

Legalization Fight

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Measure 91 to pass, arguing that it has gathered more support than the last marijuana legalization effort in the state, Measure 80, which failed when it was on the ballot two years ago.

2012 proved to be a groundbreaking year for marijuana support across the country. Washington and Colorado passed laws that legalized rec-

reational marijuana consumption in their states. Oregon had a less strict version of reform that would have allowed anyone over 21 to possess unlimited amounts of the drug.

This year, however, the measure would place limits on the drug. Measure 91 would authorize in-state manufacture, processing, and sale (between adults) of marijuana. It would also creating licensing, regulation, and taxation on recreational

marijuana. No laws on Oregon books would change on medical marijuana licensing or regulation.

In short, the new legalization effort would create a revenue for the state, be managed by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, and put an end to drug-related citations, arrests and convictions.

"The hope is by passing this measure that we deliver a message to law enforcement that we want them to focus on stopping violent criminals, not small marijuana cases," says Peter Zuckerman, community

director for Measure 91.

Over the last decade in Oregon, police have arrested or cited more than 99,000 people for marijuana offenses.

Rick Steves got involved in Oregon's legalization effort after doing the same in Washington two years ago. He points out the resources used by law enforcement to pursue marijuana-related drug crimes and points out how much local communities stand to gain by taxes and better monitoring marijuana sales and consumption.

He compares the United States to countries in Europe where drug-laws are much more relaxed and addiction is treated like a medical condition, not a law-enforcement problem.

We spent Friday engaging Portland State students on the subject of Measure 91, asking students where they stood on the matter. Some students expressed concern over the taxation of the marijuana and were ambivalent about the new law's enforcement, while others were

very much in favor of the measure but wondered what would happen to people already in custody for marijuana use, sale, or possession.

One student, who wished to remain anonymous, said he was very much against legalization policy because he had heard that other states, like Colorado and Washington, had seen an uptick in DUIs since the passing of similar marijuana laws in their states.

Racial justice groups, such as the Asian Pacific Network of Oregon, the Western States Center, the Partnership for Safety and Justice, and the Rural Oregon Project, have come out in favor of Measure 91.

"Too many people have been punished and too many of them have been youth and people of color," said the Partnership for Safety and Justice in an official statement.

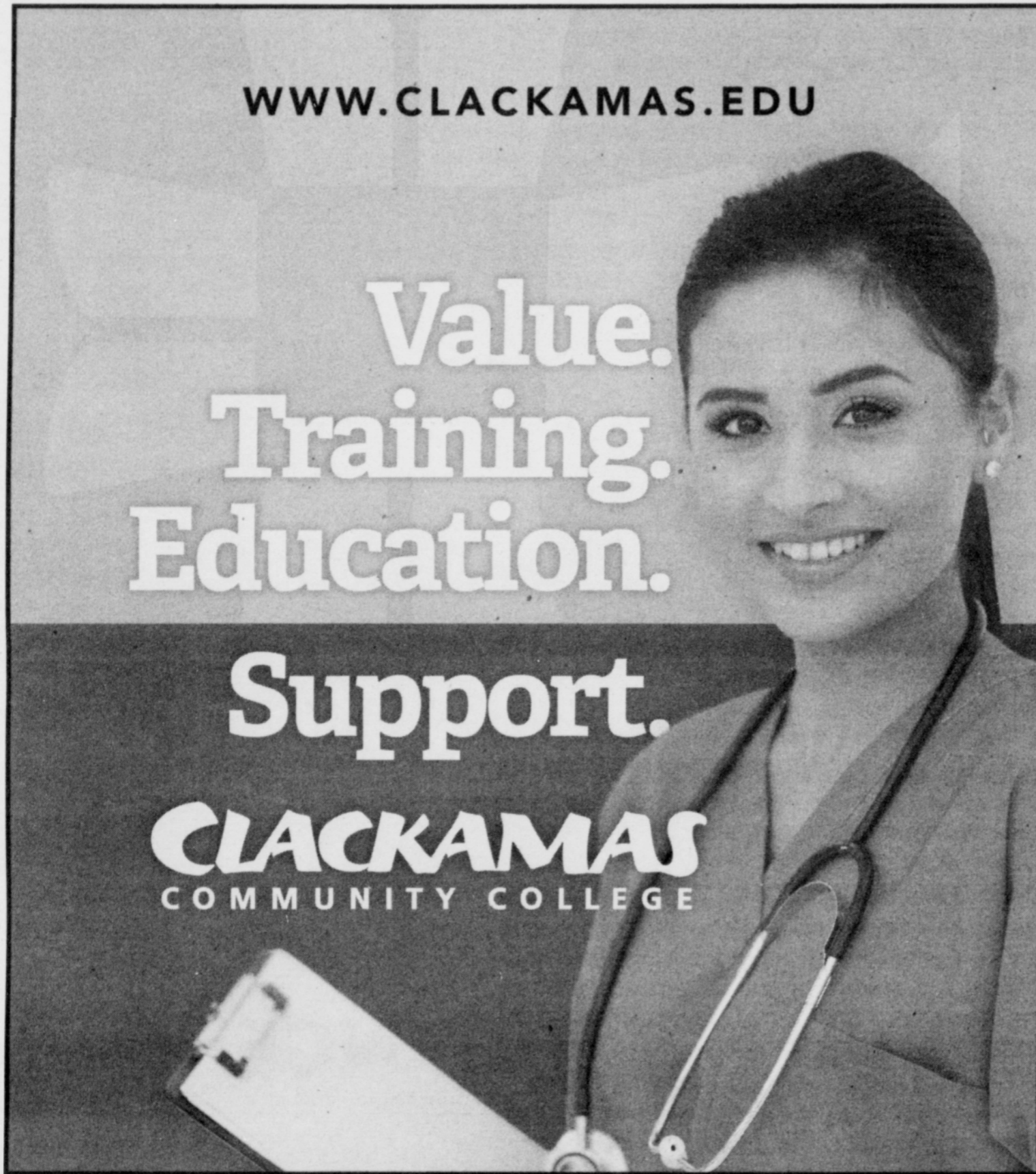
Ballots are scheduled to be mailed to registered voters later this week and must be received at county election offices or an official ballot drop site by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 4.

