

Issues & Actions

Fall & Winter, 2000

No on 92 & 98

Oregon Action urges you to vote NO on Measures 92 & 98!

Measures 92 & 98 are unnecessary and unfair.

Measures 92 and 98 are unnecessary because union members, public and private, easily can opt out of political participation and thousands do.

Measures 92 & 98 are unfair because they single out one group of people in order to deprive them of their political rights as Oregonians. They pretend to be about saving tax money when they really are about silencing Bill Sizemore's opponents. Sizemore is so afraid of democracy, he's asking Oregonians to eliminate it. In fact, these measures will cost taxpayers money. Legal experts are predicting enormous expenses to defend these poorly written and far-reaching measures.

Measures 92 & 98 are unfair to Oregonians because they pretend to be about campaign finance reform when they could kill campaign finance reform. Measure 98, in particular, threatens Measure 6, the real reform plan, the campaign finance reform plan Oregon Action members have spent months working to put on the ballot. Sizemore has publicly stated that if 98 passed, Measure 6 could not be enacted. Legal opinions differ, but why risk our hard work on an unfair, unnecessary and mean-spirited ballot measure?

Bill Sizemore wants Oregonians to think unions - in other words, working people like you and me - are a threat to democracy. Oregon Action thinks corporate PACs are a bigger threat. Compare these two Oregon PACs and decide for yourself.

Name of the PAC	CAPE/OPEU (labor)	Victory PAC (business)
Total Contributed	\$318,784	\$468,390
Contributors of \$100 or less	100%	0%
Contributors 101 to 999	0%	0%
Contributors 1000 to 9999	0%	20.5%
Contributors 10,000 or more	0%	79.5%

OPEU helped win a minimum wage increase for all Oregonians. Victory PAC members have worked to undo the minimum wage in the legislature. Corporate PACs like Victory PAC outspend labor PACs like OPEU/COPE by 4 to 1 in Oregon and 13 to 1 nationwide. Sizemore wants to silence the PACs that speak up for working people so the only voice voters will ever hear is the voice of corporate America and the folks who do their bidding - folks like Bill Sizemore.

Vote NO on Measures 92 and 98 because not only are they unnecessary and unfair. They are undemocratic and un-American.

OA Wins Reforms in Food Stamp Program

Nine months of grassroots organizing has paid off as OA members successfully pressed the State of Oregon to remove application barriers for food stamp recipients and to agree to increase enrollment in the food stamp program by 12,000 families by the end of the year. Adult and Family Services, the state agency responsible for the food stamp program, made these and other commitments to OA

and allied organizations this summer after months of actions and negotiations.

The Rural Organizing Project, CAUSA, and the Oregon Center for Policy Priorities were key collaborators with OA in forcing the state to improve its food stamp program and led the effort to get the state to use certain exemptions to expand food stamp eligibility for over 50,000 Oregon families.

Continued on page 2.

Yes on 6

Oregon Action urges you to vote YES on Measure 6!

We did it! After working with other good government groups like the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, Rural Organizing Project and the American Association of University Women, Oregon Action members helped gather the signatures that put real campaign finance reform on the ballot. Now we can complete our work by voting YES on 6!

OA members have given their time and their money to win campaign finance reform for the last several years. Our work will come to fruition when Measure 6 passes this November.

What will Measure 6 do?

1. **Measure 6 helps restore democracy to the people.** By limiting campaign spending and providing qualified candidates with the same amount of money, Measure 6 allows candidates to compete on the basis of their qualifications and ideas, not their bank accounts.

Continued on page 2.



OA members deliver Hunger Pangs report to AFS and demand reform.

Yes on 6 continued from p. 1

2. Measure 6 would level the playing field of Oregon politics. Because Measure 6 limits spending and provides qualified candidates with the same amount of money, it creates a level playing field, so that fewer incumbents run unopposed and good people without money or connections to special interests can still run competitively for office.

3. Measure 6 will help reduce the power of wealthy special interest groups. Because it provides public financing to those candidates who do not accept any private contributions during the campaign, these candidates won't have to answer to big contributors once elected.

4. Measure 6 will work. It is already working elsewhere. Our initiative would create a system that is similar to one that has been passed in four states (Maine, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Vermont) in which voters can now choose from a wider selection of candidates in elections, and candidates are focusing more attention on issues than on raising money.

Some of the best arguments for Measure 6 were made by its opposition. According to Betty Earls, who runs the political activities of Associated Oregon Industries - a big business PAC that includes some of Oregon's top political contributors, "The measure isn't going to put our PAC out of business, but it's going to tend to make PACs irrelevant." We sure hope so!

Another Salem lobbyist that opposes the measure said it would give an advantage to groups with volunteer power over business-backed candidates. We sure hope so!

Measure 6 has the support of Republicans and Democrats, labor unions and environmental groups, small business owners and some big corporate executives as well. Every living former Secretary of State (Mark Hatfield, Clay Myers, Norma Paulus, Barbara Roberts, Phil Keisling) and the current Secretary of State Bill Bradbury endorse Measure 6.

