



We see the world  
through Black eyes

## Schools get the word - 'Obey the law'

Court rulings requiring desegregation of the nation's schools will at last be enforced. Joseph Califano, Jr., Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has put the school districts on notice that federal funds will be cut off if federal civil rights laws are violated.

This marks the end to the years of disregard of the law promoted by the Nixon and Ford administrations. Over the past five years several Texas and Arkansas districts had been judged to be out of compliance but the former secretary refused to make the decision to cut off funds. School districts knew they had little to fear and no reason to comply. Now Califano, President Carter's new HEW secretary, says he will perform his job.

Emphasizing that he has no desire to block funds to any school district, Califano said the laws will be enforced. "We must now restore the integrity of HEW's civil rights programs and execute those laws and all other civil rights laws with energy and compassion."

Perhaps the Portland Public Schools will take heed and proceed with the desegregation of its remaining majority Black schools before federal orders bring another crisis to the community.

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The school district will soon award bids on its multi-million dollar educational center. Will any of this work go to minority contractors and employees? It is not likely unless the school district makes a strong commitment to insure that minorities are included.

Tri-Met is a good example of an agency that did require its prime contractor to meet EEO regulations and to sub-contract to minority firms. Their were even some thoughts of denying the contract to the low bidder if they did not make a firm commitment to minority participation. The commitment was

made.

The school district, as a public body, has the same obligation. This understanding must be reached immediately, before the contracts are signed. A shut-down by the Black community would prove costly, not only in tax dollars, but in bad publicity -- a problem the district does not need.

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The school board changed its long standing policy of rotating the chairmanship among its members, each taking a turn. That policy seemed to work well for many years; why the change?

The board will have problems if they begin to change their rules to fit their personality preferences.

## Lawyers know better

The American Bar Association, the organization representing half of the nation's attorneys, refused to recommend to the states that the death penalty be abolished.

The legal profession is in the best position to know that justice is not equal in this country -- that minorities still get the poorest legal counsel and that judges and juries still can't see beyond a Black face.

The legal profession also knows of the incompetence within its ranks -- the court appointed attorneys who don't have either the ability or the interest to provide a proper defense for their clients.

The members of the ABA know best how much the fate of a minority or poor defendant rests on chance and how the rich ones never die.

## Rehabilitation: Does the system believe?

(Cont. from page 1 col. 6)

Wilson was arrested at Rocky Butte Jail, accused of taking heroin into the jail, while working as a drug counselor. That week, he had been filling in for another counselor, interviewing jail inmates who had expressed a desire to enter the state's drug treatment program. "What was I doing at Rocky Butte Jail that day? I was there to interview people with drug related cases, talking about their case, their lives, their drug histories, their families, anything to try to help keep them from going to the joint -- where there are all the drugs in the world -- and to get them into treatment."

"After I was there for about forty minutes, waiting to see some men (it usually only takes ten to fifteen minutes), I asked another officer why the wait and if he would help speed up the process. I waited because I was doing my job. Next thing I knew, here comes the police from outside. I watch them through the bars, coming up to the jail, ringing the bell, and I stand and watch them come up to me, show me their ID and ask to talk with me. I said OK and while walking to the 'talking room', one of the officers leaped around my throat and said, 'He's going to his mouth'. Then all hell broke loose because I knew as God is my witness that I didn't do this, so I tried to fight them off me because I knew something was going down wrong. They all jumped on me and downed me. One officer said, 'Here it is', and he put a red balloon in my face."

"They said I had a bottle of methadone in my pocket." The state dropped that charge since the evidence was lost, but it played an important part in Wilson's defense.

"Since then I've learned the discouraging truth that the judicial system does

not and will not believe that I, Babe Wilson, a Black man who gave the Portland police department so much trouble in the past, can make such a positive adjustment to become and stay drug free and further to succeed through will power, self-motivation and the will of God to become a successful drug counselor and helper to others." Wilson emphasized that if the system will not believe him, who demonstrated every day on the job his freedom from drugs, it will not believe the others who are not under such close scrutiny.

"I had begun with the belief that our judicial system searched for effective ways to solve the social problems in our communities. I find instead a system that looks upon success as if it were a mere accident. I find a system that really believes 'Once a dope fiend, always a dope fiend'. I have found a system that functions on compromise and suffocates truth. How can a man like myself and so many others like me find understanding in a system that cares and then learn later that the prescription once used to cure is now used to poison. That is cold blooded."

"I once read, 'Truth conquers slowly. There is wondrous vitality in error. Truth indeed, for the most part, shoots over the heads of the masses, or if an error is prostrated for a moment, it is up again in a moment and is as vigorous as ever. It will not die when the brains are out and the most stupid and irrational errors are the longest lived.' I may never know at what moment success awaits my efforts in counseling drug addicts, but this I know without doubt, succeed or fail, I will not bow to error or succumb under discouragement."

