

SLANT

• Everyone should have their ballots by now for Measure 30 and the deadline for voting is Tuesday, Feb. 3. We urge a "yes" vote on this very important measure. If you're unclear about the issues, get educated, and if you don't have time to get educated, trust the moderate lawmakers who put this package together with bipartisan support. In brief, here's why we think Measure 30 deserves our support.

Oregon's tax system is seriously flawed. Decades of poor legislation and misguided ballot measures have left us with over-taxed low-income people, under-taxed wealthy folks and corporations, and embarrassingly underfunded education, social services and public safety. Measure 30 helps correct these inequities and buys us some time to find permanent solutions.

Measure 30 makes sense economically. Further restricting access to health care and other services is just bad economic planning. The Oregon Health Plan rations medical care more efficiently than ER visits and delayed treatment. Mental health and disability services keep people out of jail and living productive lives. An educated workforce is the biggest factor in Oregon's future prosperity and stability.

Still not convinced? See last week's cover story in our archives. And we'll be back to continue this discussion next week.

• We applaud Mayor Torrey's decision not to seek re-election this year. As expected, Nancy Nathanson is after the job, and Kitty Piercy will announce her intentions at noon Tuesday at the Library. This should be a good race with clear choices, particularly on land use issues. Unfortunately, it's going to be a very expensive race. It would be great if these two would agree to cap their campaign contributions, but Nancy will be banking on the same bulging bags of cash that were easily available to the mayor.

• Mitzi Colbath has been teasing us for awhile about her political aspirations, and we've been looking forward to seeing her run for elected office. She's smart, dedicated, organized and has been a strong and able worker on the Planning Commission, Churchill neighborhood projects, Charter Review Committee, etc. She will announce her intentions at noon Friday at the Elks Club. Due to a technicality, she missed a possible appointment to Floyd Prozanski's vacant House seat and she might go for the seat in the general elections. But new District 8 appointee Paul Holvey is a good, strong choice and will have the advantage of incumbency. Meanwhile, we think she'd be a great contender for City Council Ward 8, Nathanson's seat. Mitzi would do well against Chris Pryor in an open race. Other options for Mitzi would be County Commission, mayor or EWEB, but our bet is on the council seat.

• UO law professor and constitutional scholar Garrett Epps gave a stellar talk at City Club last Friday, providing an eloquent historical perspective on our Bill of Rights, and probably inspiring a flock of Eugeneans to run right down and apply to law school. Epps talked about the vagueness in our Bill of Rights and how its language has been interpreted in times of war and peace, from civil rights abuses in Lincoln's administration to the internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II to the latest war on terrorism. Epps concludes that peacetime brings reconciliation and apologies for such abuses, but the Bush/Ashcroft excesses may be the worst Bill of Rights abuses in U.S. history. Epps reminds us that we the people, not the courts or Congress, are the final arbiters for what's acceptable government behavior in times of war. Let our voices and our votes be loud and clear!



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