

PETER DeFAZIO

AN INVITATION TO A TOWN HALL MEETING

Please come to one of my town hall meetings to share your thoughts and concerns about Social Security. Look for the location nearest you below.

Eugene

Saturday, February 5

10:30 - 11:30 AM

EWEB Training Center and

Community Room

500 E. 4th Avenue

Springfield

Saturday, February 5

12:30 - 1:30 PM

Springfield City Council

Chambers

225 5th Street

For more information, please call 1-800-944-9603.

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‘Choice is a factor in how some of our schools look, clearly ... There’s sure room for some change.’

— George Russell

ty. District 4J’s written policy also bans discrimination broadly. “‘Discrimination’ means any act that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably differentiating in treatment based on” race, socioeconomic status and other protected classes, the policy states.

Choice critics argue that while 4J’s lottery itself may be fair, the district’s entire choice system has an illegal disparate impact on minorities and the poor that is without rational basis and illegal.

Eugene isn’t alone in struggling to make choice work for all its kids, not just the wealthy ones. Boulder, Colo., is now embroiled in a debate over school choice that in many ways mirrors Eugene. Researchers from the University of Colorado hired by the Boulder district to study the problem concluded two years ago that the district’s seven-year-old system of choice resulted in a two-tiered school system divided by race and class. “School choice has enabled some schools to achieve exceptionally high test scores and parent satisfaction, but only at the expense of other schools ... School achievement overall has not

improved. Worse, when the costs to equity are figured in, school choice in this district must be judged a loss.”

The UC researchers noted similar problems with choice systems in New Zealand. The Raleigh, N.C. *News & Observer* reported two years ago on how choice was also resegregating schools there with complaints it was dooming poor kids to failure.

In Eugene, the long-festering school choice debate is growing inflamed. Nobody’s throwing rocks and rioting as in the deep South, but usually like-minded south Eugene progressives are bristling and dividing up based on where their kids go to school amid charges of racism, classism and lies.

Willard admits she’s “resentful” that her school has suffered so alternative schools can keep their privileges. But she says she doesn’t blame the alternative parents. “Parents are always going to choose what is best for their children. Parents should.” But Willard says she does blame the district’s continuing policy of allowing 30 years of an unfair choice system that segregates schools. **EW**

Low income kids do much better in mixed