

# The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly, on the first and third Thursdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen. Phone/Fax: 503-429-9410, e-mail: noni@vernonia.com

## Opinion

### Why should we vote yes on Measure 28?

1. Because it costs more to house mentally ill people in prison than in a safe group home.
2. Because it costs more to keep an elderly person in a care facility than in their own home.
3. Because our state police have already gone from over 600 officers to less than 400.
4. Because the Oregon Health Plan costs less than taxpayer provided emergency medical care.
5. Because a good education is absolutely vital to our children's future.
6. Because we don't like being number one in the U.S. in the number of hungry people per capita.
7. Because we don't want tuition so high that most of us can't afford to send our kids to college.
8. Because we don't like closing juvenile facilities.
9. Because we know that Head Start is important.
10. Because we know our children are better off in after school programs than watching TV at home.
11. Because we don't like being number one in having the shortest school year in the nation.
12. Because we know schools are important.
13. Because we want adequate public safety.
14. Because we care about our neighbors.
15. Because we want a school nurse funded by public health.
16. Because we don't want to lose the drug/alcohol counselor at school.
17. Because we don't think public employees are our enemies.
18. Because we have the highest unemployment in the nation.
19. Because people in need should not be harmed even more.
20. Because our gutless legislature needs to be reminded that good citizenship requires behavior based on good principles.
21. Because most of us can afford to pay \$50.00 to \$100.00 per year for three years and if our taxable income, not gross income, is \$20,000 to \$50,000 per year, that is all we will pay.
22. Because we want a healthy future and do not want to further diminish the quality of life in our communities and in our state.
23. Because it is the right thing to do.



## Opinion

Under President Bush, we have been watching a federal government that throws people in prison without charges, that makes public policy but doesn't want the public to know who is involved in developing the policy, that tosses out treaties without revealing any reason supporting that action, and that frequently doesn't even want the people to know where our elected officials are.

That behavior shows contempt for the electorate and makes many people wonder whether Bush's presidency has become a dictatorship.

Though on a smaller scale, the City of Vernonia has recently been given reason to wonder about that same tendency on the part of the Oregon Department of Forestry.

An article on page one tells of the city's surprise on learning that the Oregon Department of Forestry has been working for three years on the development of a large property exchange with a private timber company, and that some of the property includes a vital part of the Rock Creek watershed, which provides the city's drinking water. After three years, the city was informed shortly before the end of the comment period.

Even worse, was ODF's failure to inform the city when they sold the timber in the watershed and developed a clearcut harvest plan on headwaters with steep slopes.

A meeting with the ODF forester revealed that he didn't know who would do the logging, who would provide oversight, or even whether there would be any oversight.

It is obvious that ODF failed to consider the potential health and economic impact on Vernonia. In addition to the need for a safe drinking water source, anything that contaminates the water in any way must be decontaminated by the city—and steep slopes that have been clear cut are known to slide.

When ODF's activities impact people, they must inform those people. Failure to do so—especially over a period of several years—shows not simply an inadequate process, but contempt for the taxpayers who pay their salaries. It is inexcusably dictatorial.

**"Secrecy and a free, democratic government don't mix."**

**—President Harry S. Truman**