"I appeal to the people to restrain the system from the further commission of injustice and acts of wrong and outrage against me and others who have tried with everything within them to change and to lead meaningful and productive lives."

Will the police system allow a former drug addict to live in peace? Will the system allow its drug treatment plans to rehabilitate addicts? "When I win my appeal, I'll be back with a dedication and determination that surpasses anything I had before. I have greater determination and insight because of this experience with the police and the courts."

"This whole thing is not hard for me or for anyone else who lives in Portland and knows me to understand. I was trouble to the police when I was on the other side of the law and I was still trouble for them when I, Babe Wilson, was getting people out of jail after they had spent so much time and money trying to put them there."

Will they ever let a man reform? "No, there is just no way that the police system can accept the fact that a Black man can pick himself up out of the gutter where they put us and become a man. This is Black History Week and people think about and hear about the contributions Blacks have made and are making, yet the jails are filled with Blacks who are there because the justice system doesn't work for us. And when we get out, or when we go through programs to change our lives and try to become useful citizens, they won't believe us. It doesn't fit their stereotypes. They would rather see Blacks the way they would prefer us to be -- degenerates and criminals. There is just no way that they can believe that I Am Somebody."

## Economic stimulus

by Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

One of President Carter's first actions was to present Congress with a package for "economic stimulus." While stimulation of the economy is badly needed, the stimulus suggested is not enough help to the people who need it most.

Even if the proposed stimulus package is 100 per cent effective, it would do little to reduce our present 7.8 percent unemployment rate. The proposed reductions would be to 6.8 percent by October, 1977 and 6 percent in 1978.

The result for Blacks in this country will be a sustained unemployment rate of 13 percent.

This is an intolerable condition which is causing untold socioeconomic suffering among Black families and the communities within which they live.

Let's look at some of the features of Mr. Carter's plan. They are not new. Most have been included in past proposals to Congress.

Nonetheless, their impact has been insignificant because they lacked, as a major thrust, the reduction of unemployment. Unless it produces jobs, spending money alone means little.

Fortunately, the stimulus package provides for a \$200 million increase in fiscal year 1977 for counter-cyclical assistance to state and local governments and \$1 billion for fiscal year 1978.

This program has proved most beneficial to state and local governments to maintain basic services and avert layoffs of public employees.

## From the Legislature

by Rep. Gretchen Kafoury

Certainly the 1977 session will not be looked upon by posterity as a dull session. There are enough controversial issues floating around this session to satisfy anybody's desire for good hot debate. Some of these issues, however, will probably not go beyond the committee hearings level. There are two measures in particular -- rescinding the 1973 Oregon Legislature's approval of the Equal Rights Amendment and adoption of the death penalty -- they will receive their due share of vocal testimony from those in favor of and opposed to their passage. In addition to those two issues, the Oregon Legislature is beginning to consider emergency measures that would mitigate the potentially disastrous effects of the drought currently plaguing the western states.

### Equal Rights Amendment

The 1973 session of the Oregon Legislature ratified the ERA, being the 25th state to do so. Three more states are needed to ratify the ERA before 1979 in order that it become the 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

This past week legislation was introduced in the Oregon Legislature that

It is effective because assistance is only given to localities with 4.5 percent or more unemployment.

Once again, however, funding falls short. With present unemployment higher than anticipated, it would take \$300 million to carry out formulas in the 1976 law and much more to given added stimulus to the economy.

Public works is proposed as another method of providing jobs. Judging from the number of applications received last year when the United States began an intensified program, additional public works projects are needed. In 1976, 25,000 applications were received totaling a whopping \$29 billion from cities, states and local governments.

None of these applications is for more than \$5 million and construction must be ready to begin in 90 days. This means jobs for construction industry people of all kinds.

The stimulus program submitted to Congress calls for \$4 billion, just enough to fund about one-sixth of the pending applications.

The most controversial part of the package is tax relief. I'm not going to criticize the \$50 per person, even though I'm not sure how much it will do for the economy. And I think the provisions to increase standard income tax deductions are great.

My question concerns the corporate tax benefits.

A business is given the option of either a 4 percent return to employees of payroll

taxes paid for Social Security tax purposes or an increase from 10 percent to 12 percent in the investment tax credit.

We recognize that a real increase in jobs must come in the private sector because four out of five jobs are there. My question is whether this method of government expenditure is effective to produce jobs.

In 1975, we provided some \$5 billion to increase the investment tax credit. Did it produce jobs? Not much so far.

