Seniority, secrecy and congressional reform

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The fellowing is a statement prepared by Common Cause.)

A new Congress will convene next month and immediately proceed to make crucially important decisions - in secret.

No bills will be involved. Rather, the important decisions in the first days of the 93rd Congress will be the selection of Republican and Democratic party leaders who, throughout the following two years, will quide America's national legislature.

Unless reforms are made before these actions in January, citizens will have no idea how these leaders won their jobs; all the public will know is the outcome.

The importance of the leadership positions - only a handful in number - cannot be overemphasized. The Members of Congress who fill them have vast influence over public affairs. They control the activities of the Senate and House, determine the flow of legislation, corral votes for and against proposals, influence committee assignments, and in many other ways deeply affect the output of Congress. Because of this, voters have a legitimate interest in the quality of Congressional leadership.

Considering this interest, it is appalling that:

1. Both political parties in Congress choose their leaders behind closed doors and refuse to divulge how mem-



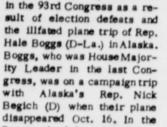
bers vote in leadership contests; and several leadership vacancias

2. House Democrats appoint not elect - their party Whip, a position which is the first step toward the top jobs of party leader and House speaker. (The Whip is, in effect, the assistant party leader; his job is to help marshal majority forces in support of party strategy.) The precedures governing

these contests are indicative of two fundamental problems - secrecy and seniority - that drain Congress of the vitality needed to be an equal branch of the federal government. The secrecy in which leadership choices are made reflects the widespread secrecy in which Congress conducts so much of its business. The up-the-ladder philosophy of House Democrats is an outgrowth of the seniority system that exalts longevity over ability, intelligence, energy - all the qualities that normal-

ly qualify a person for a leadership role. Common Cause believes these practices must be changed, not only in the leadership contests but in all proceedures of Congress. The leadership contests will be the first instances of the deilitating seniority and secrecy weaknesses to appear in the

new Congress that convenes in January. Common Cause is urging recorded public votes for Senate and House leadership positions and election of the



Both parties are faced with

Senate, the defeat of Sen. Margaret Chase Smith (R-Maine) has opened the position of chairman of the Republican Conference, which is the caucus of all Republican Senators. The defeat of Sen. Gordon Allott (R-Colo.) has left vacant the job of chairman of theGOP Policy Committee.

In addition, there may be challenges to some party leaders who are returning. Such challenges are not uncommon at the beginning of a new comgress.

News reports about leadership battles have focused on personalities rather than the more important issue of open porcedures in selection of

Students register

leaders.

Students new to Portland Community College for the winter term starting January will register Tuesday through Thursday, January 2 through January 4, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Friday, Janu-

ary 5, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Returning students and new students who have pre-registered are currently registering at both the Sylvania and Cascade centers.

Counselors and career exploration tools are available to help students decide on the program best suited to their interests and abilities. To make an appointment with a counselor, call the PCC number 244-6111, and the operator will help you.

Santa's Lane opens

There are no elves but lots of workshops at The Salvation Army Men's Social Service Center. Recently rehabilitees there have been busy repairing toys and other contributed goods suitable for Christmas gifts, The results go on display the first week of December in the main Thrift Store at 139 S.E. Union. A Christmas lane in The Salvation Army Thrift Store is a "first " for this area, according to Major Clenton Irby, Men's Social Service Center director. The gift center will be maintained until Christmas if stocks can be continued. "We felt there was a real need to Provide 'recycled' gift items as a service to low income families who want to have the independence of buying their own things but haven't the money to get what they want brand new," Major Irby said. Persons who have toys and other suitable gift items that they would like to donate may call The Salvation Army Men's Social Service Center for truck pick-up, 235-4192.

If tradition is followed, GOP and Democratic leaders will be selected in secret in each party's caucus in the Senate and House when the new Congress convenes in the first week of January. The caucus consists of all of the party's members in the House or Senate.

