

PORTLAND OBSERVER

MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR FULL
AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT.

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The
Observation
POST

Political participation is mandatory

If black people are not to end this decade as disadvantaged as we began it, there has to be a strong grass-roots movement to influence the political institutions of the country. Black people have the numbers and knowledge to help bring about the political "browning of America" that will at long last result in the total inclusion of blacks and other minorities in the democratic political process.

Some think that if a black man is elected mayor of a city, that proves the existence of black political power. To a degree it does, but that mayor is going to have to deal with regional authorities, governors, planning boards, councilmen and legislators, as well as federal officials, and his power to benefit his black constituents is partially dependent on these outside forces.

So black political power must come to mean more than electing a few mayors. It must mean the complete participation of black people in the political process and their involvement in party decisions and government machinery at all levels.

Black office-holders are only three-tenths of one percent of the 522,000 elected officials in this country. There is a need to increase this percentage, as well as to influence the political institutions to become more aware of the needs and power of black voters.

Massive registration of black voters is a necessity. Registration is the important first step. It is essential that young black people register and vote. Blacks in Portland have not registered or voted in any great numbers in the past. They have not served as party committeemen and committeewomen or been active in local party conventions that write the party platforms. The young people must take it upon themselves to get involved now, to make their voices heard at the local level.

Black citizens have to become more active in party politics of both major parties, for it is the party structure that is the basis for our political structure. The party delegates and party machinery pick the candidates for offices and write the platforms and strategies on which they run.

Election day may be too late for black voters. By then unless enough blacks register, become active in party meetings and run for party offices, we may be back in our old political role of being taken for granted and forced to choose among candidates and programs that do not reflect our interests.

Colleges risk funds

Columbia University in New York City, one of the nation's most respected educational institutions which has long prided itself on its reputation for being a bulwark of liberalism, has been threatened with the withdrawal of all Health, Education and Welfare Department grants because it has failed to comply with equal opportunity regulations. Columbia University has not provided the government with figures to prove compliance with the Executive order which prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Although the university states it is unable to provide statistics on the racial makeup of its faculty and staff, the schools Women's Liberation group states that only 2.1 per cent of the tenured faculty and one out of seventy administrators is female.

The academic community has always prided itself on being in the forefront of progressive political thought and Columbia faculty and students have taken credit for making anti-war sentiment popular, yet when asked for statistics on race, the university president became defensive, angry and evasive.

The universities and colleges in Oregon's State System of Higher Education are sadly lacking in black students and students from other minority groups. They are even more lacking in the hiring of minority persons in all levels of employment, from the administration and faculty to the secretaries, clerks and janitors. Although HEW is not yet at the door demanding compliance with federal regulations, it is time for Oregon to take a close look at its schools and make sure that when the time comes they can pass inspection. Since efforts to include minorities are usually not forthcoming unless there is economic gain or threat of economic loss, perhaps this will be an incentive. Oregon's colleges are already in deep financial trouble; they cannot afford to risk the loss of federal dollars.

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The Editor's Desk Civil Rights Commission blames Nixon

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recently criticized the failure of the Federal Government to enforce existing civil rights laws. Behind the 240 page point-by-point exploration of bureaucratic insensitivity to minorities are two basic truths:

Even the obscure government agencies have important civil rights obligations of which even their management are only vaguely aware.

Second, effective enforcement of civil rights laws will require a great deal more leadership from the top - especially from the White House - than President Nixon seems willing to provide.

In its report the Commission said it had found "inertia on the part of the Federal bureaucracy, in some cases a blind, unthinking fidelity to the status quo, in others a calculated determination to do nothing to advance the cause of civil rights."

In addition, the Commission found plain ignorance. Some agencies did not even know they had functions and responsibilities in civil rights enforcement.

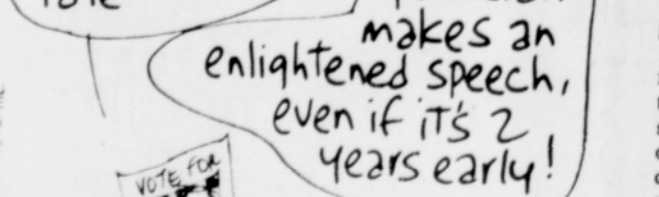
The Controller of the Currency, one of the four financial regulatory agencies, "refuses to even concede it has any responsibility under Title VIII for assuring equal opportunity in housing." The Controller's office is involved with loans and banking, areas that have been traditionally discriminatory.

