

OPINION

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Democracy in Action!

Our Voter Guide:

The Portland Observer makes the following endorsements for the Nov. 7 General Election:



Governor:
Gov. Ted Kulongoski,
Democrat



Circuit Court Judge:
Ulanda L. Watkins



Multnomah County Commissioner:
Lew Frederick

- Measure 40: No**
Takes away your vote for all Supreme Court judges.
- Measure 41: No**
Tax deduction would reduce revenue for state services.
- Measure 42: Yes**
Credit scores in insurance rates discriminate against minorities, poor.
- Measure 43: No**
Another attempt to chip away at Roe v. Wade.
- Measure 44: Yes**
Opens Oregon Prescription Drug Plan to all.
- Measure 45: No**
Throws out limited African-American incumbents with term limits.
- Measure 48: No**
Imposes arbitrary state spending limit that hurts schools, seniors and low-income people.
- Multnomah County Library Levy: Yes**
Retain our vital library services.
- Portland Public Schools Levy: Yes**
Funding is needed to improve, maintain local schools.

Bringing Dignity to the Addicted

Stress people's strengths, not their symptoms

BY KAREN WHEELER

If you've never been addicted, this may surprise you: Getting into treatment for an alcohol, drug or gambling addiction is often a frightening experience. You're afraid of change, scared to live without your habit, questioning whether you deserve success because people have beaten you down about your failings.

Nobody can make treatment easy, but Oregon is going to make it a better experience.

I remember the story of a homeless heroin addict. She wound up in the hospital after being hit by a Mack truck while wandering on a highway shoulder. With dozens of broken bones, it was a miracle she even

survived. The last time I saw this woman, though, she was in recovery from her addiction and enrolled in a master's program on an Oregon university campus.

What changed? For the first time

You talk to a cancer patient about hope for recovery; we should be talking to addicts that way, too. Regardless of the disease, we believe giving people hope supports wellness.

in years, someone -- it was her parole officer -- told her she was a worthwhile person.

It's the same message people fighting addictions need to hear when they're in treatment. This is what we're telling Oregon Department of Human Services staff, writing into contracts with

state-financed treatment providers and reporting to the Governor's Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs.

Science tells us addiction is a disease, yet addicts trying to get well may be treated more negatively than the chronically ill person with heart disease, diabetes or cancer.

An addict who relapses while in treatment -- say, an individual uses alcohol or drugs while on a pass -- is often discharged from the program. But that is like denying treatment to the cancer patient who misses a chemo

should be talking to addicts that way, too. Regardless of the disease, we believe giving people hope supports wellness.

Recovery is an issue of not only personal quality of life, but also reduced medical, judicial and other expense to the public.

To be successful, treatment shouldn't be treated solely as a medical episode. It should be supported by families who are engaged, by peer-to-peer counseling, by alcohol- and drug-free housing and by other continuing supports that promote recovery.

People who want to get into treatment and recovery or who want to help a loved one should keep these two phone numbers handy: region Partnership: 1-800-923-4357 to learn about alcohol and other drug treatment and Gambling helpline: 1-877-278-6766 for information about free, Lottery-financed treatment.

No matter how long you have been addicted, we believe you have strengths to overcome your disease. We believe in your recovery.

Karen Wheeler is addictions policy manager in the Oregon Department of Human Services.

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Letters to the Editor

Failure to Indict

The decision by a grand jury that there was no criminal misconduct in the police in-custody death of James Chasse Jr. is disappointing, but not surprising. As far as we know, there has never been an indictment of a Portland Police officer for on-duty use of force.

We suspect that one reason for the outcome is our current system which puts the District Attorney, who works with police on a daily basis to indict criminal suspects, in the position of asking a jury to indict those same officers.

We are encouraged that the Mayor and the Chief are pledging to improve the way the mental

health and law enforcement communities work together.

However, we hope that they do not divert attention from the fact that James Chasse did not die because he suffered from mental illness, he died because police officers beat him so severely they fractured 16 of his ribs and splintered pieces of his ribs punctured his lungs.

We look forward to giving the community a space to remember James Chasse, Jr. in a peaceful memorial vigil next Friday at First Congregations Church. For more information see our website at portlandcopwatch.org.

Dan Handelman
Portland Copwatch

Politicizing Judges

Unlike many states, Oregon has avoided judicial partisanship. This protects judges from being swayed by campaign contributions and has helped to maintain public respect for our courts. Measure 40 will end that great tradition.

Measure 40 provides that each of Oregon's Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges must be elected by a district (not statewide, as now is the case), with the Legislature drawing the districts and assigning existing appellate judges to particular districts.

The measure may be appealing at first glance because it seems to foster geographic diversity, but this is a Trojan horse for those who would politicize the judiciary.

Measure 40 undermines judicial independence. Its sponsors know the measure will make it easier for special interests to pick off appellate judges who make decisions they don't like -- or to dissuade judges from making those decisions in the first place.

Measure 40 invites the Legislature to play politics with the judiciary by carving Oregon into districts for purposes of electing Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges. Voters would then elect judges to "represent"

their district, which itself is a concept that is contrary to a fair and impartial judiciary that tries to follow the law.

Measure 40 requires judicial redistricting when legislative districts are reapportioned, assuring that the lines will be drawn at the height of partisan wrangling in the Legislature. It makes judges more vulnerable to special interests.

Instead of voting in all seven Supreme Court races, each voter could vote in only one. Instead of voting in all 10 Court of Appeals races, each voter could vote in only two. Special interests will have a greater impact on smaller, regional elections where they can exploit single issues, and 15 percent of the voters in just one district could force a recall election of a judge, instead of needing 15 percent of the voters in the entire state, as is now required.

The judicial branch is intended to serve as a check on the legislative and executive branches. Instead of bending to the political sways of the day, judges should decide disputes impartially and to be faithful to the law above all else.

Don't put our judicial system at risk. Vote 'No' on Measure 40.

Gary M. Berne
Portland attorney

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