OA members helped write Measure 6. OA members helped get Measure 6 on the ballot. Now OA members can help pass Measure 6 by voting YES on 6 this November. Let's finish the job! 1

Oregon Action Will Benefit From Vermont Living Wage Campaign Leadership

Ellen Kayler, Director of the Vermont Peace & Justice Center, who directed the successful campaign for the first-in-the-nation's comprehensive living wage legislation will come to Oregon to meet with Oregon living wage leaders and discuss the lessons from their groundbreaking campaign. On November 30-December 1, Oregon Action will be hosting two meetings in the state to bring living wage activists, community groups, and political leaders together to hear Vermont's experiences in building local living wage coalitions and a landmark legislative effort.

With more than fifty US cities passing living wage ordinances to insure that city workers and contracted employees are paid a decent living wage, the next step for the living wage movement will be to bring together local coalitions to address the need for living wage jobs across the state. Oregon Action leaders in the Rogue Valley who have been working for living wage ordinances in Medford and Ashland have set meetings in Medford and Eugene to start a statewide dialogue on how best to address the lack of decent paying jobs throughout our disparate communities.

The Vermont bill is a culmination of several years of research and organizing through out the state by the Peace & Justice Center. The Center conducted the Vermont Job Gap Study similar to Oregon Action's Jobs Gap Study as an educational tool to build the base for living wage work and provide accurate information about the need for more living wage jobs.

The community meetings with Ellen Kayler are set for Thursday evening at 7:00 in Medford and for Friday afternoon in Eugene at 2:30 PM. Anyone interested in attending these meeting to build statewide living wage legislation are encouraged to call for meeting details at the Oregon Action offices in Medford 541/772-4029 or Portland 503/ 282-6588 e-mail richrohde@aol.com.

OA Wins Food Stamp Reforms

continued from p. 1



OA member Moureen Rosera at AFS rally.

"The grassroots pressure really made a difference," said Moureen Rosera, an OA leader from Portland who was active in the campaign. "Our effort was also helped by the publicity around Oregon's status as the hungriest state".

A key tool in getting AFS to acknowledge that the food stamp application process discouraged many eligible, hungry families from applying was a report produced by OA which documented the experience of twenty-five Oregonian families in applying for food stamps. Called "Hunger Pangs", the report revealed numerous ways in which food stamp applicants get lost in the application process. The report was released in a demonstration outside a

Portland AFS office and generated statewide press coverage.

Some of the changes agreed to by AFS included shortening the sixteen page application form to four pages, adopting a food stamp recipient's bill of rights, consistently providing expedited service for families in crisis, providing necessary resources to non-English speaking families, and developing a statewide outreach program to improve enrollment.

This fall, OA is conducting intensive outreach to the five hundred families that were recruited to the campaign to inform them of their expanded rights, to make sure that the state is implementing the changes it agreed to, and to discuss other issues facing low-income Oregonians.

"We anticipate that by next year, Oregon will no longer be the hungriest state in the country," said Rosera. If her prediction becomes true, it will because of the efforts of OA and its allies.

You can download the Hunger Pangs report from our website at www.oregonaction.org.

WE'LL BE IN TOUCH

As part of our effort to keep you up-to-date on Oregon Action's activities, one of our phone staff will call you in the next few months to give you the latest news and ask for your support. Please take a moment at that time to hear what we're up to, renew your membership dues, and volunteer to take the action steps we're asking members to take in order to have an impact on the important issues we're tackling.

Health Care Campaign Updates

In the late '80's and '90's, the members of Oregon Fair Share - Oregon Action's predecessor - were leaders in the fight for universal health care. They led efforts in Oregon to press for a national health care program, and were instrumental in pressing our state to adopt the Oregon Health Plan.

The dreams and hopes of those members have clearly not been achieved, and health care is less accessible and more expensive than it was back then. That is why OA members are eager to step back into the battle by getting to work on some specific health issues, in the hope of rebuilding a movement for a national health care program step by step.

Prescription Drug Crisis

Clearly the nation faces a prescription drug crisis. Uninsured seniors and other Americans pay much more for prescription drugs than HMO's, insurance companies, and the federal government. Discriminatory drug pricing affects over 50 million Americans, including those who have no health insurance whatsoever. Pharmaceutical companies are earning obscene profits and the industry ranks #1 on all three Fortune 500 indexes - return on revenue, assets, and equity.

Clearly the cost of prescription drugs has become an election issue. But will the candidates act on their promises after November?

OA leaders have begun an effort to mobilize our members to get involved in this important issue, beginning with a letter-writing campaign. We're urging our members to write their congressman, stressing the following talking points:

* The cost of prescription drugs is not just an election issue. We will hold you accountable to support real prescription drug reform if you are elected.

* We want a prescription drug program that is provided through Medicare. That way, the program will be universally accessible to all seniors, we won't have to create a new bureaucracy, we can keep HMO's out of the program altogether, and the federal government can use the size of the Medicare program to negotiate the best possible drug prices.

