

Oregonian 3/6/92

★ CAMPAIGN '92

THE PLUS COLUMN

The National Organization for Women's political action committee has endorsed **Rep. Les AuCoin** for the Senate seat held by Republican Bob Packwood.



The feminist group praised AuCoin for supporting abortion rights and gay rights and for promoting legislation requiring leave for family and medical reasons.

Meanwhile, the group criticized Packwood for declining to

oppose a 1990 ballot measure that required parental notification before a minor could receive an abortion, and it blasted him for opening up lines of communication with the conservative Oregon Citizens Alliance.



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AIGN 22

Sen. Bob Packwood talks with Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill., in 1986 after passage of the Tax Reform Act.



Associated Press/1986

PACKWOOD IN PERIL

Democrats point to surveys showing that only a minority of Oregon voters would support state's junior senator

By JEFF MAPES
of The Oregonian staff

Democratic pollster Geoff Garin was bubbling over with amazement when he completed a late 1990 survey on Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore.

Garin, who is working for Rep. Les AuCoin's Senate campaign, found that only 24 percent of Oregon voters thought Packwood should be re-elected.

"It's as if he had been caught in a scandal," said Garin, noting that such low numbers are usually reserved for a senator such as Washington Democrat Brock Adams — who's been fighting allegations that he molested a woman.

Not everyone wanted to believe it. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee worried that the "numbers were too good," according to spokesman Don Foley.

But subsequent surveys have found that Packwood is indeed one of the most vulnerable Senate incumbents in the country.

Paul Maslin, a Los Angeles pollster working for Democrat Harry Lonsdale, found in September of 1991 that only 33 percent of voters would definitely or probably support Packwood for re-election.

A November survey by Portland pollster Tim Hibbitts, taken for PacifiCorp and leaked to the press, found that either Lonsdale or AuCoin would handily defeat Packwood if the election were held at that time.

Hibbitts said in his report that only once in 16 years of polling had he seen numbers that were that bad for an incumbent, and that was for an Oregon legislative race.

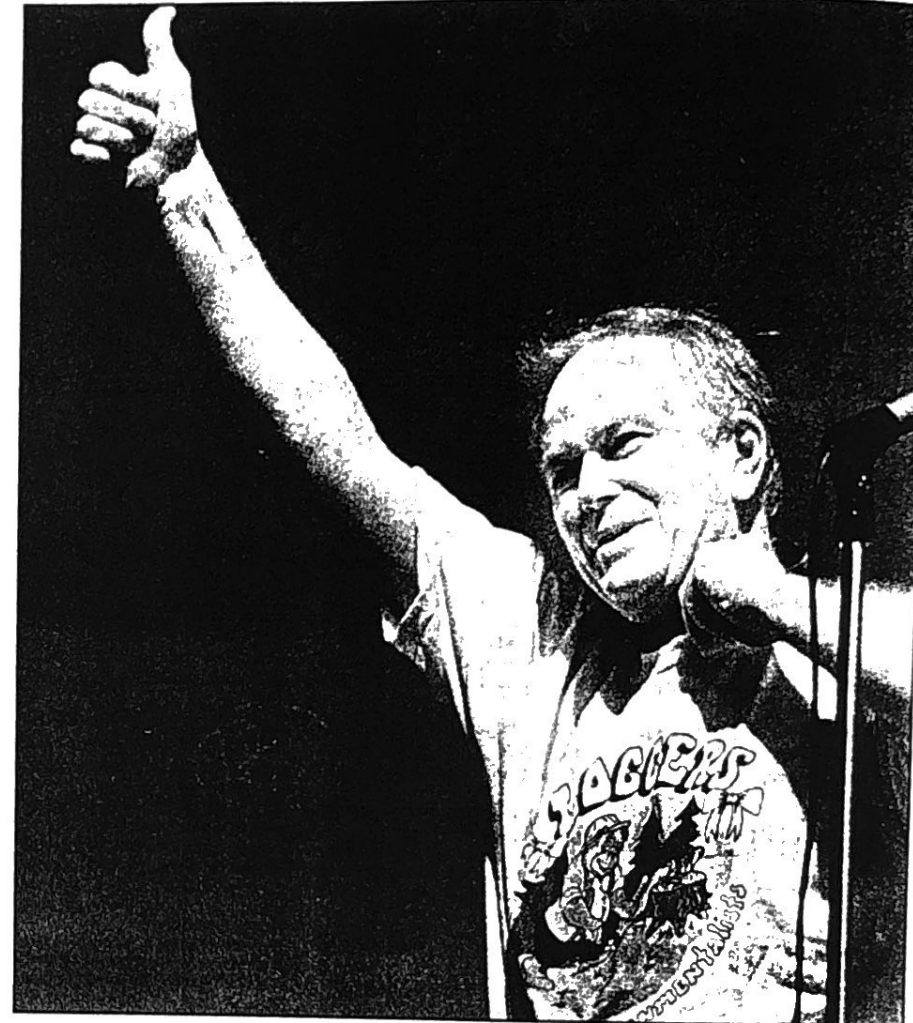
Even Packwood's supporters concede the 24-year incumbent has a difficult repair job with voters.

