

From The Mailbox



Vote Yes on January 18th

To the Editor:

As a state employee, a member of OSEA, and a public health nurse, I feel compelled to write this letter asking for a "yes" vote January 18th on the cigarette tax increase.

As state employees, we are in the best position to know the tragic consequences that will result from a defeat of the cigarette tax. Many of us have already received information on the budgetary cuts which may be necessary in the future. Services already drastically curtailed due to lack of staff and funds will be further reduced. Programs of infinite value to all citizens will be eliminated or otherwise so curtailed as to be almost totally ineffective. I believe that such a situation is unacceptable to state employees.

Among my fellow members I've heard, "The tax is discriminatory." Sure it is! What tax isn't? If you have a phone you pay a tax; if you drive a car you pay a tax; if you own property you pay a tax. But as one of our very dedicated members, Jerry Liebertz, said: "The far greater discrimination if the cigarette tax fails would be if 32,000 state employees have to assume an obligation for a responsibility which rightfully belongs to all of the citizens."

As a member of the health profession, I am reminded daily of the results of smoking. The number of elderly persons in hospitals, nursing homes, and homes for the aged with emphysema, cancer, heart disease, etc., is increasing daily. Many have already exhausted their funds and must depend on others for necessary care.

We have a responsibility as citizens, as taxpayers, as state employees, and as members of OSEA to do our part to provide those services to make our state a good place in which to live.

I encourage each and every person to vote in the upcoming election January 18th. Study the issue and the information available to you and cast your ballot wisely.

Beth Mason
District One Director
Portland

A Fight We Must Win

To the Editor:

As a taxpayer I am usually opposed to tax increases. However, the consequences for the state of Oregon if the cigarette tax increase is defeated have overridden my opposition, and I plan to vote for the measure January 18.

I firmly believe every state employee and private citizen should be made aware of the adverse effect on the economy of the state if this tax is defeated. State agency budgets—already cut to rock bottom—will be cut again, eliminating jobs, programs and other state spending. When state agencies and employees feel the pinch, so will cities, communities and private citizens, through reduced business and reduced tax income.

A "yes" vote on this measure is important to every citizen of this state, and every state employee should work actively for the "yes" vote. Some of the ways this can be done are:

(1) Urge your friends and acquaintances to vote for the measure.

(2) Attend the informational meetings in your area sponsored by OSEA and the Oregon Education Association.

(3) If possible, help transport people to the polls or organize a group to phone voters on election day and urge them to vote.

(4) And don't forget your own vote.

This is a fight state employees must win. If we work together, we can do it.

Marian Lahr
Siskiyou Chapter 84
Ashland

A Tremendous Response

To the Editor:

My sincere thanks to all those state employees who so generously donated their Betty Crocker coupons to the Kidney Association of Oregon so that KAO could obtain kidney machines.

The response has just been tremendous, and I want all of those who responded to our call of help to know their cooperation is deeply appreciated.

Doris Martin
Marion Chapter 18
Salem

'No' Voters Offered Pledge

To the Editor:

At various times and places during the past month I have heard state employees questioning the decision made by OSEA's Board of Directors that the Association give strong support to pass the cigarette tax increase at the special election January 18.

Why any state employee is against the decision is beyond me. Don't they know that they stand in great jeopardy of losing a pay increase next July if the tax measure goes down to defeat? And there is a good chance that many will even lose their jobs.

I realize the cigarette tax is a selective tax, and that it discriminates against a certain segment of our society. But I don't think that is really the point. To me the point is that the legislature has proposed increasing the tax on cigarettes to pay for the cost of state government. It has decreed that if the tax fails, then government services will be cut. It's that simple.

State employees, more than anyone else, should support the cigarette tax increase. Personally, I am proud of OSEA's decision to support the tax. I wonder how many employees who do not plan to vote in favor of the tax would sign the following statement:

"I am going to vote against the cigarette tax increase in the special election January 18. In making this statement, and with full awareness of the facts about the state's financial condition, I make the following pledge: If the cigarette tax is defeated and the \$4.3 million mid-biennium salary adjustment fund presently appropriated to the Emergency Board is taken to help make up the state's deficit, I promise not to gripe to OSEA, the legislature, or anybody else about not getting a pay raise on July 1, 1972."