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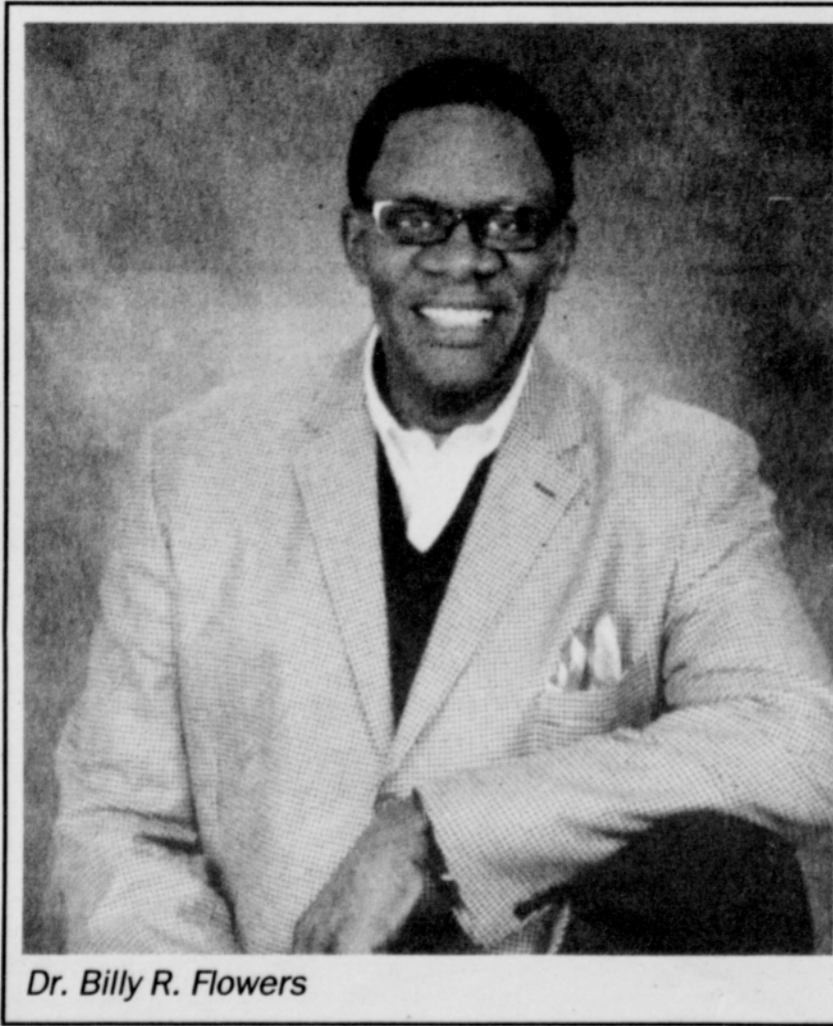
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