"It's an interesting and challenging mixture of things that could be working against us," said Packwood's campaign manager, Elaine Franklin.

There is also surprisingly broad agreement on the unusual confluence of events driving Packwood's approval ratings into the basement.

They include Packwood's:
• Long incumbency in an era of economic hard times when voters are in a mood to throw incumbents out — particularly when, as in Packwood's case, voters have a hard time citing many positive accomplishments on his part.

• Authorship of the 1986 Tax Reform Act. Many experts hailed the bill for dramatically lowering tax rates while eliminating loopholes.



The Oregonian/1990

Sen. Bob Packwood addresses a Molalla timber rally in 1990. Packwood's changing stand on some issues has cost him support, some analysts say.

But most voters still aren't happy with the tax system and anyone who had a big hand in designing it. "He's Mr. Tax to a lot of people," said Portland attorney Jack Faust, Packwood's longtime campaign chairman.

• Shifting positions on issues. Voters often have a hard time understanding where Packwood is at. He's had a variety of stands on tax reform, went from pro-wilderness to pro-timber and abandoned his earlier pledge not to take money from political action committees.

• Ties to Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore. The two senators are both moderate Republicans with two-syllable Anglo Saxon names who have served for more than two decades. When Hatfield's standing with voters dropped during his 1990 re-election campaign, both Republican and Democratic pollsters said Packwood's poll ratings dropped as well. And Hatfield's subsequent ethics problems — he's under investigation for taking unreported gifts — have seemed to further hurt Packwood. "You hear people say, 'Hatwood' or 'Packfield,'" said Portland pollster Bob Moore, who is working for Packwood this year. "People don't pay that close attention to politics, so they throw him

into the same pot."

Packwood's supporters like to portray many of these problems as an unlucky series of events that they can reverse once they can start reminding voters of the senator's accomplishments.

Moore and other Republican operatives also point out that approval ratings for incumbents are down across the board this year.

But Democrats portray Packwood's problems as being much deeper — and more self-inflicted.

"The voters know Bob Packwood all too well," charged Mary Beth Cahill, AuCoin's campaign manager. "... They know there is no position he won't abandon for reasons of expediency."

Packwood has taken strong stands on some issues, such as support for abortion rights and for industry deregulation. But sometimes his political maneuvering on these issues brings him as much grief as gain.

For example, Packwood fought a bill sought by consumer interests to tightly re-regulate cable television, saying it would stem industry innovation.

But attention focused on the large amounts of campaign money Packwood had received from cable inter-

ests — and on his sponsorship of a substitute bill industry lobbyists hoped could be used as a stalking horse to kill any re-regulation.

Meanwhile, Packwood's attempts to open lines of communication with the anti-abortion Oregon Citizens Alliance to head off a third party challenge upset many abortions-rights activists. They were particularly angered that he refused to come out against a 1990 state ballot measure requiring parental notification before a minor could get an abortion.

In part, Packwood's problems are not new. He won re-election in 1974 and in 1980 with less than 55 percent of the vote. He got 63 percent of the vote in 1986 — but only after Democratic nominee Jim Weaver dropped out of the race and was replaced by Rick Bauman, then a little-known state representative.

Despite Packwood's difficulties, nobody is ready to write him off in this race.

He already has \$3.1 million in his campaign fund, far above either AuCoin or Lonsdale. And he is a sharp campaigner who is not afraid to go on the attack.

"There is time," said Franklin, "to define both Sen. Packwood and his opponent."

AuCoin: Play fair or we'll raise our trade barriers

■ '92 campaign: The U.S. Senate candidate says countries like Japan should be sent a message loud and clear.

By BRENT WALTH
The Register-Guard

U.S. Senate candidate Les AuCoin said Tuesday that the United States should raise trade barriers against countries like Japan that refuse to open their markets to U.S. products.

"If they won't tear the pages out of their rule book, we'll tell them that we're working out of the same rule book and see how they like it," said AuCoin, a Democrat who has held Oregon's 1st Congressional District seat for nine terms.

AuCoin appeared at the University of Oregon for his second in a series of policy speeches begun earlier this month. He is seeking the seat held since 1969 by Republican Bob Packwood and is opposed in the primary chiefly by Democrat Harry Lonsdale of Bend.

AuCoin's focus on trade stemmed from President Bush's trip to Japan this month to press for trade concessions and Monday's remarks by a top



Rep. Les AuCoin

U.S. must improve work skills

Japanese official who called U.S. workers lazy and poorly educated.

