

Commission. I also served on the Dean's Advisory Committee at the UO School of Law.

I think Vicki Walker is the very rare elected official who combines honesty, courage, intelligence and a strong work ethic, and because of these qualities she is being targeted by the special corporate interests that she has opposed.

As we all know Vicki has been on the opposite side of the most powerful and influential person in Oregon (a former Democratic governor), the most powerful industry in Oregon (private utilities) and one of the most powerful agencies in state government (SAIF). In each instance the public interest was served by what she did.

I was personally involved in Vicki's initiation of the law that now prevents utilities from charging Oregon ratepayers for taxes which the utilities in fact do not pay.

I think the words "courageous" and "fear-

less" accurately describe Vicki Walker.

She is opposed by a conservative running as a moderate even though he is anti-choice and a supporter of Bush. He does not even identify himself in his advertising as a Republican, but he is running as a Republican.

If Vicki were to lose, the intimidation of other legislators by the out-of-state-owned private utilities would be enhanced and the power of these utilities increased. This would not be good for Oregon. As an Oregonian interested in the public welfare, I only wish there were other legislators with the courage of Vicki Walker to do what is the best interests of Oregonians and not for the benefit of the big money special interests.

Kenneth Lewis
Portland

MONEY TALKS

I greatly enjoyed Lance Sparks' conflicted

viewpoint BY THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Revolving Door

The case against arbitrary term limits

When it comes to who represents us in Salem, Oregon voters should have the final say. But Measure 45 would prevent us from electing lawmakers we support and from deciding for ourselves when we need a change in Salem. Measure 45, put on Oregon's ballot with mostly out-of-state money, is a recycled version of the same term limits we have tried in Oregon once before. Our organizations are united in our opposition to Measure 45. Here's why:

An effective Legislature has a mix of experienced and new legislators. Just as people do in any profession, the novices learn from the advice and example of the veterans. If Measure 45 passes, more than half of today's legislators will be forced out by 2009. Why should we have to lose effective lawmakers just when they have learned the job?

Oregon's previous experiment with term limits, from 1992 to 2002, was a failure. Inexperienced lawmakers moved into leadership positions before they understood the process, leading us to gridlock and excessively long sessions. Knowing that they would only hold office for a short time, legislators ignored long-term problems needing long-term solutions to focus on high visibility political ploys that would help them make the transition to their next position. The only people with experience were lobbyists and bureaucrats, increasing the power of the unelected. Do we really want to go back to those times?

Term limits don't do what their proponents claim. According to the 2006 Joint Project on Term Limits, the only major academic study of term limits, "Term limits have not led to the new breed of diverse, citizen legislators proponents expected to see, however. In general, there are not more women or minorities in state legislatures, and there is no substantial difference in legislators' age and occupational backgrounds." Also, "in the majority of term-limited states, the number of women legislators has actually decreased since term limits took effect." Instead, term limits create a revolving door of politicians who move from office to office or from elected office to lobbyist.

Measure 45 does not solve the real problem in Oregon - lack of oversight and ethics reform. We need stricter reporting requirements, stronger penalties for violations and an ethics committee with sufficient rules and resources to make a difference. Changing politicians is not the same thing as changing the political system.

Measure 45 is not an Oregon solution to an Oregon problem. Howard Rich, a wealthy New York developer, has moved more than \$1 million into Oregon to pass Measure 45. Term limits have not been passed in any state since 2000 and have been withdrawn in five other states besides Oregon. Let's not let Howard Rich buy Oregon's way back to the failed experiment of term limits.

We believe that Oregon - and every other state - has the most effective term limits of all: elections. Every election gives you the right to make up your own mind about whom to vote for and whom to vote against. Your right to vote is a powerful tool. Don't let anyone take that right away. Vote no on Measure 45.

This commentary was provided by Margaret Noel, president of the League of Women Voters of Oregon, Holly Pruett of Stand for Children, and Nancie Fadeley and Flo Alvergue, co-presidents of the LWV of Lane County.

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