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## **Oregon Issues Forums (OIF)**

is a non-partisan program of public discussion on important challenges facing Oregon. The forums offer citizens and communities throughout the state an opportunity to examine public issues, consider options, and work together toward a common ground of action. OIF does not advocate any specific policy or point of view; instead it seeks to provide a way for Oregonians to work together productively. For more information about OIF, call Judy Burrige in Albany (503) 967-3871, Paul Sunderland in Portland (503) 725-2000, or Bruce Weber in Corvallis (503) 737-1432, or write to Oregon Issues Forums, OSU Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331.

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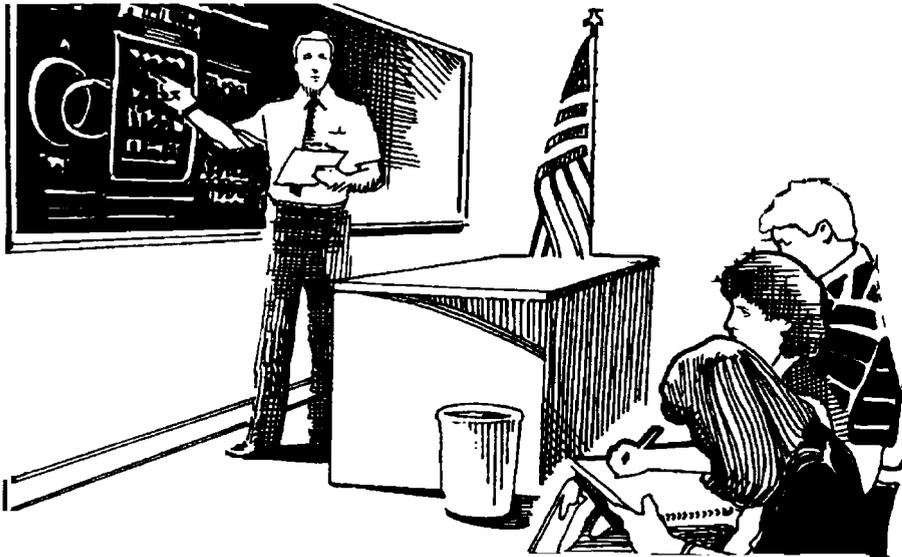








“Advocates of traditional public schools . . . are alarmed by the cuts in educational funding at all levels since 1990, when Measure 5, the property tax limitation initiative, was passed by Oregon’s voters.”



educational opportunities. Thus they would emphasize the need for support services in housing, health care, nutrition, abuse prevention, and other forms of early intervention.

Public Responsibility advocates also would argue that state government has a role in establishing guidelines for what constitutes an educated citizen. Thus they might emphasize the need for public schools to implement Oregon’s landmark education legislation, House Bill 3565. Passed in 1991, this bill establishes the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) as the benchmarks of a student’s progress toward graduation.

These certificates will be phased in gradually. The implications for curriculum are being discussed in

schools throughout the state, as educators consider how best to meet the new standards, which will replace the traditional transcript and diploma. Both Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility advocates would see this legislation as an example of how state government can establish general guidelines for local school districts to implement.

In addition, Shared Responsibility advocates would look toward partnerships with the private sector and with local communities to meet the goals of educational reform. For example, Roosevelt Middle School in Eugene requires every eighth grader to arrange a 6-week mentorship with a member of the community. The student must line up a mentor, spend time at an organization, government office, or place of business, learn how it

functions, contribute to its success, and report on the experience.

This mentorship program, to which community members donate their time for free, is the result of a partnership between the school and local residents. Advocates argue that it benefits both parties by teaching students how to function in the world and teaching the community how students can contribute their talents. They see mentorship programs as forging links between schools and communities without adding expenses to already strained budgets.

### Objections to traditional public schools

Opponents to traditional public schools, including many Individual Responsibility advocates, would dispute the claim that Oregon’s schools are the envy of the nation. They might argue that although our students score well on the SAT compared to those in other states where large numbers take the test, Oregon’s students are outscored by students in many other states.

More importantly, the average scores across the nation are significantly lower than those earned by students in many other nations. If Oregon’s work force is to compete successfully in an international arena, they argue, Oregon needs to improve its system of education. Individual Responsibility advocates would argue that as long as public schools have a monopoly on school

“Alternative public schools always reflect the choices of those who participate in running and attending them.”

funding there will be no real incentive to provide consumers (parents and students) with a better product.

From a different perspective, Public Responsibility advocates might argue that mentorships in public schools sound like a great idea until we think about making sure that every child finds a mentor or that every portfolio gets the attention it deserves. They would point out that someone needs to coordinate every mentorship program to make sure that all students, regardless of parental involvement, find mentors, secure transportation to the mentorship, and follow through with the reporting process. Teachers already overburdened with large classes and few resources can't be expected to take on these extra responsibilities. To these critics, a mentorship program winds up benefiting students whose parents are able to help them succeed, while it penalizes students who lack these extracurricular resources. Unintentionally, but inevitably, it exacerbates inequality.

### Alternative Public Schools

Alternative public schools are funded in the normal way and subject to district and state requirements for teacher certification, curriculum, and enrollment policies. Although these schools vary a great deal in their approaches to learning, they all

tend to involve high levels of participation from teachers, parents, and students.