Addressing the education question, AuCoin also on Tuesday proposed using money saved from cuts in U.S. defense spending to pay for \$100 billion a year in new federal education grants through 1996.

AuCoin said America's trade woes

were summed up by Bush's mission, which he described as: "An American president, hat in hand, all but begging for trade concessions" and "a Japanese prime minister expressing condolences over America's economic plight — as if we're a charity case."

He said the United States had to couple trade sanctions with stepped-up efforts to better educate students and train workers.

"Even if we knock down every barrier, we'd have trouble competing because of our neglect of work skills," he said.

AuCoin said he didn't support across-the-board retaliation. Instead, he suggested that Congress and the president should study all trade barriers against U.S. products and respond with selected, symbolic import restrictions.

"All you need to do is pick a few high-profile products and industries to show people we mean business," he said.

AuCoin offered one example: photographic film. He noted that Japan blocks export of U.S.-made Kodak film to protect the Fuji brand. "There's an example of where we can clearly compete and are being locked out," he said.

Lonsdale said Tuesday that he, too,

supports limited trade sanctions as retaliation.

"I'm for reciprocity," Lonsdale said. "If they don't open their markets to us, we should shut ours down to them."

Lonsdale said that any trade sanctions had to be tied to promises from domestic companies that prices at home would not increase as foreign imports decrease.

"We saw the auto industry do that before," Lonsdale said. "There has to be a deal here that we won't pay higher prices so our own companies can compete."

AuCoin also suggested legislation to prevent "dumping," the importing of foreign products sold below cost to undercut domestic goods. And he repeated an earlier proposal to curtail exports of raw logs from private lands.

AuCoin has sponsored a bill with Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., that would allow states to charge a 10 percent tariff on log exports from private lands.

The U.S. Forest Service has estimated that the tariff would curtail the exports by only 3 percent, according to Mark Gaede, AuCoin's legislative assistant on timber issues. The plan also includes a 2 percent tax credit for tree growers who sell their logs domestically.

To bolster schools, AuCoin said he wants an additional \$100 billion a year in federal education grants and \$2.1 billion more annually to offer Head Start to every eligible child.

Head Start provides preschool education, hot meals, and medical checkups for 3- to 5-year-olds. The program, with a \$2.2 billion annual budget, serves about 30 percent of the 2 million eligible children.

Democrats in Congress have long pushed to boost Head Start spending, and President Bush said Tuesday that he will propose increasing Head Start funding by \$600 million annually.

Two weeks ago, AuCoin also suggested dipping into the savings from defense cuts to pay for a \$20 billion tax break for families that would include a tax credit of \$800 annually for each child.

AuCoin has suggested cutting the \$291 billion-a-year defense budget by 60 percent over the next eight years to pay for these and other domestic programs, reasoning that the historic levels of U.S. defense spending in Europe are no longer necessary with the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Even under the best of financial scenarios, AuCoin could not find the money to pay for these promises until

1995, according to his own estimates. AuCoin campaign spokesman Rick Gureghian said the proposals should be viewed as "targets" that could be met in five years.

"We may not get a full loaf for certain domestic programs," Gureghian said. "We may not get 100 percent of the way there. But it's imperative that we wean ourselves from defense spending and put these things on the domestic agenda."

Roll Call
2/17/92

Political Briefing

By Tim Curran

Purloined Poll Places Packwood Poorly

Portland's Willamette Week has uncovered more bad news for Oregon's junior Senator, Republican Bob Packwood, as he approaches his re-election bid.

The newspaper reported last week that it had obtained a copy of a November poll by TH Research, a local firm, showing Packwood losing to either of the Democrats hoping to face him this fall. The survey showed 66 percent of voters were ready to replace Packwood with a new person, with 10 percent undecided, giving the four-term Senator, who formerly chaired the Finance Committee and now is its ranking member, the solid support of only 24 percent of the 802 voters surveyed.

Rep. Les AuCoin led his Democratic primary opponent, businessman and 1990 Senate nominee Harry Lonsdale, 54 to 32 percent, in a head-to-head matchup. In a general election test, AuCoin led Packwood, 59 to 32 percent, and Lonsdale was ahead of the incumbent, 53 to 39 percent.

In a summary of the poll results, TH president Tim Hibbitts described the situation as "near desperate," and concluded: "This margin will close, but the very size of the gap and Packwood's high negatives strongly suggest he will have to run a fundamentally negative campaign."

The head of TH Research, an independent polling firm, would not comment on the contents of the poll, which was apparently done for a corporate client, saying only that it should not have been released.

