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bigger investments.

There needs to be more time (sentence) for someone who sells a child or woman than for selling drugs, and currently you do more time for selling drugs than you do for selling children. You can sell a drug once, and it's out of your hands. You can sell a woman a thousand times. It's slavery, and it needs to end. I'm really disappointed with media coming back and saying it's not that serious of an issue. They can't prove it. Come work with the people I work with every day. Have people call you in the middle of the night, and say, "I'm standing on a corner, and I'm trying to get away." Then tell me it's not that big of a problem.

Most strip clubs don't hire employees, they hire contractors. They don't get Social Security, workers' compensation, or any kind of medical benefits. They go into the jobs, and they pay the house. Women who have little kids are dancing or lingerie modeling. There is not enough oversight of the business because they are pulling 7th graders out of the dance clubs. It is a business that takes advantage of people. We need to create living wage jobs for young moms. Are we creating this substandard industry for poor women, mostly women of color? Once again, we go back to equity and race.

J.T.: Tell us about your organizing work around environmental justice, specifically the Columbia River Crossing.

J.W.: I started organizing around environmental justice around 1994 as a hotel worker when I was exposed to toxic chemicals. I was on an organizing committee for about eight years. We founded a union for parking lot attendants downtown, it was called the Urban Workers Union, and we affiliated it with Teamsters Local 206. I went on to become the executive director of the Environmental Justice Action Group. We worked on issues on health disparities in transportation policy and how they create disparate impacts.

High levels of asthma, emphysema, and cancer clusters are in Northeast, especially around where you have arterials. The I-5 freeway was put in a low-income community of color. It doesn't run through Beaverton. It's the same all over the country. We have this freeway

through our community, and we created this situation where we have tons of traffic going through our community. The emissions rise 1,500 feet they move over about two blocks and then they drop. We have benzene, diesel particulates in those areas.

I sat on the Bi-State Transportation Task Force (appointed by then Governor Ted Kulongoski to look at healthier regional transportation issues), and we defeated the expansion of the freeway. Then we moved on to Delta to Lombard where we won a million dollar community enhancement fund. I now live in an apartment where they just put in the crosswalks from the fund. And then, we went on to the Columbia River Crossing. We were called into a meeting and told not to expect the things that we got before. We were told we weren't going to have these conversations about environmental justice, and they eventually just got rid of the environmental justice working group we had created. We forced them to recreate it, and they got this hand-selected group of people that knew nothing about environmental justice.

Where do I stand on the CRC now? I don't think that that big fat bridge is going to be built in the way they think it's going to be built. We don't have the money to get it done.

J.T.: The Portland Plan is guiding our city into building 20-minute neighborhoods, places where people can get around quickly and easily. What do you see as being the big obstacles with fulfilling that vision?

J.W.: There are parts of Portland that just aren't created that way, especially the folks that live out there in "the numbers" near Gresham. How do we make this happen for everybody? I don't know that we can.

So I guess one of the big things is we need to learn to listen more. I can't tell you what a Russian community out in Southeast Portland needs. This cookie-cutter 20-minute neighborhood might not meet everybody's needs, and we're only talking about the people that we talk to. Portland is a very progressive vortex. You have a lot of people engaged, but by no stretch of the imagination do we have everyone engaged, like people whose first language isn't English, low-income people and the homeless population, etc.

When the Portland Plan was started, I was asked how to engage with communities of color. I said, go build a relationship with them. People will have coffee with them, and then they leave the city government. Six months later someone asks how to do this again. We're not taught as city planners to think about a long-term relationship.

J.T.: What ideas do you have for increasing the stock of affordable housing in Portland?

J.W.: The 30 percent set-aside for affordable housing, it's an arbitrary number. Say you live in a community where 70 percent of your people need affordable housing, and 20 percent need homeless accommodations, and you're saying, well, I have a 30 percent set-aside. There's no way that's going to meet the needs of the people in your community. We're going to have to revisit the 30 percent set-aside.