The focus may be on academic basics, performing arts, math and science, maritime life, progressive education, a foreign language, or some other area of mutual interest; however, alternative public schools always reflect the choices of those who participate in running and attending them. According to their advocates, they achieve much of the diversity possible in private schools without undercutting funding for public schools, undermining the certification process for teachers, or excluding students who can't come up with private school tuition.

Recognizing the need to improve traditional public schools, Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility advocates generally favor establishing alternative public schools.

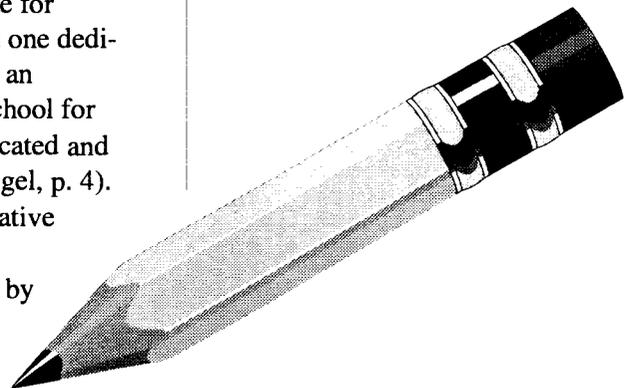
As an example, advocates of alternative public schools would point to Public School District #4 in East Harlem. In 1973 the Board of Education, desperate for improvement, allowed one dedicated teacher to create an experimental public school for “chronically undereducated and troublesome kids” (Fligel, p. 4).

Several other alternative public schools soon followed, each shaped by the concerns of teachers and parents.

With these new schools flourishing, the district decided to take the unprecedented step of permitting parents and children to choose whichever school within the district they wanted to attend.

The results have been miraculous. In a district larger than the school systems in many American cities (15,000 students in 30 schools), in 1973 only 16 percent of the students were reading at grade level; by 1987 62 percent were reading at grade level. The “Miracle in East Harlem” has gained well-deserved national recognition, even as teachers, parents, and students continue to develop a network of traditional and alternative public schools.

In the Midwest, advocates of this approach would point to Minnesota, among the first states to adopt legislation in the area of school choice (Nathan, p. 683). There more than 14 percent of Minnesota's 786,000 K-12 students actively selected their schools in 1992-93 (Nathan, p. 683).





By 1993 alternative public schools could be found in one-fourth of the state's districts, both urban and rural. The math-science magnet school in Cyrus, Minnesota, for example, is an alternative public school run by a committee of teachers in that rural community. In 1993 it was named by Redbook magazine as one of the nation's 51 best public elementary schools (Nathan, p. 684).

In Oregon a number of communities have alternative public schools. In Eugene, for example, Eastside Elementary School was established in the 1970s when a group of parents and teachers decided that the community needed a small elementary school that emphasized responsible decision making. In 1987 and 1991, fifth

graders at that school scored highest in the state in verbal skills.

Many Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility advocates see alternative public schools as an excellent opportunity to improve education in Oregon by allowing teachers, parents, and students to work together to develop schools that best serve their evolving needs.

### Objections to alternative public schools

Objections to alternative public schools can be raised from two directions: from Individual Responsibility advocates, who would rather see the creative energy that goes into them invested in charter schools or voucher programs that enable more children to attend private schools; and from Public Responsibility advocates, who see alternative public schools as *de facto* private schools.

Individual Responsibility advocates would argue that real competition from outside the public school system would be more effective than the illusion of competition from within a system shackled by bureaucratic impediments to innovation. They would point out that as long as school boards and legislatures retain control over funding decisions, choice will not enter the picture for either parents or students.

Many Public Responsibility advocates also would object to alternative public schools, but for

different reasons. While they might see them as an improvement on traditional schools, they would argue that the fraction of students attending alternative public schools nationwide (probably no larger than 5 percent) is too small to make them anything more than *ad hoc* private schools within a public school system.

They also would point out that the students in these schools tend to be children of parents who have the time to transport their charges across town, volunteer at school, or attend conferences, meetings, and events.

Because they lead lives of privilege, these parents perpetuate opportunities for their own children. According to critics, alternative public schools allow them to do this without having to resort to private schools. Why should the public school system create a special layer of schools for the privileged?

### Vouchers

Vouchers are allocations of funds that individual parents can use to pay for private school tuition for their children. Voucher advocates argue that the public school system is inefficient, wasteful, and unsuccessful. They point to numerous studies that show declines in standardized test scores despite steady increases in public funding for education.

“Let schools compete for students. When they do, they will discover that either they will have to produce better results or fold.”

The solution, according to them, is to subject schools to the same market forces that have led to success for many American businesses. Let schools compete for students. When they do, they will discover that either they will have to produce better results or fold. Some will adapt, while others die off, in a natural process of selection that results in better education at a lower cost. Many Individual Responsibility advocates would agree with these arguments and support vouchers as a way to reform education.

Voucher systems come in two versions: publicly funded and privately funded. In the public approach, school districts set aside whatever funds have been allocated for each student. Parents who qualify and want to enroll their children in a private nonsectarian school can use the state's allocation to offset tuition costs. In the private approach, the funds are provided by private donors such as corporations and foundations. Parents who qualify usually receive vouchers worth half the cost of tuition at a wide range of private schools, both sectarian and nonsectarian.

