

INITIATIVE ATTACK

Our right to decide which initiatives we can vote on is under attack by four out of five Lane County commissioners. Pete Sorenson, the only attorney on the commission, understands that the county cannot legally weigh in on initiatives until after the new laws are passed. That this is a constitutionally protected provision of the initiative process is the argument Sorenson made to his fellow commissioners.

If Sid Leiken, Jay Bozevich, Faye Stewart and Pat Farr really want to save the taxpayers' money, they won't pass a law that, most certainly, will kick-off a lawsuit and land the county in court. Let's keep the pressure on our elected officials by contacting them. Tell them: "Hands off the people's business, executed through the initiative process!"

Michelle Holman
Deadwood

THE REAL DEVIL

It is very well known that Trump is an offensive piece of shit. So hatin' on him is a consuming passion, and Clinton gets a pass. Even though Clinton represents the mainstream management that embodies the disaster all around us.

Global warming daily produces more severe weather crises, species extinctions, galloping air, water and soil pollution and dozens of other results. Technology is swallowing everything, turning people into zombies unable to interact, and the constant rampage shootings show that mass society has erased community and spawns always more pathologies.

Trump is the devil, just as Bush was for many. But he's mainly a diversion from where we're really at today. Billions are spent to maintain the humiliating spectacle of no real change, no turn from the developing catastrophe.

John Zerzan
Eugene

BAD BLM PLAN

The Bureau of Lane Management (BLM) enacted a plan to increase logging 37 percent on our public forests in Western Oregon. They are not applying the best and most current forest biology and climate science.

In media coverage, there was little mention of global warming and the carbon these same forests sequester in very large amounts. There was also no

conversation about the vast amounts of private forests that have been clearcut on the forests adjoining BLM lands, which fragments wildlife habitat in destructive and unsustainable ways.

The fact is, the vast majority of Oregonians wants our forests restored and preserved. The logging industry should be paying timber harvest taxes at levels similar to the states of Washington and California to supplement our county budgets. There are exciting alternatives for wood products such as Hempcrete, where you can build a home from hemp grown in four months on less than three acres of land.

Let's invest in sustainable businesses such as permaculture farming and design, solar and wind energy and resource conservation projects — something we can be proud of.

There are no jobs on a dead planet, and that is where we are currently headed at full speed.

Pam Driscoll
Dexter

YES ON 97

Enough is enough! The power of money and influence in collusion with corporate-

controlled mainstream media is shaping what people think is true.

As a 70-year old grandmother, I am strong with purpose, caring about our children and grandchildren. Become informed about Measure 97 and share truth with voters. Oregon Center for Public Policy points out that corporations pay 6.7 percent of all Oregon income taxes today versus 18.5 percent paid 40 years ago, and are projected to pay 4.6 percent in 10 years, given the status quo.

About 3 percent of corporations will be affected by Measure 97, which means only .25 percent of one percent of businesses in the state will see their taxes go up. This will not result in higher costs for goods and services.

We have 2,000 fewer teachers than before the financial crises of 2008, even though enrollment has increased. Corporations were bailed out on the backs of our children, the most vulnerable in our society.

Carol Louise Scherer
Eugene

WILLAMETTE 'DISASTER'

I hope you people are happy. The new Willamette Street is clearly a disaster!

EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

BY RACHEL RICH, LARRY LEWIN AND ROSCOE CARON

Spirit of the Law

HOW MUCH DOES STANDARDIZED TESTING REALLY COST US?

There is the letter of the law, then there's the spirit. Rep. Lew Frederick, the Oregon House's only African American legislator, was the guiding force behind two new Oregon laws: HB 2655 (the testing opt-out bill of rights) and HB 2713 (the testing cost audit bill).

The spirit behind the two new laws is clear: To honestly examine the costs, both financial and otherwise, of the standardized testing that dominates Oregon education and to allow parents and students to make their own informed decisions about what kind of education is best for them.

HB 2713, the testing audit bill, directs school districts to report to the secretary of state by Sept. 15 on the impact of state tests on "instructional time, curricula, educators' exercise of professional judgment, budgets and administrative time and focus."

The state already knows how much it pays for the tests: It's \$27 million a year. Yes, \$27 million. Payments go mostly to AIR, the American Institutes for Research and to the British education conglomerate, Pearson.

The testing audit bill seeks to determine the many additional costs that school districts pay.

Here's the question: When responding to HB 2713, will local school districts consider all of the costs of high-stakes testing or will they minimize the total costs in order to minimize the growing movement questioning these tests? Will local districts respond to both the letter of the law and the spirit of the law?

Will local districts consider?

First, immediate costs

- Loss of instructional staff to school "testing coordinator" positions?
- Classroom time lost to test preparation?
- Loss of libraries and computer labs for months as they become testing centers?
- School counselors forced to focus on testing, not counseling?
- Staff meetings dominated by test preparation and logistics?
- Professional development workshops predominantly devoted to test prep?
- Loss of professional development to improve comprehensive education methods?
- Diminishing of electives, civics and social studies because they "aren't tested"?

Second, deeper, long term costs

- Narrowing of curriculum caused by teaching to the test?
- Tracking kids from an early age based only on test scores?
- Increased high school dropout caused by such labeling and tracking?
- Loss of teacher creativity from having to teach to the test?
- Creative teachers leaving due to excessive testing?
- Potential outstanding teachers not entering the profession?
- Loss of innovative school administrators due to excessive testing demands?
- Effect on local school boards as they become conduits for federal and state mandates, instead of focusing on what's best for their community?

Opponents of excessive testing believe that honest answers to these questions will reveal that the corporate, testing-based model of education has had a devastatingly expensive impact on students, families, teachers and local communities — in terms of education, finances, emotions and equal opportunity for low-income, minority, special education and English Language Learner students.

HB 2713 provides our local school districts with the opportunity to critically examine the effects of the corporate "reform" model of education, which relies on for-profit companies to make decisions about what's best for your child, without consulting teachers, parents or students.

Will local districts look deeply and, perhaps, re-examine some of their long-held support for the data-based model of learning? Will they respect the letter and the spirit of the law?

This fall — right away before the Sept. 15 deadline — ask your children's teachers how much these tests really cost them last year. Ask your principal, too. Tell your school board and superintendent now how you believe they should carry out the mandate of Lew Frederick's HB 2713, the standardized testing audit bill.

This is a test. Let's see how our local school districts answer the questions.

Rachel Rich, Larry Lewin and Roscoe Caron are retired middle and high school teachers in Eugene and Springfield. They are members of the Community Alliance for Public Education (CAPE, oregoncape.org), a coalition of parents, teachers, professors, students and community members who challenge the many assaults on public education and who believe in a strong public education as the foundation for American democracy.