OSEA's Resolution to Permit State Employes To Serve in Legislature Approved by House

A resolution to amend Oregon's Constitution to permit state employes to serve in the legislature has passed the House of Representatives.

If approved by the Senate, the measure would be voted upon by Oregonians in the November, 1974 general election.

The resolution—HJR 30—was drafted by and introduced at the request of OSEA. It was carried on the floor of the House by Rep. Mary Roberts (D-Portland). She made the following remarks about the measure in explaining it to House members:

"HJR 30 amends the Oregon Constitution, upon voter approval at the next regular general election, to permit state employes to be eligible for seat in the Legislative Assembly.

This bill is another step in making the state employe a citizen equal to other residents of Oregon. In extending the right to hold a legislative seat to employes of the State Board of Higher Education, it was recognized that these employes were indeed entitled to have the right to hold this office if elected. What we are asking is that other state employes also receive this right.

Records from the Personnel Division indicate there are approximately 29,684 state employes in Oregon. Approximately 6,900, or 23 per cent, are employed by the State Board of Higher Education. That leaves 22,785 employes, or 77 per cent, who are not eligible under the current constitution to run for legislative office. It is not difficult to understand why those 22,785 persons feel discriminated against.

City employes can run for the legislature. County employes can run for the legislature. Privately employed persons can run for the legislature. Does not the state employe have the same right? He holds the same kinds of positions. He pays the same taxes. He uses the same public facilities. He votes. He can have the same interests in public service. He should therefore have the equal privileges and protections granted all citizens under the Oregon Constitution.

REP. MARY ROBERTS

"City employes can run for the legislature. County employes can run for the legislature. Does not the state employe have the same right?"

A few have stated, somewhat facetiously perhaps, that if a state employe were elected to the legislature and if that legislator by chance was chosen by leadership in the House or Senate to serve on the Ways and Means Committee, and if by this appointment he was one of the votes needed to approve a state agency budget, he might use his position to raise a salary for a position he himself intended to take.

I submit to you that a person who stands for election and has to stand on his record to win once again the approval of the voters and the respect of his colleagues would certainly choose not to betray their trust and the trust of the leadership who placed him on the committee.

The membership of this assembly is aware that all of us, despite opportunities to serve our self-interest through committee positions, even if our one vote could in fact affect such a thing, would shrink from such abuse of the faith placed in us.

I see no reason to suspect that state employes would be given greater opportunities or be more likely to divert public interests to their own personal gain.

HJR 30 will place a proposed amendment before the people of Oregon who must be allowed to decide every two years who shall serve as their representatives. Their will is our directive.

If the people of Oregon place their trust in a candidate who happens to be a state employe, their choice is as deserving of election as any other candidate. The state employes among those voters deserve the opportunity to win that trust.

I urge you to vote for this resolution so that the people may make known their will in the next general election."

There were seven votes against the resolution. They were cast by Reps. Sidney Bazett (R-Grants Pass), Bernard Byers (D-Lebanon), Dick Magruder (D-Clatskanie), David Stults (R-Junction City), Jack Sumner (D-Heppner), Paul Walden (R-Hood River) and Martin Wolfer (D-Salem).

After passage by the House, the measure was sent to the Senate Elections Committee, headed by Sen. Keith Burbidge (D-Salem). It is expected to get a "do-pass" recommendation from that committee.

OSEA Proposes Faculty Pay Raise of 14.5%

An average pay raise of 14.5 per cent during the next biennium was recommended for Oregon's faculty employes by OSEA at a recent hearing held by the Salary Subcommittee of the legislature's Joint Ways and Means Committee.

Assistant Executive Secretary Everett B. Stiles, who testified on behalf of the Association, proposed an average pay increase of 9.71 per cent in the first year of the biennium and 4.81 per cent in the second.

OSEA's recommendation amounts to an "average" pay raise because of its proposed distribution of the money. Stiles said 5 per cent of the 9.71 should be given to all faculty employes on an across-the-board basis this July 1. The remaining 4.71 per cent should be used for selective raises.

On July 1, 1974, the beginning of the second year of the biennium, an amount equal to the cost of living increase should be granted to faculty employes across-the-board, he said, and the remainder of the 4.81 should be distributed selectively.

"Through the years, Oregon's academic employes have seen their pay increase at a much slower pace than other segments of Oregon's work force," Stiles said. He urged the Salary Subcommittee to give "top priority consideration to raising academic salaries to make up for that lag."

In 1957 the legislature adopted a plan of setting faculty salary increases. That plan established a list of 19 institutions of higher education with which Oregon would be compared in determing faculty pay raises.

Stiles said the 1957 legislature also decided that Oregon, in order to be in a parity position, should rank 10th on the list of 19 schools, and raised faculty pay to that level.

"Unfortunately and unhappily for faculty employes, Oregon's position since 1957 has slowly eroded from a position of 10th place to a low of 16th place during the years 1967 through 1970. Today our state is in 15th position," he said.

Through the years many legislators have criticized the plan that compares salaries paid by Oregon universities with those paid by some of the institutions that were selected in 1957, Stiles noted. "Some are quick to challenge the comparison with Big Ten and California schools, but readily accept the comparison with smaller schools such as those in Idaho and Montana."

'We Work Hard For Our Money'

Two university presidents and the chancellor of Oregon's System of Higher Education were among those who testified on faculty salaries at the recent hearing held by the Salary Subcommittee.

Ann Goekjian isn't as well known as such higher education leaders, but what she said was just as impressive. She spoke for OSEA's Portland State Chapter 68. Here is part of what she said:

"Recently a private group issued a study calling for higher education to be restructured in a more 'profitable' fashion. That would be nice, but education is not a profitable business as far as dollars and cents goes.

The profit that any system of education accrues is that of sending out students who have been educated, trained and are capable of performing useful functions within the society. We feel the Oregon State System of Higher Education does just that, though we do admit our failures.

On the whole, the system functions reasonably well and Oregon students receive a good education. We try to be responsive to our students' needs and to society's needs. We ask that you be responsive to our needs.

We don't come here today to ask that you grant us this increase out of the goodness of your hearts. We come here and ask that you grant us this increase because we deserve it. We work hard for our money."

"One significant factor which must be kept in mind, however, is that in the years since 1957 the base data has remained constant while Oregon's faculty pay has become less competitive with the comparative group," he said.

Stiles compared faculty salaries to salaries paid other educators and teachers working in secondary education in Oregon. "In 1965 and 1966 the percentage pay increase appropriated for faculty employes exceeded the percentage increase received by other educators in Oregon," he said.

"From 1967 through 1971, however, the percentage wage increase granted to faculty employes was considerably less than the average increase granted to their colleagues in other educational areas. During the past two years both groups have received percentage increases of relatively the same amount."

He also drew a comparison between university professors and community college teachers. "An analysis of the growth in real earnings since 1967 will show community college teachers with an increase of 14.2 per cent, while during the same period of time the growth in real earnings for faculty employes at the University of Oregon and Oregon State University has been 2.9 per cent."

Stiles said it would require an additional $9 million over and above the governor's budget recommendations to finance OSEA's proposal. As to where the money would come from, he suggested several alternatives: "Funding of the salary proposal in lieu of a lessor priority budget item such as capital construction, a careful look at program duplication, the possible elimination of programs which have limited enrollments, or an increase in tuition."

"Those are only a few alternatives," Stiles said. "There are others. I'm sure each has its drawbacks and each will have its defenders. The point I'm trying to make is this: faculty employes are entitled to parity pay. The funds needed to achieve that goal should not be used to subsidize other higher education programs."