J.T.: Do you have ideas for sustaining revenue for housing and social services?

J.W.: Other than raising the tax bases because we're getting people more jobs. I think when you're talking about increasing revenue it's forming partnerships, and I think for government that means letting go of the control a little bit and working more closely with faith-based organizations. It's about utilizing partners we haven't utilized yet, finding other nonprofits and really focusing on the faith-based ones. The city would have to cross that line of what they see as a separation of church and state.

J.T.: Public transportation is getting more expensive. The free zone downtown is getting

chipped away and is threatened with elimination. Do you have any thoughts on how to preserve the Free Rail Zone?

J.W.: I think we just need to do it. I also support the Bus Riders Unite! with OPAL, which has taken the lead on getting transfers elongated so people can pay one amount for their trip and get back home. I think that possibly TriMet might be pricing itself out. Every time there's an increase, you're preventing the opportunity for people to pay. I don't think it's working for them. Who's getting the \$175 tickets on the MAX? People who can't afford the two dollars. You're making these investments in cursing your community rather than blessing it. I don't have the answer, but it has to be different from what we're currently doing.

J.T.: The video on your campaign website, which is very candid and harrowing, said your pimp was a gang member. I'd like to get your thoughts on Portland's gang problem.

J.W.: My first husband was really violent, and when I left him and came out to Portland I was missing teeth, I had zero self-esteem. I was looking for work, and a girl who I met lived with me, and she was trying to stay sober. She had a crack addiction, and she let her brother move in, and he forced me into working 82nd. He and

I still don't think that we're responding to the reasons of why these kids are becoming gang members in the first place. Their basic needs aren't being met, their spiritual needs aren't being met, their family needs aren't being met. Like anybody, you go to where you feel there is a place where you belong. Even if it's not healthy. Even if it's dysfunctional.

about 10 other gang members raped me, and I was officially a gang member, and forced me to walk 82nd every night.

When I sit at the government level, and I listen to people talk about gangs, I think we're getting to a deeper level, but I still don't think that we're responding to the reasons of why these kids are becoming gang members in the first place. Their basic needs aren't being met, their spiritual needs aren't being met, their family needs aren't being met. Like anybody, you go to where you feel there is a place where you belong. Even if it's not healthy. Even if it's dysfunctional.

Many have grown up watching a ton of violence and sexual violence on TV and think the world is this way. And how am I going to get ahead? I'm going to gang up with other people so we have some sort of power in this world that's gone crazy for self protection. And then you glamorize it in the media.

One thing is, if you have a City Council that does not look like you, where is your hope? If you have people making decisions about your life in a forced way who don't look like you, if you don't have anybody who's never had your experience, but is making decisions about your life, where is your hope? That's why you get into gangs.

I kept my kids out of gangs. I have three in their 20s. That doesn't mean they weren't touched by a gang; that doesn't mean they don't know gang members. They look at gang life much differently than society.

Have we created a society of children that is so numb that killing someone is like putting gum in your mouth? Historically, minority communities have grown up with so little opportunity that the hope is gone. Sam's mind is not on that; Saltzman's mind is not on that.

Day in-Day Out

By Ted Heath

End of the month
Elongated lines
Shuffle... shuffle...
Something on bread

All the people passing by
Pretending I'm not there
I give a smile, say, "Hi"
Silence... empty silence

Pony soldiers spot my backpack
You can't stand here
You can't sit there
No lying on your back

Do you have any drugs
Do you have any booze
Drug free zone
"Fuck" I just want to snooze

End of the month
Elongated lines
Shuffle... shuffle...
Something on bread
All the people
All the people

Seeing new faces selling Street Roots? Each week, more people sign up to become a Street Roots vendor and it's great to support new salesmen. Please make sure you buy from a badged vendor, confirming that they have attended the vendor orientation and are authorized to sell the newspaper. Your vendor will thank you!