Feb. 4,
1992

AuCoin advocates health-care system similar to Canada's

By JEFF MAPES
of The Oregonian staff

ASHLAND — Rep. Les AuCoin blasted America's "medical-industrial complex" as wasteful Monday and said the federal government needed to take over the private health insurance system.

The Democratic Senate candidate laid out his vision of a Canadian-style health care system in a speech at Southern Oregon State College, although he admitted he still didn't know how taxes should be raised to pay for such a system.

AuCoin has talked favorably of a "single-payer system" for several months but has resisted saying how he would pay for it.

"I think it takes a lot of thought," said AuCoin, adding that there is "plenty of time" to arrive at a tax proposal. He argued that any taxes to finance the system would be less burdensome than the \$400 billion a year that Americans spend on health insurance.

AuCoin recalled how President Eisenhower warned of the dangers of a "military-industrial complex" that would promote constant increases in defense spending.

"Thirty years later we confront a similar problem: the medical-industrial complex," said AuCoin. "The insurance industry. The drug companies. Medical equipment manufacturers. The providers. They all have a vested share and a vested interest in keeping the system the way it is."

AuCoin added that his proposal "means replacing the 1,500 insurance companies that run up billions of dollars in overhead costs, bury us in a senseless sea of paper work and write their own rules."

Under his system, the government would set up commissions in each state that would negotiate with physicians and hospitals to provide health care for everyone in the country.

AuCoin and other supporters say this would save money while extending coverage to the more than 35 million Americans who don't have health insurance.

Critics, including Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., whose seat AuCoin is seeking, say government shouldn't have such a central role in the health-care system and say it could lead to long waits for some medical procedures, as there are in Canada.

Packwood has instead proposed that all employers be required to offer health-care benefits to full-time workers. State Medicaid programs would be expanded to cover other uninsured people.

"The insurance industry. The drug companies. Medical equipment manufacturers. The providers. They all have a vested share and a vested interest in keeping the system the way it is."

— Rep. Les AuCoin

Harry Lonsdale, AuCoin's chief Democratic rival in the primary contest for the nomination to Packwood's seat, also wants employers to be forced to provide coverage.

But AuCoin argued that this isn't workable.

"The last thing small businesses need or can afford is another federal mandate from a federal government intent on avoiding responsibility," he said. "Playing games with the current system is a death penalty for small businesses and no cure for working Americans."

AuCoin also said that a single-payer system was the only way to control skyrocketing medical costs because the government could set an overall budget for health care that can't be exceeded.

These limits have led to waiting lists for some surgeries and other procedures in Canada, but AuCoin said he thought the U.S. already had enough capacity in hospitals and high-tech medical machinery to avoid those delays here.

AuCoin said he wasn't worried about the political impact of endorsing a plan that requires an increase in taxes.

"I'm confident people can pencil that out" if they are actually paying less than they were with health insurance, he said.

The major single-payer bill in Congress, sponsored by Rep. Marty Russo, D-Ill., calls for a 7.5 percent payroll tax, an increase in income taxes for those earning more than \$50,000 a year and a boost in corporate income taxes.

AuCoin said he looked at whether federal money saved by cutting defense spending could be put into health care, but he concluded that any savings needed to go into other domestic programs.

Corvallis Gazette-Times
Jan. 10, 1992

AuCoin calls for huge defense cut

PORTLAND (AP) — The United States should reduce defense spending by 60 percent over the next five years and “use the money to get our economy moving,” U.S. Rep. Les AuCoin said Thursday.

The 1st District Democrat, who is seeking Republican Bob Packwood’s seat in the Senate, urged President Bush to discard his budget agreement with Congress.

AuCoin made the proposal in what was billed as a major policy speech at Portland State University.

The budget agreement with Congress prevents transfer of military savings to the domestic budget.

But a defense budget cut of 60 percent would free \$1.1 trillion that could be put to better use elsewhere, AuCoin said.

“Our economy flounders as the economic competition is getting stronger,” he said. “We’re handcuffed. Our country is being forced to live with a budget agreement that predates the fall of the Berlin Wall; that predates the independence of Eastern Europe; that predates the collapse of the Soviet Union.”

The budget agreement pre-

vents money from being shifted from defense to education, job training, rebuilding the nation’s infrastructure or controlling the cost of health care, AuCoin said.

He urged Bush to “seize this historic opportunity to do something real about building a strong, growing economy.”

Some of the money, he said, could be used to reduce the federal deficit.

The congressman also called for a tax cut for middle-income taxpayers “to re-start the economy and correct the tax sins of the ’80s.”

AuCoin’s proposals also included:

- An \$800 tax credit for each child.

- Reinstatement of a tax-free individual retirement account, allowing for early withdrawal to finance home purchases or college educations.

- Obtaining lower interest rates for first-time home buyers.

- Creating a National Advanced Research Project agency to promote innovation in American industry.

- Establishing a public fund to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure.