an editorial written by, and expressing the opinion of the majority of The Clackamas Print editorial staff. As such it is left unsigned.

At the student government debates last week, presidential hopeful Tim Lussier said something that should strike a chord with students.

"I'm amazed how much the [ASG] president's job does for students," he said, "meeting with various organizations and standing up for students' rights."

The student government, and in particular the ASG president, plays an invaluable role in campus politics, representing as they do the interests of all the students at Clackamas. It is because of their unquestionable devotion to students that an amendment to section five of the "Bylaws of the ASGCCC Constitution" is so troubling.

Section five states:
"... any person running must serve at least two terms on Student Leadership (CCC Student Government and CCC Student Ambassadors) prior to position."

The amendment was made during Spring Term 2005. This is the first ASG presidential election under the new guidelines.

While the amendment may have been passed with good intentions, we believe it will have a damaging side-effect on the elections. This is the second election in a row with an uncontested run for the president position, and voter turnout last year was smaller than the enrollment of some classes.

There seems to be a surprising lack of concern as to why students are not voting. This creates problems for campus workings, because as with any politics needs to be stirred up to prevent spoiling.

Anyone can join ASG. However, they are not elected in by the student body. Instead they apply and are approved by the current ASG officials. The amendment to the ASG bylaws creates an institutional block against "fresh" candidates, because in order to be eligible to run (by previously being a part of ASG) they must be selected by the previous ASG officers. This way the choice is selectively limited to those approved by student government.

It makes sense that student government wants someone with experience in leadership as president; after all, experience is something to be desired in a leader. But this cannot get in the way of a free election, for if that principle is lost a feeling of apathy and disassociation is bred, which is inevitably bad for both the students and ASG.

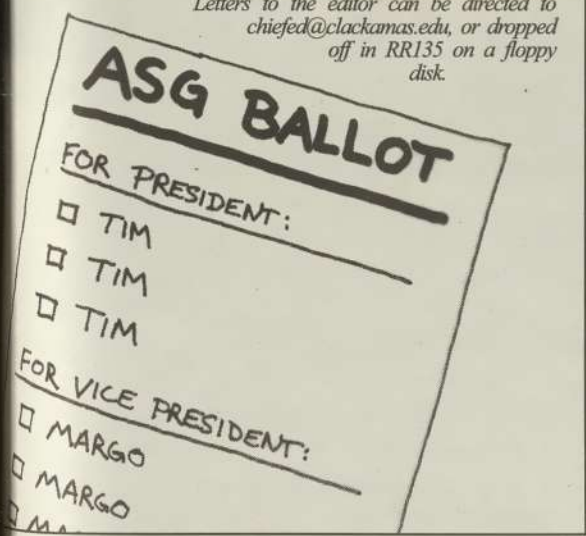
One of the issues addressed by the presidential and vice presidential candidates during last week's forum is that much of the campus is not even aware of their existence. If a well-contested election were held, these issues would be subject to debate and students would have more of an opportunity to learn what ASG does and what they stand for.

But more importantly this would keep the student body from feeling forgotten. If students are allowed to directly oppose and take part in the political process, they would feel better connected to their government and therefore to the campus.

While no easy solutions to appease both sides are apparent yet, discourse on the matter is needed to prevent the symptoms of a sick democracy from growing and harming the campus community.

One price of democracy is that occasionally those without experience or even ability will be elected to important offices. We at The Clackamas Print believe that this price, while often heavy, is an integral part of ensuring that the voice of the student body, the entire student body, is heard when it matters most.

Letters to the editor can be directed to chiefed@clackamas.edu, or dropped off in RR135 on a floppy disk.



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Declare hunting season on loan sharks

Ben Maras

Editor-in-Chief

In the shortest session on record, the Oregon Legislature passed into law a handful of statutes that were met with little to no opposition last Thursday. Of them, two are worth special attention.

The first involved tougher sentences for sex offenders against children, and was sure to pass from the get-go. The second places tighter regulations on "payday loans," - although it does not go far enough.

Payday loan operations (also known as paycheck advances or cash advances) are privately run short-term lenders that charge borderline usurious interest rates to those who fall on hard times.

For years this economic hammer-lock has been the necessary evil (emphasis on the "evil" part) of millions of working families who experience an unforeseen hardship, or even worse, use them to make ends meet and buy things as simple as milk for their kids.

Now Oregon has done something about it - sort of.

Although this is a strong step forward for Oregon, the text of the bill falls short of impressive, and does more to disgust the citizen with the kinds of practices that the legislature previously allowed to be perpetrated by these companies.

