

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Supreme Court just another sport event?

Everyone who has been following the story of mandatory drug testing in the Vernonia School District knows the lie, oops..., line about "protecting our athletes." The district has managed to hit a new low, however, with envelopes emblazoned with the Stars and Stripes flying above a slogan saying "U.S. Supreme Court, here we come!"

Instead of using this opportunity to educate, the district has spent more than four years brainwashing students, trivializing the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and, now, equates a hearing in the U.S. Supreme Court with an athletic contest!

This is disgusting and degrading but, unfortunately, not surprising.

It's not surprising because this district has already said Vernonia students use drugs; it has already said that drugs are openly available in town; it has already said that students smoke marijuana in the restaurant across from the school. If you think they haven't made these claims, you need to read the district's responses to the lawsuit filed by the Acton family, and the transcript of trial testimony.

Instead of educating, this school district trivializes the foundations of our country. It's obvious they are willing to destroy those foundations in favor of a world of blind, unquestioning conformity and, no, it's not because some students used drugs; there are ways to deal with that, as other school districts have shown.

This district's mandatory, suspicionless drug testing policy was started because a few high school teachers couldn't maintain discipline and the administration didn't support those who tried.

There was no concern for athletes. If there had been, the tests would have included steroids, but they didn't. If there was real concern for the students, the tests would have included alcohol, but they didn't.

How many thousands of dollars that could have been used for education, have been wasted on this policy? What if that money had been used to beef up instruction in some neglected course—like the Constitution? And how much is it going to cost the taxpayers when the district's insurance rates jump because the insurance company has been taking care of this legal defense?

Why are some students going to Washington, D.C.? Not because it's educational, no. The superintendent has openly said it's great "propaganda". That's why only those who support drug testing were selected. Independent thinkers need not apply.

Sadly, this whole situation came about not to protect athletes or any other students, but to protect a few teachers and administrators who lacked the courage to tell students that inappropriate behavior would not be accepted.

These few teachers and administrators would rather lie and subvert the foundations of our democratic way of life, than accept responsibility for doing the job they were, and in some cases still are, paid to do. No matter what the eventual outcome, their behavior is worse than any of the students.



The Josi Report

By Rep. Tim Josi
Oregon Representative, District 2

Last Monday [March 13, 1995], hundreds of opponents and proponents of Ballot Measure 18, the provision passed last November that bans certain hunting practices in the taking of bear and cougar, descended on the Capitol. In an emotional afternoon of testimony before the Subcommittee on Agriculture and Forestry on HB 2584, which repeals the new law, committee members heard three solid hours of testimony supporting HB 2584.

Instead of using one of the customary ways of calling on witnesses, first come, first heard; those that traveled the farthest speak first; or a balanced approach of one pro, then one con argument; the committee chairman "stacked" the list of witnesses by first listing the names of people he had contacted before the meeting to testify. During the three hours of this one-sided testimony, the chairman constantly chided the opposition for their requests to be heard. Reluctantly, during the last two hours, he allowed some opponents who had traveled great distances to speak. Regardless of how one feels about this issue, this kind of treatment at the hands of elected officials is unconscionable.

I truly believe that if we, as a nation, are to survive long-term, we must be willing to listen to each other in a respectful manner. If we cannot do that how can we hope to agree on a long term public policy rather than one that swings wildly from one extreme to the other depending on who has the momentary majority?

Take Measure 18, for example; I did not vote for it. We hire competent professionals to staff the Department of Fish and Wildlife to determine a sound wildlife management policy; I do not believe they would institute a policy that was inhumane to animals. Also, one of the Department's goals is to "maintain all species at an optimum level" which would preclude over-hunting. However, at the polls last November, the majority of Oregonians decided to take control of certain wildlife management practices by limiting the use of bait in hunting bears and the hunting of bear and cougar with hounds.

Now, some people who opposed this measure are claiming it should be repealed for a variety of reasons. They run the gamut from public safety, to hunting with hounds keeps kids out of gangs and teaches responsibility, to it's city vs. rural dwellers, to the voters were fed lies by out-of-state interests during the election, to this is the first step in an attempt to stop all hunting.

The bottom line is, even if all of this is true—and we do not know that for sure—we cannot ignore the vote in November. Even if the majority of Legislators may wish to overturn this new law, we must not; for if we do, we will be destroying the initiative process. Then why stop with Measure 18? What other initiative results do "we" dislike?

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The Saxe

By Dale Webb, member
Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

In this column I would like to lay out what is on the agenda for the Nehalem Valley "Ikes" for the upcoming year.

Our first major undertaking of the year involves riparian-area tree-planting projects. We have five project sites slated for planting this year, which will encompass 11,300 feet of riparian area. This program is just getting started and is likely to get bigger on an annual basis. Approximately 2650 trees will be planted. The trees were purchased by the Izaak Wal-

ton League, but we hope to secure a grant to recover our costs and finance future projects since our chapter is not able to fund this project on an ongoing basis. The purpose of the project is to reestablish a conifer component to the existing hardwood riparian area, which is inadequate to provide shade for the streams. This, obviously, is a long term project with a long term goal.

Our biggest project this year is going to be at Cedar Ridge on Rock Creek. It is located at the former Perry's Sport camp now owned by Larry Steele. This project will involve using en-

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