The principal positions to be filled by the Democrats, who will continue as the majority party, are the Speakership, the Majority Leader, the party whip and the chairman of the caucus. Although the Speaker is elected by the entire House, the vote is on party lines and thus the individual nominated by the majority party always wins.

The Democratic party leader and caucus chairman and the nominee for Speaker are selected by elections in the caucus. The Democratic whip, however, is appointed by the party's two top officials, the Speaker and the party leader. House Republicans meeting in caucus will be filling simi-

lar leadership positions except that, as the minority party, their candidate for Speaker will serve as House Minority Leader. All House Republican positions are phone 378-3292.

In the Senate, Democrats and Republicans elect all of their leaders. The principal positions are majority and minority leaders and whips and the chairmanships of the Republican Policy Committee and the caucus. In both chambers, the leaders will seek to conduct all

elected.

sessions.

ic Whip.

of this business in secret Common Cause is urging two principal reforms in the its services. leadership selection process:

public rather than secret votes on all party leaders in both chambers of Congress; and election rather than appointment of the House Democrat-Whether Congress consid-

ers and passes legislation of is getting a job. one or another political philosophy (for example, more or less business or consumer taxes, stronger or weaker pollution controls, and so on) will be much influenced by the political outlook of each agencies. party's leadership.

The public should know how Members of Congress vote on leadership contest; only when that information is available to the public can meaningful citizen influence be brought to bear and can Members of Congress be held accountable for their votes on mission. leadership choices.

Secret voting and hand- originally set for December picked appointment are the 6 and was set over because antithesis of an open Congress of unavoidable conflicts, will

Labor Bureau sets hearing

Norman O. Nilsen, the State Labor Commissioner, has anworking conditions concern nounced that he will hold a safe and sanitary work area, public hearing in Portland on adequate lighting, adequate Wednesday, December 20, on ventilation, adequate washa proposal to adopt interprerooms, adequate toilet facilitive rules and policies for ties, adequate rest rooms, administering and enforcing adequate dressing rooms, adthe state Private Employment equacy of what lunch rooms Agency Law. may be provided, adequate ta-The hearing will be in Room bles and work benches, suit-

able seating.

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36 of the State Office Building 1400 S.W. Fifth Avenue. Time will be 1:30 p.m.. Testimony can be made either orally at the hearing or submitted in writing in advance. The proposed interpretive

rules and policies are contained in a statement explainvision, Oregon Bureau of ing what is proper and what Labor, 115 Labor and Indusis improper under the law tries Building, Salem, Oregon which has been used since 97310, telephone 378-3292. the law was revised in 1961 for the guidance of owners and operators of private employment agencies.

Copies may be obtained from A.W. (Bud) Gardner, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the Oregon Bureau of Labor, 115 Labor and Industries Building. Salem, Oregon 97310, tele-The Oregon Private Em-

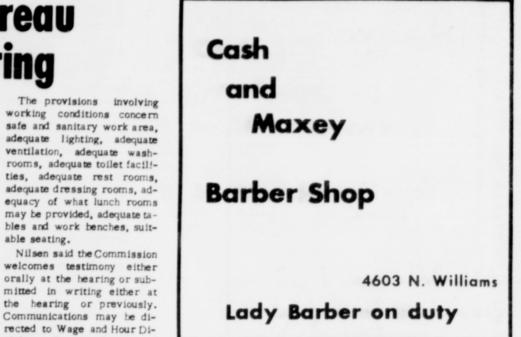
ployment Agency Laws apply to any business which conducts an office or a type of agency which acts, offers, promises or attempts to get employment for others or which provides for the registration of persons seeking to gain or retain employment or which participates in the giving of information about employment which charges for

The laws also apply to any person, bureau, organization or school who offers to get employment for anyone who pays for its services or which charges tuition or charges for any services where the object of the person paying the money

Not subject to the law are educational associations with some teacher-placement activities, nonprofit organizations working for civic purposes and vocational guidance

A public hearing has been set for December 21 by the Oregon Wage and Hour Commission on proposed revisions of the Commission's Consolidated Work Order, according to Norman O. Nilsen, the State Labor Commissioner and executive Officer to the Com-The hearing, which was