The Commission emphasized that enforcement of civil rights law will not take place until there is strong Presidential leadership and example.

The Civil Rights Commission has no enforcement powers of its own and can only monitor governmental activities and advocate enforcement. The agency that is entrusted with the responsibility for watching civil rights activity, the Office of Management and Budget, was itself found to be "only adequate."

It is apparent that in the vast bureaucracy of government there will be little action until the White House agrees to lead - by example, by Presidential rhetoric and by constant surveillance.

an enlightened politician makes a great speech, even if it's 2 years late... a great politician makes an enlightened speech, even if it's 2 years early!



Notice

The Observer's official position is expressed only in its Publisher's Column (The Observation Post) and the Editor's Desk. Any other material throughout the paper is the opinion of the individual writer or submitter and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Observer.

C R charges HUD

A top official of the Commission on Civil Rights has rated the performance of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as "barely marginal" in fighting residential discrimination.

Martin E. Sloane, the commission's acting deputy staff director, told a Senate Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity that housing laws have been "timidly enforced and sometimes hardly enforced at all." He said the fair housing section of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 has been reduced "to no more than a complaint bureau - and not a very effective complaint bureau at that."

"HUD's operation of substantive housing programs has been carried out in almost total isolation from its civil rights responsibilities." He called upon Congress to pass a Metropolitan Equal Opportunity Act which would structure a systematic attack on inequity in housing and education in metropolitan areas. There is a full arsenal of federal laws already in existence barring housing discrimination, Sloane said, but it is made ineffective because the responsibilities for regulation are scattered among so many government agencies.

Observer's Intercom

Dr. Thaddeus H. Spratlen, Director of the Black Economist's Development Project at UCLA, will join the Graduate School Faculty at the University of Washington.

Black football players from the NAIA schools will play in the first black all-star football game as a benefit for Sickle Cell Anemia research and music scholarships. In addition it will spotlight small college players who are often overlooked. Coach for the East will be Oree Banks of South Carolina State and Coach for the West is Vanette Johnson of Arkansas AM&N.

WASHINGTON BRIEFS

The American Civil Liberties Union announced its opposition to the appointment of William Rehnquist as U. S. Supreme Court Justice. This is the first time ACLU has taken a position on a Supreme Court appointment. They fear that Rehnquist would place the rights of the state over the rights of the individual and could not maintain a balance between the two.

Senator Bob Packwood (R-Ore.) has gained assurance from Senator Henry M. Jackson, chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, that hearings on his bill to establish the French Pete intermediate recreation area will be scheduled "early next year."

Military racism charged

A black Air Force Major and a black Captain in the Army Medical Corps testified that although the Armed Services have established housing referral services for military personnel, blacks are still subjected to discrimination in housing.

The testimony was given before the Hearings on Racism in the Military held by the Congressional Black Caucus.

Major Washington Hill, who flew from Frankfurt, Germany to appear at the hearings, said housing discrimination is crucial in Germany. He charged that the American military hierarchy has largely ignored discrimination. He recommended that housing and station allowances be withheld until German landlords have signed compliance contracts. Hill's wife testified that wives of black servicemen are reluctant to complain for fear of reprisals against their husbands. There is also concern about the lack of black teachers in "dependent" schools and the Army's reluctance to recruit black teachers. Most of the schools do not teach Black Studies.

Capt. Edmond Robinson, MD who is stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas said that because of their propensity to Sickle Cell Anemia, blacks are excluded from pilot training, although an adequate medical examination to determine if the disease is present is not given.

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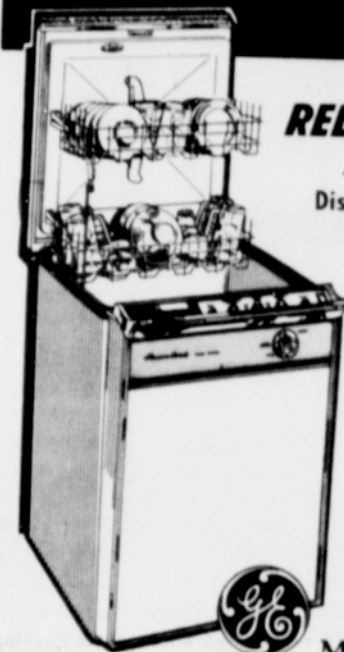
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