The bill's first change sets a maximum rate of interest at 36 percent. This is by far the most impressive move by the legislature, for a reason best summed up by a payday loan operator himself.

Expecting to be risen up on shoulders and championed as a prince of a man, one owner wrote in to the *Oregonian* last week saying that as an act of heartfelt misanthropy, he had already cut his interest rates in half - they originally stood at more than 500 percent. Forgive me for not applauding.

The law also limits the beginning fee down to 10 percent of the loan total, and specifies that no more than one fee may be charged for the inability to pay a loan back on time. It also limits the sort of fees that can be charged to a person, so that meaningless charges cannot be tacked onto their bill.

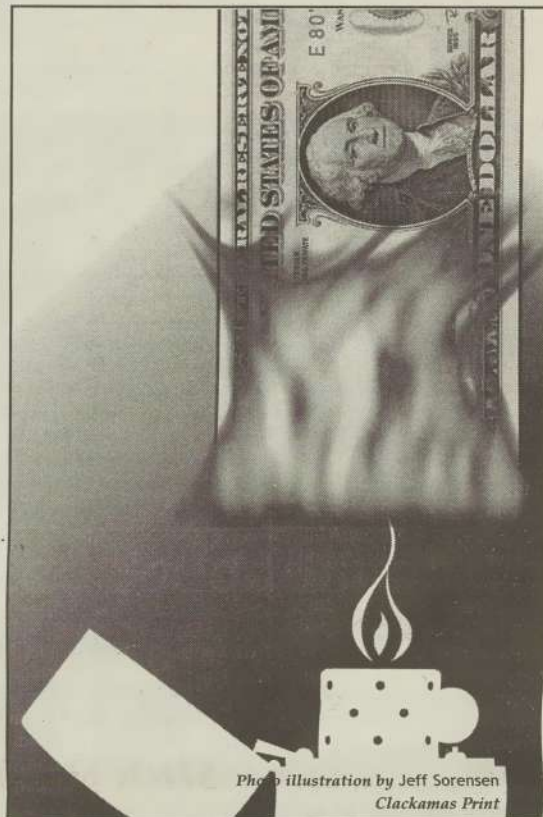
Considering these moderate limi-

tations of arm-twisting by the private sector, it's surprising that the pro-business House Republicans and Neoliberals passed it. While they claim that it is an attack on freedom to conduct business, what they seem to forget is a payday loan operation's sole purpose is to exploit others for their own financial gain.

In this case, the prey is those who can afford it least.

The state's first job is to protect the people, especially if they have become their own enemy. If a nation can in fact be judged on how it treats its worst-off citizen, then protecting the rights of the fat parasite does not reflect well on us as citizens, and as Americans.

We can only hope that this first step will not be the last.



Bush's stance on Iran is familiar

Administration's angle on Iran carries distinct Iraqi flavor

Laura Cameron

Commentary Editor

Is George W. Bush really that stupid?

Noises have been coming from the White House lately about the possibility of military action against Iran. This notion has been greeted with about the level of support that one might expect.

The problem with Iran, of course, is that they have a nuclear program going and recently managed to refine a small amount of uranium. In the eyes of the Bush administration, any country with both a large population of Muslims and a nuclear program is obviously working on making nuclear weapons - no matter how many times they say they're only interested in nuclear power plants.

Let's be clear on this: I am not claiming that Iran's actions are necessarily innocent. I have a hard time trusting the word of a president who claims that the Holocaust never happened.

But the Bush administration is now taking the same tack on Iran that it did on Iraq - apparently under the impression that, if he just changes the last letter in the country's name, no one will notice him starting another war.

But even better than Bush's plan to recycle Iraq by subtracting a "q" and adding an "n" are some of his ideas of how to deal with Iran if we do attack.

For example, Bush has the bright idea of sending missiles against the plants where they are enriching uranium. That's right, to keep Iran from making nukes, we would blow up their uranium. Because that's a good idea!

I have heard several times now that Bush is focusing

on Iran because it's looking like the Republicans will suffer in the November elections, as though he thinks having another war sitting on the back burner would force people to re-elect House and Senate Republicans to keep the war effort running. If that is truly the president's plan, then he is even dumber than I thought.

We don't even have enough troops now to keep both Afghanistan and Iraq on track. If we invade Iran, the only way we could get enough "boots on the ground" would be to reinstate the draft. I can just imagine the reaction to that proposal!

Mr. Bush, please reconsider your position on this. Yes, yes, we know that military action against Iran is "a last resort," but supposedly so was military action against Iraq.

We the people are even more cynical about your motives now than we were when we entered Iraq. Watch your step.

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