

the OSEA news

The monthly publication of the Oregon State Employees Association

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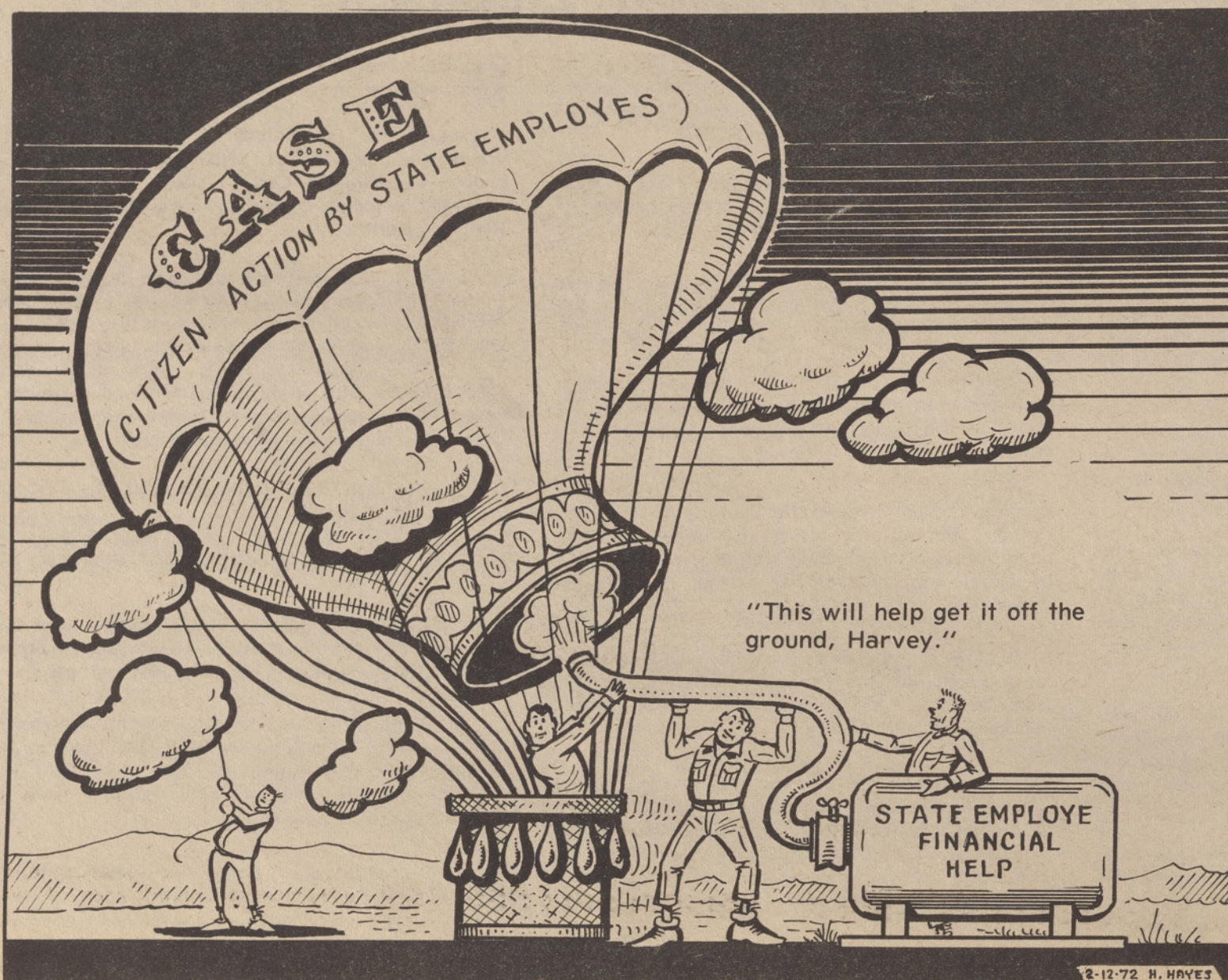
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From the.... Executive Secretary

A Brief for CASE

Almost a year's work by some of the Association's best minds has gone into the formation of a state employee "political action arm," otherwise known as Citizen Action by State Employees (CASE).

Similar to the Oregon Education Association's PIE (People for Improvement of Education), the AFL-CIO's COPE and the doctors' Oregon Medical Political Action Committee, CASE will be able to support candidates in partisan elections where OSEA dues dollars cannot be spent.

The factor which will determine the success of CASE will be how well it can raise necessary candidate support funds. The basic financing will come from solicitation of \$10 per year memberships, presently open on a charter basis.

State employees who have looked for a stronger "political clout" now have a chance to back up their objectives with a \$10 charter membership in CASE.

One Down. Another to Go?

On the night of January 18, KGW-TV news commentator Floyd McKay reported that "votes of higher education and state employees in the mid-Willamette valley provided the winning margin for the cigarette tax in today's special election."

And indeed they did. With the winning margin statewide only 51 per cent of the vote, the budget-balancing measure went over in Benton County at 70 per cent. Marion and Polk Counties came in at better than 56 per cent, and the voter turnout was much higher than the state average. The voting pattern was apparent in all areas of concentrated state employment.

Now anti-tax politicians are busy trying to get another budget-balancing measure referred to popular vote. Petitioners are active, trying to get 26,656 signatures by February 20 to refer a special session bill divorcing the state income tax from the federal system to a vote at the May primary election.

If the "divorcement" measure were referred and defeated, the same automatic cut in general fund appropriations that would have followed a cigarette tax defeat would then take place. The percentage effect would be worse, however, because the state would be further along in the biennium.

State employee awareness was apparent in what one of our staff members overheard when a referral petitioner approached a lady at an East Salem shopping center. Replied the lady, "Do you think I'm out of my mind? I'm a state employee!"