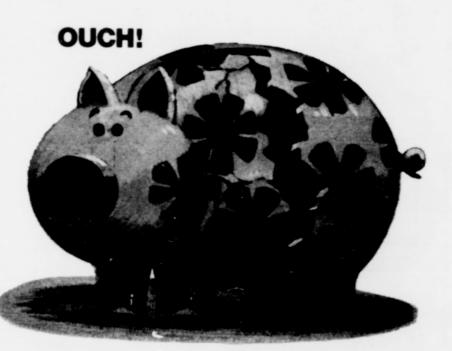
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operating under the scrutiny of an informed electorate. Citizens would be outraged if the Senate or House took a secret vote on raising income taxes. There is, by the same token, no good reason why the public should tolerate secret votes on the Congressional leaders who will exercise so much control over the fate of the tax, pollutioncontrol and other bills that will come before Congress in the next two years.



Motorists kill dogs at an alarming rate. But dogs can be deadly motorists, too. One year's study of a single thruway revealed that more than 200 accidents had been caused by dogs dashing in front of cars. What are the legal conse-

quences of such an accident? If a dog causes injury to a motorist, may the owner of the dog be held liable in court? Consider this case:

A motorist, suddenly confronted by a dog in the street, swerved to the right, struck the dog, lost control of his car, and crashed into a fire hydrant.



from the owner of the dog under the state's "strict liability" law.

be held at 10 a.m. in Room 36 of the State Office Building in Portland, 1400 S.W. Fifth Avenue. The proposed revisions

mostly deal with providing equal coverage regarding working conditions for all employers as authorized by the last session of the Legislature. Previously, coverage was permitted only to women and minors of both sexes under 18 years of age. Also proposed is that all

persons over 16 years of age be allowed to work as doorto-door canvassers. At present, such work is denied to females under 18 and males under 16.

And the court held that, since the dog had indeed caused the accident, the owner would have to foot the bill-even with no proof of his negligence. Strict liability laws, although not yet universal, are already on

the books in many states. And even without such a law, a dog owner may be held liable if shown to be negligent. In another case, a terrier had

the habit of assaulting passing vehicles of all kinds. One day he rushed ferociously at a youthful motorcyclist, causing him to lose his balance and crash. Even with no strict liability law

in effect, a court ruled that the dog's owner would have to pay damages. The court said he was guilty of negligence for failing to keep such a troublesome dog under restraint.

On the other hand, there is no liability if the dog-although involved in the accident-was not really its cause. Thus:

A motorist, after barely touching a dog, ran his car into the ditch. But when he sought damages from the dog's owner, the quality of his own driving came under scrutiny. Considering all the circumstances of the encounter, the jury concluded that a reasonably careful driver would have had no trouble staying on the road. Result: case dismissed

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North Portland Special Patrolmen Inc.

1771 N. E. Dekum Portland, Oregon 97211 Phone 289-5536



This letter announces the opening of the NORTH PORTLAND SPECIAL PATROL-MEN, INC., a private, locally-run and operated security force specializing in security protection for homes and businesses, neighborhood patrol, and escort services.

Our office and staff are here to serve the City of Portland in any way we can. The Portland Police Department is one of the finest in the Northwest, lacking only the necessary manpower to cover the growing city of Portland. You may not know it, but there are approximately 11,000 burglaries a year in this city, and we are organizing all our resources to prevent a growing percentage of these, as well as any special security needs you might have.

We hope you will give us a chance to be of service to you, as we have the very best of officers to serve you - hand picked and trained by the most qualified people in modern law enforcement techniques. And we are bonded and insured for your protection.

We are very proud of our organization, and we want a chance to show you what we have to offer as the first multi-racial company of this kind in the Northwest. If you would like further information, or are interested in our services, please fill out the information sheet below, and our field representative will call on you.

Thank you.

Occupant:

Sincerely,

T. J. OLIVE, President

NATHAN J. PROBY, Field Representative

Name

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Injured, he claimed damages

Dog-Caused Collision