



# Opinion

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## Take Big Money Out Of The Running

By JO ANN BOWMAN, STATE REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 19

What if they gave an election and nobody came? As the cost of elections continues to set new records, fewer people are choosing to meaningfully participate — by contributing their time, money, or even their votes — to a process they increasingly see as removed from the real needs of their lives. Unfortunately, this just makes the problem worse, leaving candidates more dependent than ever on special interest contributions instead of constituent support.

When it comes to modern democracy, it is more important than ever to expose the role of money in politics. People of color, women, poor and working people — all but a small minority of wealthy individuals and business would benefit from taking the influence of money out of politics. At a Portland conference, Money in Politics: A Modern Civil Rights Struggle, held this past April, Tarso Luis Ramos commented, "Is it any wonder that public policy inadequately protects the rights and addresses the needs of communities of color? We don't have the bankroll. We can't afford



Jo Ann Bowman

it. The price tag of democracy is too high." Finally, there is a campaign finance reform alternative that can achieve meaningful results,

The Oregon Political Accountability Act, Measure 6, on the November ballot represents the best real hope of restoring democracy to the people so that candidates can compete based on their ideas and qualifications, not their bank accounts. Measure 6 would allow qualified candidates who agreed to strict spending limits to receive "clean money" public funding instead of private contributions. This voluntary system will create a more level playing field — allowing more quali-

fied candidates to run viable campaigns. Similar reforms have passed and are working in four other states: Maine, Vermont, Arizona

and Massachusetts.

If the election were held today, Measure 6 would pass by nearly a two-to-one margin. Our communities clearly recognize that our individual votes matter less than the checks written by big money contributors. What Oregonians are just beginning to understand is the profound challenges this presents to the concept of one person, one vote — perhaps the most important idea in the development of representative democracy. For when we look further, it is not hard to see the consequences of a system that prioritizes wealthy interests who can buy access to the system. The problem of money in politics is truly a direct concern of all of us who care deeply about civil rights.

Given the chance, all of us would choose to elect representatives with no strings attached, so that they are free to vote their conscience with direct accountability only to the people who elected them. But Measure 6 faces a very real threat. That threat is the same reason there has been no reform legislation since 1973. That threat is summed up in one word: lobbyists. It is only natural that lobbyists should be opposed to Measure 6,

since they are the only group that stands to lose by cutting ties between special interests and political candidates. The \$10,000 contributors who account for almost 70% of the funds given to candidates aren't going to sit by idly while Measure 6 rolls over them. But the threat posed by lobbyists is countered by the strong coalition behind Measure 6 which includes CAUSA, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, APANO (Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon), the League of Women Voters of Oregon and thousands of individuals from every county in Oregon.

Communities across Oregon came move one step closer to national campaign finance reform this election. It is critical that we support Measure 6 so candidates can compete based on their ideas and experiences, not their bank accounts.

Once we level the playing field or Oregon politics, the state will discover powerful new voices that have been drowned out by the volume of money now awash in the system. In the midst of confusing, cluttered ballot in which the public good is mostly on the defensive here in Oregon, it is great to have one positive thing to vote on which will put the voice of the people into our political system.

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## Abortion Pill: No Panacea for Women

By NANCY REIKO KATO, NATIONAL ORGANIZER, RADICAL WOMEN

The FDA's recent approval of mifepristone (RU-486) is a victory of sorts for pro-choice advocates. However, the drug falls far short of being the "wonder drug" that will give women reproductive freedom without a fight.

There is much excitement among feminist groups over the decision, which has been held up for years because of rightwing threats to boycott any pharmaceutical company manufacturing the drug. Will mifepristone end the debate and battle over abortion? No. The drug is not a quick and easy solution to an unwanted pregnancy.

It must be administered within the first 49 days of pregnancy, but over half the abortions in the US. take place after this period. A physician must administer the drug and follow-up visits are required. This means women must have access to health care and be close enough to a medical facility for treatment. However, for poor women—many of them women

of color, immigrant and young—who don't have adequate health care, these conditions do not exist. Additionally, the lack of conclusive research on the long-term health effects and risks of RU-486 should be of concern.

The same establishment that has sanctioned mifepristone has also approved the use of the toxic, sterility-inducing contraceptives like Norplant and Depo-Provera, as well as the deadly Dalkon Shield.

There is no pill that will end the debate over the issue of abortion rights. Antiabortionists are determined to roll back every gain made for women to control their own bodies. The rightwing will continue its terror against abortion clinics, providers, staff, clients, and any pills or procedures that give women choices.

Denying women their reproductive rights is a crucial part of keeping women in second class positions and maintaining the inferior status of females is key to keeping profits high. Today's rights were won through militant organizing. To

safeguard and expand the right to abortion, the feminist movement must be willing to continue the fight and not get seduced by narrow medical solutions for broader political problems.

In light of the climate of violence and hatred against women by "pro-lifers" and scapegoating politicians, Radical Women calls on feminists to demand: full and free access to safe abortions and contraceptives; pre- and post-natal care; 24-hour quality childcare; no forced sterilizations; nationalized healthcare; and community-controlled defense of women's clinics.

These demands will not be won with polite, liberal lobbying, or by electing pro-choice Democrats who fail to make nationalized healthcare a reality. It's going to take a radical, grassroots movement, led by uppity women of color and poor and working women—joined by feminist men—to make the needed changes. And we will not stop at anything less than full equality in a society that values every one of us!

## Letters To the Editor

### Support Measure 97

We are writing this letter urging to support Measure 97 because of our personal experience with our dog Buddy, a 140 pound German Shepherd who didn't come home last Jan. 5. We found his body, not more than 100 yards from our backyard. Bloody foam was around his mouth and nose. We also found curious pink film can sized objects on the pathway where we found him. We then learned where Buddy was poisoned in a wooded area where kids, hikers, dog walkers and fishermen travel - a well-worn pathway. We found six M44's on or along the path. Five of them were active and full of poison gas. One was discharged, no doubt the one that killed Buddy.

Any child would be attracted to the pink capsules. We called our vet who was afraid to accept his body. The poison center could not help us

with information. Finally a lab at OSU was able to tell our vet how to handle the body safely. We urge you to join us and vote on Measure 97 to ban cruel traps and two deadly poisons, which include sodium cyanide.

Dixie and George Tippett,  
Estacada

### Measure 6 is overdue.

The money going into political campaigns is getting bigger and bigger. Interestingly, the same deep pockets are giving to both parties.

It seems there is one massive merger, big corporations with politicians—and the line between Republicans and Democrats is getting blurred, and like all mergers there will be lots of people getting down-sized—the American people are the real losers—just like HMOs. Let's give government back to the people.

Dan Keefer  
Portland

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**\$6 Case**

**4 for \$1**  
Safeway Club Price

**Tampico Punch**  
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