Al Ullman, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is proposing a major change in the business part of the tax cut plan submitted by Mr. Carter. Ullman suggests an employment tax credit this year and next under which the government would pay part of the wages of additional workers a business hires.

This approach not only stimulates the economy and helps business but also guarantees jobs.

This is not a tax break nor a bonanza for businessmen who would make the investment anyway. The attraction of Ullman's proposal is that unless jobs are provided, there is no cost.

I strongly urge Congress to accept Ullman's proposed change. We've waited much too long for an administration to pull our economy out of the doldrums. Let's do it now -- not using old ineffective methods that in the past have produced nothing -- but by straightforward methods which put the unemployed back to work.

Only then can we get real "economic stimulus."

judge must have a separate sentencing hearing for the defendant if he is found guilty. The judge would consider whether the defendant acted intentionally and whether it is probable that he would commit further criminal acts of violence. In addition, the defendant would receive an automatic review by the Oregon Supreme Court of his or her death sentence and the Governor would have the right to commute any death sentence.

### Drought

The current drought affecting Oregon has potentially disastrous effects not only on our economy but also on the many amenities water has provided us.

The Oregon Legislature is taking action on measures that will help to conserve our scarce water reserves. Among the proposed laws being considered is SB 337. This bill would require all toilets installed after January 1, 1978 to flush only 3 1/2 gallons per flush. The average toilet currently uses between 5 and 7 gallons per flush.

A family of four uses approximately 10,000 gallons of water annually, in flushing toilets. It has been estimated that 40 per cent of all water used in homes is for flushing toilets. It is estimated that 17.6 million gallons of water per day could be saved if SB 337 were passed.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Babe Wilson needs support

To the Editor:

This letter is in regard to James "Babe" Wilson - a man who has tried in every way to use his own misfortune to help others. He was convicted of a crime, that I feel in my heart, he is not guilty of. He couldn't be - He went too far out of his way to help others get away from the thing he is being accused of - I'm in drug treatment, and he made that possible by pleading with me to change my life, telling me there was another way to live, that a person did not have to give in to being a drug addict. Everything he told me and showed me was true. He is a living example of what society said could not be done. He changed his life - and others. Now he is in jail because some people feel we never change. I mention again, he was convicted of a drug charge but I wonder if he was really convicted of his past?

Thank you for your time,  
Laurencia Lamberth

To The Editor--

My name is Anna R. Martin. I am a mother of two sons and the wife of a very beautiful man. Right now I am in a drug treatment plan.

I have known Mr. Babe Wilson for so many years and now he is convicted of a crime which I really deep inside don't believe and know he did not do.

Mr. Wilson has always given me some positive ideas to straighten my life out even when I was out on the street messing around I would see Babe and he would always tell me there is a better way of life.

Instead of drugs he would always constantly tell me--Get your life together.

I feel the court did not give him a fair trial because anyone who knows and has met Babe knows he did not do this crime.

Anna R. Martin  
Dear Portland Observer Readers,

At 11:30 p.m., February 4, 1977, an all white jury convicted James Babe Wilson for Criminal Activity in Drugs and Taking Contraband into a Correctional Institution (Rocky Butte Jail). Babe is innocent of these charges. Babe told the truth; he was framed. Unless he wins his case in Appellate Court, he could face spending the rest of his productive life in the penitentiary.

Since Babe left Conquest House, a drug rehabilitation program, he has dedicated his life to helping drug dependant individuals. He spent long hours at Alpha House working with the residents. He would not hesitate to come in at any time,

day or night, to help in a crisis. He talked to addicts on the street, trying to show them that there is a better way of life. By his own example, he showed them that they could change their lives. Babe has had a positive impact on hundreds of lives.

Now Babe needs help. His life is at stake. While Babe was out of jail, he could have raised money for legal expenses by dealing dope. He did not do this - he is a changed man. He could have run, but didn't. He is putting his life in the hands of the community that he worked so hard for.

The bitter reality that he is now facing is that the support he expected is not there. The Defense Fund P.O. Box remains empty. There is an abundance of words of support, but very little action. All of you who complain and cry about social injustice and oppression of minorities and the poor, where are you now? If you are not fighting the problem, then you are part of the problem. Is it so very much to ask for a little of your money and energy? How much is this man's life worth?

Donations and offers of help should be sent to the Babe Wilson Defense Fund, P.O. Box 10681, Portland, Oregon 97210.

Sincerely,  
Nancy L. Adams  
Coordinator  
Babe Wilson Defense Fund



ALFRED L. HENDERSON  
Editor/Publisher

## Portland Observer

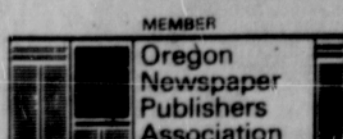
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