Both systems can be illustrated by the experience of Milwaukee. In 1990 Wisconsin State Representative Annette “Polly” Williams succeeded in establishing the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), a government-

funded voucher program for low-income families. In 1993–94 it provided \$2,987 per student at 13 nonreligious private schools, as well as public funding for transportation. In 1994–95 it was expected to enroll up to 1.5 percent of Milwaukee's public school children in these private schools (McGroarty, p. 56).

Milwaukee also has the privately funded Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE), an outgrowth of an existing foundation to support Catholic schools: the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Education Foundation. Major donors include an insurance company and a power company. In 1993–94 PAVE provided over 2,000 vouchers averaging \$550 for elementary students and another 400 averaging \$1,321 for high school students at a wide range of private elementary and high schools (86 schools).

Evaluating these programs is difficult, since they haven't been around very long. However, according to a researcher at the University of Wisconsin, parental approval ratings in the public program have been above 95 percent each year. The evaluations of the private program have been similarly positive, with “the overwhelming majority” of parents “very satisfied.”

From the point of view of an Individual Responsibility advocate, both of these approaches show promise. To them, the privately

funded voucher system is superior, however, because it faces fewer regulatory hurdles. Also, with private funding, the private schools themselves avoid the risk of government interference (Reason Foundation, p. 4). Privately funded voucher programs now operate in 12 cities, including Indianapolis, San Antonio, and Minneapolis. Advocates of privately funded vouchers recommend that “state legislatures grant tax credits to organizations providing tuition vouchers, and reduce business regulations affecting private schools” (Reason Foundation, p. 6).

Publicly funded voucher programs have been less widespread, partly because of state legislatures' desire to place “severe limitations on the transfer of public money to the private sector” (Corwin, p. 69). In general these public voucher programs have applied only to low-income families in large cities with poor public schools.

Public voucher proposals have been defeated in several states, including Oregon (1990). Voucher advocates are being taken very seriously nationwide, however, as indicated by recent votes in Pennsylvania (1991), where voucher legislation passed in the Senate but not in the House, and in Arizona (1994), where such legislation passed in the House, falling only three votes short in the Senate. In fact, supporters are quick to argue

that if it weren't for the concerted efforts of the "public education establishment" (including teachers' unions, which, according to the Reason Foundation, spent \$15 million to defeat it), a voucher initiative would have passed in California in 1993.

Advocates of both publicly funded and privately funded voucher systems see them as the best way America's public school systems can be held accountable for their failure to educate our citizens. According to them, by giving parents a choice about where they send their children, these voucher systems force public schools to improve or shut down.

### Objections to vouchers

Those who object to publicly funded vouchers, including many Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility advocates, see them as a threat to funding in an already under-funded educational system. They also point out that in Milwaukee, where both publicly and privately funded voucher systems exist, there have been no measurable improvements in student test scores.

They argue that there never will be enough private schools in the United States to accommodate more than a small fraction of the nation's students and that the lack of certification for private school

teachers could undermine quality. Furthermore, according to these critics, many of the elements of choice that make vouchers attractive to parents can be incorporated in alternative public schools. All this being the case, critics argue that we need to maintain a strong public education system. They believe that publicly funded vouchers would do more harm than good.

A 1991 Gallup poll and a 1992 Carnegie Foundation survey both indicated that the vast majority of parents did not think their children should be sent to private schools at public expense (Corwin, p. 69). According to voucher opponents, this is why the 1993 California voucher initiative, which was defeated by a margin of more than two to one, was the 19th such defeat since 1966 (McGroarty, p. 53). This is also why in Oregon, supporters of a school voucher initiative for 1994 could not even gather enough valid signatures to get it on the ballot.

Opponents to vouchers would be less bothered by a privately funded voucher system, figuring that it would not be likely to grow big enough to make much of an impact on public education. Shared Responsibility advocates might even see it as an opportunity to foster cooperative ventures between citizens, businesses, and communities.

Still, both Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility



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“Charter schools place decisions in the hands of experts in management and teaching.”

advocates would make some of the same arguments as above about the lack of teacher certification in private schools and the lack of measurable improvements in student performance. They also might consider tax advantages for contributors to privately funded voucher systems a drain on state tax revenues that might be needed for other purposes.

### Charter Schools

Charter schools are public or private schools that have been chartered, i.e., given permission to operate, by local school boards or state legislatures. This movement began in Minneapolis, where in 1991 the legislature authorized up to 8 charter public schools (increased to 20 in 1993).

Charter schools also have been approved by legislatures in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Wisconsin.

Under this system, “certified teachers are given the opportunity to create new and distinctive schools,” free from “thousands of rules” yet “accountable for student results” (Nathan, p. 687).

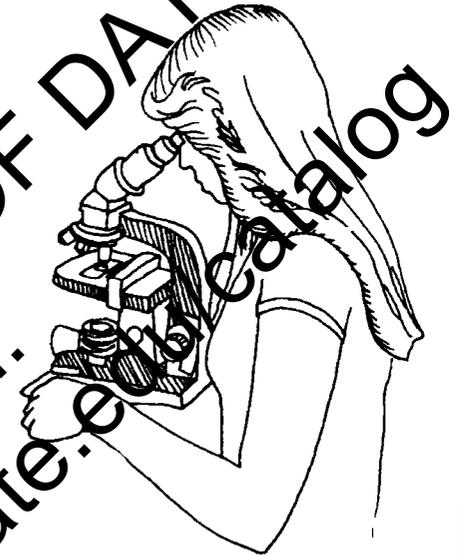
These privately managed schools allow those who run them to offer a wide variety of approaches to teaching, unencumbered by many of the regulations

that restrict conventional public schools. Charter schools remain public, in the sense that they are paid for out of taxes, they do not screen students for achievement, and they are answerable to the school boards that charter them.