James R. Dyer
Oregon Chapter 22
Salem

Thanks for the Scholarship

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the Oregon State Employees Association for the scholarship of \$200 which is currently helping to keep me in school here at the University of Santa Clara. With it, I am assured of no financial difficulties this year. I am very grateful to the OSEA for this award.

Colleen D. Patterson
University of Santa Clara
Santa Clara, California

OSEA Carried the Day

To the Editor:

A recent issue of the OSEA News said General Council delegates voted to increase the Association's dues by \$1.00—from \$2.00 to \$3.00 a month. Why was this done? What has OSEA done to earn the increase?

Name Withheld

Editor's Note: The primary reason for the increase is inflation. It has increased the cost of almost every item in OSEA's budget, including taxes, goods and services, telephones, postage, staff salaries, travel, meals and lodging.

In answer to your second question, we offer the following quote from a recent speech by Sen. Jason D. Boe (D-Reedsport), a four-term member of the legislature who served on the powerful Ways and Means Committee during the 1971 session:

"There can be no question, however, that it was OSEA testimony on salaries, fringe benefits and retirement that helped carry the day for state employees. It was also as a result of OSEA testimony that Ways and Means decided to grant minimum cost-of-living increases to all state employees."

"Perhaps the most significant aspect of the legislation effecting personnel and personnel administration which came before the Ways and Means Committee during the 1971 session was the fact that most of the legislative changes reflected OSEA's viewpoints and attitudes, either through the original initiation of the legislation or by way of a compromise arrived at during the session."

"Ways and Means simply did not consider salary or personnel items without having the benefit of OSEA's advice and counsel on the subject. And in almost every case, OSEA concurrence or approval was an essential ingredient for a bill to get out of Salary Subcommittee."

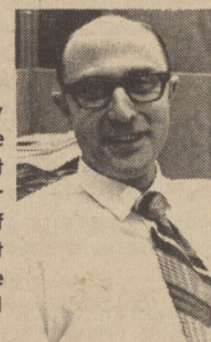
Inquiring Photographer

What Will Happen If the Cigarette Tax is Defeated?

(Asked at Oregon State University, Corvallis)

JACK A. DANLEY Payroll Supervisor

Well, for one thing we would lose our pay raises due next July. For another, we probably wouldn't be permitted to fill vacant positions. That, of course, would mean fewer employees doing the same amount of work. If the tax is voted down, the 85 and 75 per cent merit pay limitations would probably be increased to zero per cent. I'm pessimistic. I really think it would be that bad.



WILLIAM W. PLEMMONS Carpenter

If the tax is defeated there will be some drastic cuts in state government. And those cuts will probably include our pay raises next July. I don't think the cigarette tax is a fair tax, but we have no alternative. It seems to me that it's a band-aid approach to a massive problem. It just doesn't produce enough revenue. The legislature must develop another method to raise money.



LESLIE W. WILSON Electrician

If the tax goes down it will definitely curtail services provided by state government. We're already operating on a bare bones budget. If the tax is defeated, we will be hurt even more. The effect will be that we will have the same amount of work to do, but with less money, no new equipment and fewer employees. Our cigarette tax ought to be on a par with surrounding states.



MARY YOUNG Secretary

It would be very destructive to Oregon State University and to higher education if the cigarette tax increase fails. I don't like the concept of a cigarette tax because taxes should be paid by all citizens, not just cigarette smokers. But if the alternative is either increasing the cost of a package of cigarettes or cutting higher education budgets, then I choose the tax. I'll vote for it.



GEORGE H. ARSCOTT

Chairman, Department of Poultry Sciences
There will be substantial cuts in both resident instruction and poultry research service activities. I definitely see budget cuts coming if this tax is defeated. I don't think there's any question about it. Anyone who thinks otherwise is dreaming. The agriculture experiment station portion of our budget already has been cut, and that resulted in reducing our research programs.



PAUL H. WESWIG Professor of Agricultural Chemistry

I think it would be a catastrophe to higher education. And I think all state employees are in the same boat regardless of whether they are classified or academic. We'll all be hurt. Our department already has suffered a budget reduction, and we'll get further cuts if the tax is defeated. Every school in higher education and every state agency will suffer similar consequences.

