

SENATE BILL #1523

Title: VCR Election Drawing

Introduced: January 21, 1986

Thesis:

Sponsor: Election Committee

1. Whereas the ASUW Election Committee has been charged with the task of
2. running the 1986 ASUW Elections and whereas the committee has made increasing
3. voter turnout one of its primary objectives and has thus decided to give away
4. a VCR with a random drawing of those who vote in order to encourage students
5. to vote; Therefore, be it enacted by the Student Senate of the Associated
6. Students of the University of Wyoming that the Election Committee be
7. authorized to spend up to \$300 to purchase a VCR to give away and that the
8. committee shall be charged with developing rules for the contest.

Referred to: steering ^{1/28/86 - DO NOT PASS 1/28/86}

Date of Passage: _____ Signed: _____
ASUW Senate Chairperson

"being enacted on _____, I do hereby sign my name hereto and approve this Senate action." _____ ASUW President

1st reading 1/28/86
2nd reading 1/28/86
3rd reading dispensed 1/28/86
emergency proceeding
failed 12-16-0

January 21, 1986

Dear Senator:

Recently, the Election Committee decided to raffle off a VCR in an attempt to increase voter turnout in the Spring elections. Under the proposal, the names of all of those who voted in both elections would be put in the hat and one lucky voter would win a new VCR. The committee felt that this might encourage students to vote who otherwise might not. We realize that it is an unusual approach, but we decided to try it as a one-time experiment because more traditional approaches have not seemed to work.

Since that time, it has come to our attention that some members of the Senate and the Executive Branch of ASUW have objections to the proposal. The committee could go ahead with the raffle without Senate approval (as long as the VCR is less than \$300), but since this seems to have become a controversial issue, we have decided to bring it to the Senate for approval or rejection. A bill to approve the raffle will be brought up for first reading at our next Senate meeting, and, since our advertising campaign is tied to the VCR raffle and our posters need to go to the printer right away, we are going to attempt to move into emergency proceedings on the bill.

The following are some objections to the raffle idea that have been brought to our attention and the committee's answer to the objections:

The Raffle Would Damage the Credibility of ASUW. We disagree. Certainly it is a new idea and one that, to the best of our knowledge, has not been tried by any formal government agency. But the committee feels that our number one credibility problem is that so few students take an interest in ASUW. How can we claim to represent the entire student body when only about a fifth of the students even vote? The committee feels that it is time to use new ideas to increase voter turnout, even though this plan might seem a bit strange. Certainly, Congress or the Wyoming Legislature would never undertake a program like this, but remember, we are NOT a formal governmental organization like Congress. We have no actual legislative powers -- our mission is to give students a voice in university affairs, and getting students involved should be our primary concern. Getting carried away with self-importance is more damaging to our image than any raffle could be.

The Raffle Would be Buying Votes -- In a Way, a Type of Bribery

The Election Committee does not see it that way, and we don't believe students will either. Chances are less than one in 2,000 that an individual would win a VCR -- a pretty pathetic "bribe." What we feel it will do is to encourage people to make an extra effort to get to the polls, especially among people who feel they should vote and that voting is important but who may need a little extra push to go out of their way to vote.

Student Fees Shouldn't be Used to Finance a VCR Raffle.

Basically, the committee looks at this expenditure as an advertising expense. A VCR will cost about as much as a full page ad in the Branding Iron, and ASUM (especially CAB) has commissioned plenty of those. If the raffle proposal is turned down, the committee will have to spend at least as much or more on ads or other promotional ideas to reach our goal of increased voter turnout. We have the money, and if this expenditure increases voter turnout, it will be money well spent.

In conclusion, what we are asking the Senate to do is to take a chance on a new idea. To be honest, we don't know what the reaction on campus will be and we don't know if it will work to increase voter turnout, although we remain hopeful. If it doesn't work, we aren't obliged to try it ever again. But we won't know if it will work unless we give it a try, and the committee feels that we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by giving it a whirl. We would appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

The Election Committee

Members: Mark Cranston
Connie Cruz
Richard Shumate
Rebecca Leber