The state to issue the most charters has been California, which in 1992 set the limit at 100. In 1993 Massachusetts turned over 15 public schools to private management, “including the first schools to be run by the for-profit Edison Project” (New York Times, March 19, 1994). Baltimore turned over nine of the city’s public schools to Educational Alternatives, Inc., a Minnesota-based firm (Christian Science Monitor, October 28, 1994), and Hartford hired the same firm to manage its public schools (New York Times, November 12, 1994).

This quickly growing movement, according to its advocates, shows that there is a reasonable alternative to a standardized public education system. For example, the Jersey City, New Jersey schools went into state receivership because of poor academic performance, despite spending “an eye-popping \$9,200 per public school pupil” (McGroarty, p. 56).

Under circumstances such as these, argue charter advocates, everything is to be gained by turning to charter schools. For several reasons, they offer the best



available alternative to the present educational system:

- They place decisions in the hands of experts in management and teaching.
- They avoid bureaucratic red tape.
- They respond to parent preferences.
- They provide a diverse array of schools.
- They respond to communities’ changing needs.
- They apply efficient approaches to allocating educational resources.

According to Individual Responsibility advocates, charter schools epitomize the advantages of privatization. They allow governments to “contract out” services that can be delivered more

effectively and cheaply through private enterprise, while at the same time maintaining oversight and accountability. If they weren't a good idea, 10 states wouldn't have approved them since 1990.

### Objections to charter schools

In 1990 "media entrepreneur" Chris Whittle founded the largest charter movement—the "high profile, high risk" Edison Project. He planned to open a vast network of for-profit charter schools in the United States and hired the president of Yale University, Benno Schmidt, to run them.

Critics of charter schools, including many Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility advocates, are quick to point out that Whittle recently went bankrupt, placing the future of the whole enterprise in doubt. According to the New York Times, this is after spending \$40 million since 1991 without opening a single school.

Furthermore, in Baltimore, where nine public schools now are run by the Edison Project's rival, Minnesota-based Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI), "on average students at the privately run EAI schools did a little worse on the standardized tests than their peers in the city's other schools" (Christian Science Monitor).

To critics of charter schools, the whole idea is better in theory than in practice. In reality, they argue, charter schools promise more than they can deliver.

Furthermore, they are skeptical that in the field of education private enterprise can turn the profits necessary to satisfy investors. When even the best private schools now struggle to keep their budgets balanced, it is doubtful that the new educational entrepreneurs can do better (New York Times, November 2, 1994).

Though Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility advocates would be critical of

charter schools, they also would admit that the diversity of choices charter schools promise is a virtue. It stimulates competition, frees educators to try different approaches, and responds to parental concerns.

But they would argue that these results can be achieved through alternative public schools, which do not attempt to turn a profit. Most importantly, critics argue, public education should not be a profit-making enterprise. It belongs to the public, not the private sector. To them, privatization "insulates service providers from the direct political consequences of doing a poor job" (Hanson, p. 84). In doing so it removes from the public arena what should be one of our most pressing public concerns—the education of our children.

In the final days of the 1995 session, the Oregon legislature considered but failed to pass a charter school bill introduced by Representative Patti Milne of Woodburn.

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## Chapter 3

# Some Choices about Public Safety in Oregon

“Between 1992 and 1993, there was nearly a 9 percent increase in arrests for crimes against people in Oregon, and a 5.6 percent increase in crimes against property.”

Oregonians want to improve public safety. Between 1992 and 1993, there was nearly a 9 percent increase in arrests for crimes against people in Oregon, and a 5.6 percent increase in crimes against property, according to the Statistical Analysis Center of the Oregon Criminal Justice Council. Their summaries show that in both categories arrests have increased annually since 1990.

Even taking into consideration population growth, crimes against people have increased since 1990. In 1992, Oregon ranked 29th in population, but 17th in index crimes and 14th in property crimes.

These statistics indicate that compared both to the Oregon of the recent past and to other states, Oregon has a significant crime problem. It should be no surprise, then, that in 1994 the people of Oregon passed three crime-related initiatives, whose cumulative effect is to require more prison facilities. Given this evidence of concern about public safety, it seems appropriate to outline some proposed solutions that help distinguish between the three approaches to government described in Chapter 1.

<sup>1</sup> Index crimes are willful murder, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

## Privatizing Prisons

One way to combat crime is to lock up criminals. By 1988, however, federal and state prisons operated between 67 percent and 72 percent beyond capacity (Chi, p. 70). To relieve this overcrowding, advocates of the Individual Responsibility perspective might support turning to the private sector to expand services and manage correctional facilities (Chi, p. 70).

The private sector has long been involved with prisons. In 1981 in Florida, for example, Prison Rehabilitation Industries and Diversified Enterprises, Inc. (PRIDE) assumed control of all state correctional industries. In 1988 the company made a \$4 million profit and paid 60 percent of inmates' wages to the state to defray correctional costs (Chi, p. 71). Advocates of privatization argue that Oregon would do well to replicate the Florida model when it implements the 1994 voter initiative requiring Oregon's inmates to participate in work programs.

In terms of prison construction, more than a dozen states have used lease-purchase agreements, in which private companies design, finance, construct, and then lease prisons to states. In 1986, for example, Missouri selected two firms to build a 500-bed prison near Potosi, saving \$50 million in state appropriations that would have been needed to construct the facility (Chi, p. 71).



“Private prisons relieve overcrowding. They promote flexibility and efficiency.”

Private industry also has been successful at managing jails in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Pecos, Texas, and Hernando, Florida, where the Nashville-based Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) has been in charge since the mid-1980s (Chi, p. 72).

One of the most successful and promising areas of prison privatization, though, involves a large number of privately owned and operated correctional facilities, from juvenile units, immigrant detention centers, and work-release facilities, to more conventional jails. At the state level, three private minimum-security facilities are operating in California, Florida, and Kentucky (Chi, p. 73).

In 1988 the Texas Board of Corrections interviewed 20 bidders nationwide before it contracted with CCA to build two 500-bed prerelease centers. Once built (through tax-exempt bonds secured by a lease-purchase agreement), Texas paid \$34.79 per inmate a day in a renewable 3-year agreement (Chi, p. 73).

These examples illustrate how widespread prison privatization already has become and how attractive this idea could become to the people of Oregon. As its advocates, its advantages are many:

- Private prisons relieve overcrowding.
- They promote flexibility and efficiency.

- A private contractor can open a prison more quickly than the state can.
- Private financing saves the taxpayers money.

**Objections to private prisons**

Critics of this approach, including many Public Responsibility and Shared Responsibility advocates, observe that since 1985 a number of state and local governments have studied prison privatization, but few have approved it (Chi, p. 75). Many question the profit motive as a reliable goal for a corrections system, which they argue should focus rather on public safety, rehabilitation, and crime prevention. They also question the private sector's untested and long-term claims for profitability, pointing out that several states have backed out of plans to privatize their prisons.

For example, in Tennessee in 1985 the Corrections Corporation of America proposed to take over the whole state correctional system, doubling existing prison space in less than 5 years and managing 4,500 employees. “After a few months of heated debates, the Legislature rejected the takeover bid primarily for philosophical and political reasons” (Chi, p. 72).

Similarly, in 1986 the Pennsylvania Legislature imposed a moratorium on the operation of private prisons (Chi, p. 75). That same year the American Bar Association called for such a

moratorium “until the complex constitutional, statutory and contractual issues” are resolved.

These issues include the following:

- Accountability (holding private providers to acceptable correctional standards)
- Constitutionality (complying with prohibitions against incurring long-term debt without working through state building authorities)
- Values (making sure private providers reflect the values and priorities of society as a whole)

According to critics, prison reform is necessary, but turning prisons over to the private sector is not the solution.

**Private Protection by Uniformed Off-duty Police**

Few people would suggest that we privatize police departments throughout Oregon. Advocates of privatization do suggest, however, that the private sector employ off-duty police to provide additional protection from escalating crime. Since the people’s need for safety dovetails with officers’ need for extra income, they argue, this is a mutually beneficial solution for both consumers and providers of protection. Individual Responsibility advocates would support this line of reasoning.

“In many departments the number of off-duty uniformed officers performing police duties exceeds by a substantial number those officially on duty.”

Hiring off-duty police has become a popular way to increase security in some communities. Contracts can be brokered by individual police departments, as they are in Boston; unions, as they are in Seattle; or the police officers themselves, as they are in a number of cities, including Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Minneapolis.

To allow off-duty uniformed police to be hired by the private sector, however, cities must break away from traditional prohibitions against “moonlighting” tied to 19th century assumptions that police officers should be available around the clock to enforce the law. Even today, “this doctrine remains a cornerstone of American policing” (National Institute of Justice, p. 5).

For example, police in Portland are prohibited from contracting out their services when they are off duty. When Portland merchants want to hire off-duty police, they must turn to outlying communities where such prohibitions have been lifted. Privatization advocates would object to this interference with the laws of supply and demand and point to the scores of other cities throughout the country where such employment has become common.

In 1984, for example, the Oakland, California police department dealt with fear of crime in the central business district “by securing private funding in support of additional foot, mounted, dirtbike,

and Cushman vehicle patrol to augment its police forces in the central district” (National Institute of Justice, p. iv). Private organizations in Boston also have used augmented foot patrol to curb crime.

It is hard to measure the success of these ventures, given the difficulty of attributing decreases in crime to uniformed off-duty police rather than to the on-duty police in the same area. Private agencies that employ these officers, however, are sufficiently satisfied with the results to continue the practice. In fact, in many departments the number of off-duty uniformed officers performing police duties exceeds “by a substantial number those officially on duty” (National Institute of Justice, p. 5).

What this tells advocates of privatization is that there is a tremendous demand for these services. The officers that provide them show how effective the private sector is at meeting one of society’s most pressing needs.

### **Objections to privatizing off-duty police**

Critics of hiring uniformed off-duty police point out that there is widespread traditional skepticism about the wisdom of this idea. This



criticism comes from police forces that want to make sure their officers are rested, uninjured, and prepared for their normal duties, and from citizens who view such “moonlighting” as unwise.

These critics worry about the lack of professional supervision when police are contracted out to private companies. In Cincinnati, for example, “despite the intention of division administrators to supervise all officers on off-duty employment, each administrator interviewed reported that officers on extra duty normally went unsupervised because of insufficient personnel” (National Institute of Justice, p. 31).

Public Responsibility advocates also might point to potential conflicts of interest between the public government responsible for these officers and the private

employer contracting for their services: "Much of the traditional emphasis on prohibitions against employment of off-duty officers arose from the strong belief that officers cannot enforce the law impartially when they serve a private rather than a public interest" (National Institute of Justice, p. 19).

Opponents of this practice also argue that it could confuse the public and undermine confidence in uniformed police. Where the number of off-duty officers met or exceeded the number of regular police, citizens could never be sure whether the officer they turned to

was on or off duty. If off-duty police want to "moonlight" by providing security, say these critics, they should do it dressed as security guards or some other private providers of protection, unless the operation (e.g., crowd control at parades or football games) contains all the normal components of oversight and focuses on the public good.

### Social Services for Offenders and Potential Offenders

Public Responsibility advocates are likely to look toward the public sector for programs that can divert potential criminals toward productive lives and, failing that, maintain prisons where criminals can be both rehabilitated and restrained. Public Responsibility advocates argue that early intervention to diminish child abuse, drug abuse, poor nutrition, disease, or gang activity pays for itself by keeping children from embarking down a criminal path. Every dollar spent in a Head Start Program, they argue, prevents scores of dollars from being needed to apprehend, convict, and incarcerate criminals.

But the government's vigilance shouldn't end with preschool, they argue. Nothing but an active determination to

track developing citizens throughout childhood and intervene when they go astray will succeed in making Oregon as safe as it should be. Once citizens reach adulthood, the government still has a responsibility to help them find employment and housing so they will not feel desperate enough to commit a crime.

According to this perspective, both prisons and law enforcement should be viewed within a larger context that produces criminals as a by-product of modern life. To produce fewer criminals, argue these advocates, we must assure all citizens of the educational and economic opportunities that make criminal activity seem like a poor choice.

Despite governmental efforts to prevent crime, admit these advocates, there still will be criminals, because there always have been criminals. Public Responsibility advocates therefore do not consider themselves utopians. They see the need for both police and prisons but defend the present public police forces and public prisons as appropriate mechanisms for apprehending and incarcerating criminals.

To them, the function of government under such circumstances is to make sure that justice is done. In practical terms, this means that police forces should be well trained and accessible to all segments of the population, and prisons should



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“Every dollar spent in a Head Start Program prevents scores of dollars from being needed to apprehend, convict, and incarcerate criminals.”

be managed in such a way as to rehabilitate as well as restrain criminals.

The bottom line for many Public Responsibility advocates is that solving the problem of crime requires cooperation rather than competition, because “the pursuit of happiness” rather than profit is the goal. From this perspective, crime is embedded in a complex web of relationships involving families, schools, economic opportunities, and the community as a whole. Any solution that focuses narrowly on how to patrol the streets or when to build more prisons is inadequate, because it fails to take into account this complex web.

For example, when the city of Portland developed a problem with drunken, disorderly conduct in Old Town, it not only restricted access to fortified wines and malt liquors, it also consulted professionals in alcohol abuse about the relative value of treatment as opposed to punitive sanctions. Furthermore, it conducted public hearings to allow both residents and merchants of Old Town to express their views.

Through a combination of voluntary restrictions by sellers and licensing restrictions by the city, Portland continues to address this problem. In 1993 the Mayor’s Office issued a news release that announced a plan to work with the State Legislature “on legislation for more local control over the liquor

licensing process.” Thus Portland has coordinated the efforts of citizens, merchants, police, licensing bureaus, alcohol abuse counselors, city councillors, and state legislators to deal with alcohol-related street crime. Shared Responsibility advocates would be especially enthusiastic about these efforts.

Advocates of the Public Responsibility perspective are quick to admit that not all programs are effective, not all cooperative endeavors successful, not all interventions justified. The responsibility of government, however, is to amend rather than abandon these efforts. By holding appointed and elected officials accountable for their decisions, the people indicate which programs should be expanded, contracted, initiated, or abolished.

Public Responsibility advocates point out that according to the U.S. Supreme Court, “The genius of our government provides that, within the sphere of constitutional action, the people—acting not through the courts but through their elected legislative representatives—have the power to determine, as conditions demand, what services and functions the public welfare requires” (Heilman, p. 18). Public Responsibility advocates trust in the electoral and legislative processes to produce policies and actions that reflect the will of the people and cope with crime in the

best interests of all. These advocates acknowledge that, disappointed by government’s inability to effectively combat crime, the public often becomes distrustful of leaders and critical of waste. They nevertheless argue that the solution is more effective, rather than less, government.

#### **Objections to a social services approach to public safety**

Critics of this global approach to public safety see it as futile. They criticize this approach for linking every simple problem to a host of other (usually insoluble) problems, as if to build a bridge it were necessary first to study the path of the river below it and all its tributaries.