Send us a copy of your letter, or email it to us at info@oregonaction.org.

OA Releases Prescription Drug Report

As a part of our efforts to educate the public about the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs and pressure our elected officials to take action, OA released a report on October 11, 2000, on the cost of prescription drugs and the effect the costs are having on families. Entitled "Impossible Choices", the report was prepared by US Action, a national coalition of citizen action organizations, and released across the country by its affiliates.

The lengthy report details the rising cost of prescription drugs and shows how many Americans, particularly senior citizens, are being forced to choose between paying for drugs and paying for other basic necessities such as food and housing.

The report is available online at www.oregonaction.org

Congress Proposes Reducing Funding For Kids Health: OA Members Respond

Congress has proposed rescinding funding for the State's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), state programs that provide health coverage to low-income working families that make too much money to qualify for Medicaid. Forty states that have dragged their feet in implementing their CHIP programs and failed to use their full CHIP allocations stand to lose a total of \$1.9 billion. Oregon stands to lose \$18.2 million in children's health insurance funds.

Oregon could lose \$18.2 million in children's health care funds.

OA members are responding by organizing a statewide letter-writing campaign and urging members to write their congresspersons. Our message is simple: we're urging our members of congress to maintain full funding for

states' CHIP programs and to work to insure that our state doesn't lose over \$18 million that is available to provide health coverage to Oregon's children.

For fact sheets on this issue, sample letters to congresspersons, and addresses for your elected officials, visit our web page www.oregonaction.org

Oregon Action is a statewide, non-partisan network of people and organizations dedicated to economic justice for all through building grassroots power.

Statewide/Portland
Jim Fleischmann, Executive Director
Joe Nowinsky, Organizer
Kate Titus, Organizer
Missy Rohs, Office Manager
3009 NE Emerson
Portland OR 97211
503/282-6588
Fax: 503/282-7266
E-Mail: info@oregonaction.org

Rogue Valley
Rich Rohde, Organizer
33 North Central Street, #303
Medford, OR 97501
541/772-4029
Fax: 541/772-0355
E-Mail: RichRohde@aol.com

Web Site:
<http://www.oregonaction.org>

Board of Directors
Ruth Anderson, President
George Fence, Vice President
Samantha Watterburg - Sec./Treas.
Steve Barnes
Cindy McMurphy
John Stalter
Marty Mosenthein
Sean Weathers

Electronic OA

We'd like to get your email address. No, we won't send you junk, irrelevant material, or solicitations. We will send you exciting issue updates and interesting web links on issues like health care, living wages, jobs and the economy, and much more. And we will inform you about pending legislative and congressional actions that could effect your life and your pocketbook. Simply send us an email at subscribe@oregonaction.org asking to be placed on our listserv.

You can also keep up with our work by visiting www.oregonaction.org. You will find interesting links, fact sheets, reports, and a host of other information that you'll find informative, stimulating and useful.

We cannot send newsletters as often as we would like, but we can keep you up-to-date with our website and listserv.

Leadership Training at OA

"The leadership training we attended in Easton, WA, was like nothing else we have ever experienced. We think that it was a very good program because it explained the need for everyone to take part for the fight for human rights. No longer can people sit on the sidelines and wait for change. It is the responsibility of everyone to take an active part.

History has shown that any active change has only occurred after people have become involved. We must write our own history and not let what happens to us be only the result of what others have done."

Rose and Tony Spears



Rose and Tony Spears recently attended a NWFCO training in Easton, WA. OA is a founding member of NWFCO. They are pictured here with their grandson.

Oregon Action Research

- Impossible Choices:** The effect of prescription drug costs on families.
 - Hunger Pangs:** OA tested the Oregon Food Stamp program by following 25 applicants through the process. This report identified barriers and led to major reforms in the food stamp system.
 - Undermining Democracy:** A useful tool in the campaign for clean money campaign finance reform, Undermining Democracy follows more than 3 dozen bills through the 99 Legislative Session and clearly demonstrates the link between campaign contributions and public policy.
 - Oregon Job Gap Report:** Prepared by the Northwest Policy Center and directed by OA's Job Gap steering committee, this is the definitive study on what is a livable wage in Oregon.
- Our reports are available online at www.oregonaction.org. You can purchase a hard copy for \$5 from the Portland office.



Oregon Action
3009 NE Emerson Street
Portland Oregon 97211-6905

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Portland, OR
Permit No. 1620

**OA Endorsements
Yes on 6!
No on 92/98!**



Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Email: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

I want to be a member of Oregon Action! Suggested contribution is \$24 -50 per year.
(Additional donations gladly accepted!)

I want to volunteer with Oregon Action!

Send contribution & correspondence to:
Oregon Action 3009 NE Emerson Portland, Oregon 97211

Because Oregon Action does grassroots lobbying, contributions are not tax-deductible. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to Fair Share Research & Education Fund, the 501(c)(3) affiliate of Oregon Action.