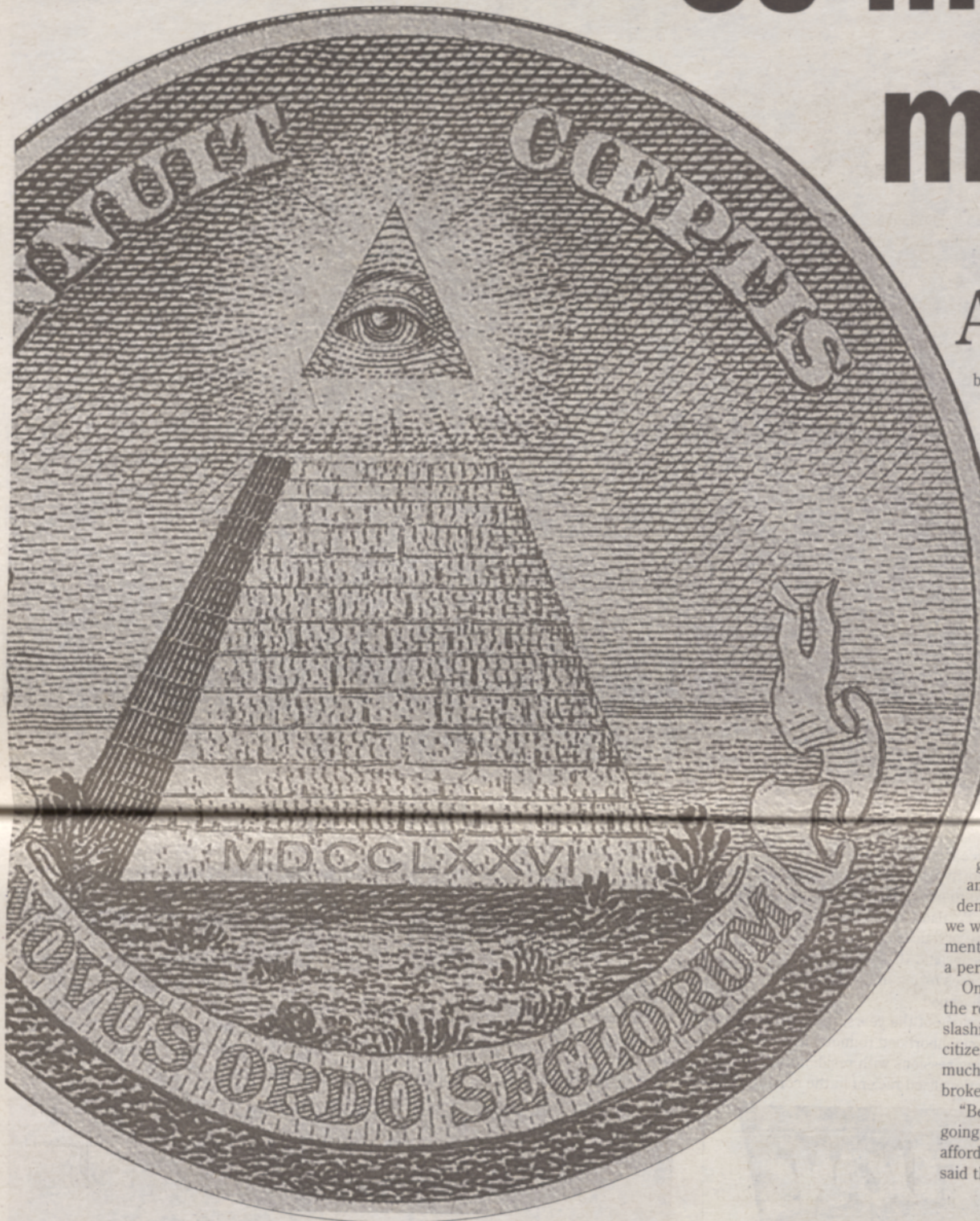


So much money...



BY SPIVEY JINGLES
UNEMPLOYED WRITER

Angry legislative aides lashed out at reporters Friday for asking questions about the economy during a roundtable on the stimulus package. The roundtable, focused on how stimulus dollars will be used to help Oregon's lagging economy, included representatives from the state of Oregon, Multnomah County and the city of Portland.

After a heated discussion turned into a free-for-all, reporters asked civic leaders when exactly communities would see the millions of dollars promised to the region from the federal government.

"We don't know," said a staffer at the governor's office. "It's not clear that we have figured out how to figure out how to allocate the money being allocated to us. It's complicated."

Asked by Street Roots if affordable housing money promised to local communities would be seen in the next six months, the aide said, "Look, even if we get the money, there are a lot of things we need to discuss before we just hand over millions of dollars to the dying private sector and drowning nonprofits working on these issues. We have a process in Salem."

Asked what that process was, the aide responded, "I've already told you. We don't know exactly."

Street Roots has been told by insiders that the governor's office wants the money allocated one way and the state Legislature another. The aide later denied these reports, saying, "Look, if we had it my way, we would completely do away with people living with mental illness and substance abusers, but we don't live in a perfect world, now do we?"

One state representative from Southern Oregon told the roomful of reporters that they wanted control of slashing the state budget for Oregon's most vulnerable citizens, and that the governor's office was taking too much of the credit for the system being completely broken.

"Before any money is allocated, state legislators are going to require that every interest group working with affordable housing tell us just how miserable things are," said the representative. "We just can't allow for all that

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