This endlessly regressive process is not only chaotic, but expensive. If every problem requires a network of solutions, they argue, nothing will ever get done until everything gets done. In a world of finite resources, this procedure is unrealistic. It shows just how much “big government” has become synonymous with “ineffective government.”

An Individual Responsibility advocate would argue that if downtown Portland has a problem with drinking and disorderly conduct, downtown merchants should contract with off-duty police from surrounding communities to help arrest the offenders. If there is inadequate jail space to



“Throughout Oregon and the United States, people are developing partnerships between neighborhood organizations, businesses, and local police to reduce crime.”

incarcerate the guilty, then the opportunity exists for an entrepreneur to build a prison facility in a lease-purchase agreement with the city and county. Inmates could work to offset some of the costs of their detention. By focusing on the specific problem at hand, argue Individual Responsibility advocates, the people of Portland can have the problem solved long before the City Council or the State Legislature gets around to acting.

### Community Policing

Throughout Oregon and the United States, people are developing partnerships between neighborhood organizations, businesses, and local police to reduce crime. They call these partnerships “community policing programs.”

These programs focus on goals common to all parties in the public-private partnership. The key to success, advocates argue, is the ability to balance the “economic requirements of efficiency” with the “political requirements of accountability” (Heilman, p. 31).

The private sector is superior at operating efficiently, because it is accustomed to competition and “less subject to regulatory intrusion” (Heilman, p. 30). The public sector is superior at developing public policy that reflects the will of the people and is accountable to them. According to Shared Responsibility advocates, a public/private

partnership that “engages and meshes these two different dynamics to capitalize on the positive aspects of each” (Heilman, pp. 30–31) is superior to both the paternalism of the Public Responsibility perspective and the market orientation of the Individual Responsibility perspective.

In the case of Portland’s problem with drunken, disorderly conduct in Old Town, for example, the solution has involved community policing in a partnership between local neighborhoods, liquor licensing agencies, professionals who treat alcohol abuse merchants who sell alcohol and hire off-duty public police officers from surrounding communities, city officials who conduct hearings to allow residents and merchants to express their views, and state legislators who work to give local governments greater control over liquor licensing. Thus Portland has coordinated the efforts of citizens, merchants, police, licensing bureaus, alcohol abuse counsellors, city councillors, and state legislators to deal with alcohol-related street crime.

As Oregon works to solve its crime problem, advocates of the Shared Responsibility perspective will look for more and more effective ways to create partnerships among citizens, businesses, and the public entities that express the will of the people and are answerable to them.

### Objections to community policing

Some critics of the Shared Responsibility approach to public safety see it as an unwieldy hybrid of Individual Responsibility and Public Responsibility perspectives. To them, it shares with the Individual Responsibility approach a naive belief that the private sector will act in the public interest, and it shares with the Public Responsibility approach a futile desire to solve problems by creating expensive programs.

An Individual Responsibility advocate also would argue that in the case of Portland’s problem with drunken and disorderly conduct, the array of participants in the partnership complicates the situation and gets in the way of an efficient solution. A Public Responsibility advocate, on the other hand, might argue that inviting sellers of alcohol to participate in a plan to restrict access to fortified malt liquors is like asking a broker not to sell bonds, or an architect not to design buildings.

It’s the government’s responsibility, they would argue, to revoke licenses that are abused and to enforce statutes against disorderly conduct, even as the government seeks help for substance abusers and alternatives to homelessness. From this perspective, public/private partnerships are likely to sacrifice the public to the private.

# Conclusion

In a democracy, the danger is not that people will disagree. After all, people *always* disagree. Rather, the danger is that citizens will become so disenchanted with their leaders, their government, or each other, that they lose interest in trying to improve their world. The real danger is that they will abdicate the responsibilities of citizenship itself until their skills at decision making atrophy and they become the “perpetual children” Alexis de Toqueville warned about.

To combat that danger, Oregon needs an informed electorate capable of making good choices. The three perspectives outlined in this pamphlet, and their applications to education and public safety, can help us appreciate more fully both our own opinions and the opinions of others.

Thus equipped, we should be able to work more effectively to help Oregon develop the best possible government for its citizens.

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# Oregon at the Crossroads

## What Do Oregonians Want from Government?

<p><b>What's the problem?</b></p>	<p>Oregon voters say they don't trust elected officials to do the jobs they are elected to do, that there is tremendous waste in government. Many see their schools facing budget cuts, yet they don't see their property taxes going down as they expected. In November 1994 voters approved several measures that will require more prison facilities.</p>
<p><b>Why is it so serious?</b></p>	<p>Oregon's growing population is increasing the demand for public safety, education, and other services. At the same time, Measure 5, the 1990 property tax limitation, is reducing taxes as a share of personal income.</p> <p>Even if Oregonians agreed on what roles they wanted state and local governments to play, it would be difficult to meet these demands. But Oregonians disagree about issues like taxation, public services, and the proper role of government.</p>
<p><b>What can we do?</b></p>	<p>We can engage in thoughtful discussion about what we want from government. By understanding better our own ideas, as well as perspectives we normally consider misguided, we can expand our abilities to communicate with each other, to seek common ground, and to find solutions.</p>
<p><b>Summary</b></p>	<p>This Forum examines three ways of answering the question: What do citizens want from government? We hope you will consider carefully the positive and negative aspects of each perspective. If this Forum is successful, you will find ways to use all three perspectives to help suggest solutions to the problems that face Oregon.</p>

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# Three Perspectives on Government in Oregon

These perspectives on Oregon government are not mutually exclusive. In important respects, however, the perspectives described below reflect different assumptions about what people want from government and have different implications for what the future holds. Solutions to the problems facing Oregon will draw on ideas from all perspectives.

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	Individual Responsibility Perspective	Public Responsibility Perspective	Shared Responsibility Perspective
<p><b>What's the problem?</b> Each perspective is based on a distinctive view of how government in Oregon should change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government is too big and inefficient. By providing for people what they can do for themselves it undermines initiative and breeds dependence. The private sector, individual or corporate, has the ability to differentiate between essential and nonessential community needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government needs to do a better job of guaranteeing all citizens access to opportunities to prepare themselves for productive lives. In a world of limited resources, it should provide more effectively the planning it takes to reflect the will of the people and promote the good of all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government needs to do a better job of producing citizens who will take responsibility for solving problems. In a world of limited resources, it needs a more pragmatic approach that combines the efficiency of the private sector with the accountability of the public sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What should be done?</b> Each perspective favors specific measures to improve government in Oregon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government should limit itself to providing essential services.</li> <li>Through elections and other processes, people should hold officials accountable.</li> <li>Government should allow individual initiative to provide what people want.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government should provide a full range of social services to ensure that the disadvantaged as well as the advantaged can become productive citizens.</li> <li>Government should make sure that decision makers are accountable to the people for efficiently implementing their will in the interests of all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government should act as a facilitator, rather than provider, of the services people need and want.</li> <li>Government should promote public/private partnerships between citizens, communities, and businesses, to achieve solutions that reflect the common interests of the partners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Why this course of action?</b> Proponents offer arguments for each perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government has a responsibility to reduce taxes, waste, and bureaucratic red tape.</li> <li>By reducing its intervention in the private sector, government can promote individual responsibility, free enterprise, and prosperity.</li> <li>The laws of supply and demand are sufficient to regulate the marketplace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Oregonians deserve access to opportunities to learn and earn as productive citizens.</li> <li>The private sector must be regulated to protect citizens from exploitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many of the resources for problem-solving in Oregon lie in the private, not the public, sector.</li> <li>People who cooperate with others to discover common interests and seek mutually agreeable solutions learn to be better citizens.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What do critics say?</b> Critics point out faulty thinking and unacceptable consequences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People never will be able to agree on the "basic essentials."</li> <li>The laws of supply and demand do not automatically guarantee fairness.</li> <li>Left to itself, the private sector would exploit the public and exacerbate economic inequalities.</li> <li>The disadvantaged would fall through the cracks into homelessness, hunger, and poverty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big government has failed both to solve present problems and to plan successfully for the future.</li> <li>The only thing a focus on equality guarantees is excessive spending for a vast array of social services.</li> <li>As long as special interests can manipulate public opinion, the ballot box will fail to hold government accountable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Shared Responsibility concept is a confusing hybrid of Individual Responsibility and Public Responsibility perspectives, combining the selfish tendencies of the former with the spendthrift tendencies of the latter.</li> <li>Partnerships encourage cumbersome combinations of interested parties that can take forever to solve problems.</li> <li>Nothing guarantees that the "common interests" of partners will reflect the will of the people or the good of all.</li> </ul>

**PULLOUT ISSUE BRIEF**

**What happens in a forum?**

During the forum, you will be asked to:

- 1) Understand how different people view government
- 2) Weigh the positive and negative consequences of each viewpoint
- 3) Find the areas where you agree as well as disagree
- 4) Move toward a common understanding

Forum participants don't just pronounce opinions. They work hard to learn from each other's experiences, find shared values, and identify the basis for common understandings about government roles.

**Why do we need to understand these perspectives?**

To strengthen Oregon's political system so it can meet its critical tasks that affect all of us, we need a shared sense of what issues and principles underlie our most important choices.

The best approach may be some combination of the three perspectives outlined here. Or it might include some perspectives not mentioned.

**Looking across the perspectives**

- What do you think is government's primary purpose?
- In achieving this purpose, what should be the role of business?
- How can society best address the needs of poor and disadvantaged citizens?
- Can government help develop citizens?

**Moving toward common ground**

- What trade-offs are Oregonians willing to make?
- What consequences are unacceptable?
- How can we move beyond sloganeering?
- What common ground have we discovered?

**What happens next?**

To have a lasting impact, governmental action needs to reflect the values of the public. You can share the results of this Forum with friends, colleagues, community leaders, and policy makers. You also can convene your own study circles to explore more fully these perspectives and the specific problems that confront the citizens of Oregon.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."* —Margaret Mead

Oregon Issues Forums (OIF) offers citizens and communities throughout the state an opportunity to examine public issues. OIF does not advocate any specific policy or point of view; instead it seeks to provide a way for Oregonians to work together productively. For more information about OIF or about training to lead forums and study circles, call Judy Burridge in Albany (503) 967-3871, Paul Sunderland in Portland (503) 725-2000, or Bruce Weber in Corvallis (503) 737-1432, or write to Oregon Issues Forums, OSU Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331.

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Extension Service, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Lyla Houglum, interim director. This publication was produced and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension work is a cooperative program of Oregon State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Oregon counties.

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