

We see the world
through Black eyes

Reverse combat pay?

The Portland School Board has budgeted the amount of \$455,177 for school desegregation. Portions of this money are to be spent on transportation, a desegregation specialist, and recruiting. On the surface this looks like a good idea.

It is puzzling to find an item budgeted for \$167,994 - the largest item in the desegregation budget - that will supply extra teachers to majority white high schools that lose students to the magnet programs at Jefferson or Adams. Justification for this expenditure, which clearly has nothing to do with desegregation, is to pay principals of white schools to cooperate with desegregation. Clearly, no white principal would recommend white students to transfer to Jefferson or Adams unless there was some financial compensation for his interest.

Why call these desegregation funds? Desegregation funds should go to aid minority students in white schools, or white students in minority schools, - but to white students in white schools? Strange.

It could have something to do with federal pressure to proceed with school desegregation. It might look good to the federal government that the Portland Public Schools are spending \$455,177 to further desegregation - even if it isn't.

Support SB850

Senate Bill 850, currently in the Senate Ways and Means Committee, would establish a commission to study the status of Blacks in Oregon.

Blacks have had a difficult history in this state - first excluded from moving into the area, then constitutionally banned from residence. Even after the Civil War settled the slavery question, Blacks were still legally barred from owning property, serving on juries, voting, and in general, for taking part in the economic and political life of the community. These laws were not rigidly enforced, but the attitudes pervaded white society and still prevail.

Now nearly 150 years later, Black people still do not fully participate in the benefits of life in Oregon. Blacks are underrepresented in employment and in decision making roles; attend segregated schools; are more easily and frequently incarcerated, and meet all kinds of barriers.

In the 1950's Oregon was one of the first states to pass civil rights laws. Since then federal laws and directions have been provided to aid minorities in their effort to attain first class citizenship. Unfortunately these laws are not always enforced.

SB 850 would provide a Commission, made up

mostly of Blacks, and funds to study the current laws and policies of government and public agencies, labor organization, private businesses, educational systems, etc. to determine to what degree discrimination exists and which established laws and procedures promote or remedy discrimination.

The Commission would not have much authority. It could not subpoena records. It could not force compliance. It could only advise.

One thing the Commission could do is to gather existing data and make an overall study of where Blacks are in the state. These facts could then be used to justify the later creation of a Commission that would have some power and authority to make changes.

The other function the Commission could serve is to bring the facts to the public. Often the embarrassment of a public revelation brings change.



From the Legislature

by Rep. Gretchen Kalsoury

RULES COMMITTEE

Last week probably was one of the most difficult in Oregon legislative history. The differences among the many members as to how the session was progressing and how it should be managed resulted, as you know, in the transfer of many responsibilities to the newly established Rules Committee.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Rules Committee members and all other members of the House have a busy schedule ahead of them. House Speaker Phil Lang in a floor statement on Thursday pointed out several key areas which they must deal with before final adjournment. Top among the priorities he cited are legislative actions on energy conservation and community corrections. The community corrections package is about to be sent to the full House from the Judiciary Committee.

Other priority areas the Lang identified for action this session are revisions in land-use planning laws, field burning,

additional highway or transportation revenue, timber taxation, and changes in the workmen's compensation laws.

Lang also cited two major accomplishments already achieved by the House. These are House passage of an increased Homeowner and Renter Relief Program and a reformed school finance package.

The Homeowner and Renter Relief Program was changed to increase the size of payments to residential property taxpayers and to expand the eligibility limits from \$15,000 annual adjusted gross income to \$20,000.

The School Finance package included major reform in the method of distributing school equalization support and a substantial increase in the amount of basic school support provided to local school districts by the state.

The Relief program represents direct relief from local property taxes and the school finance package represents indirect relief through helping to hold down increases in local school property taxes. Taken together, these two major accomplishments represent the most massive

taxpayer relief program in the history of Oregon.

Both of these measures are now undergoing review in the Senate Revenue and School Finance Committee.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The House this past week concentrated on its internal rules and Lang said that they must now concentrate on "getting the legislative process back on track in order that the remainder of the session may be concluded in an orderly manner so that we will depart from Salem with a record of accomplishments which both Democrats and Republicans can be proud of."

INFORMATION

There are many bills which we are working on in the various committees now. If you need information about the status of a particular bill you may easily obtain it by calling Legislative Information. Their toll-free number is:

1-800-452-0290

PSU Education Opportunity Program for all students

by Herb L. Cawthorne

In November of 1976, I was fortunate enough to be selected to assume the directorship of the Operation PLUS program at the Portland State University campus. This opportunity created a difficult challenge - it was a challenge to strengthen a program torn by internal strife and institutional neglect.

Working with a nucleus of competent staff from the Operation PLUS program, a large scale reorganization began upon my arrival in November. In January, 1977, the program was renamed The Educational Opportunity Program.

In a letter to students, faculty and friends of the former program I wrote, "The Educational Opportunity Program will carry on the work of the former Operation PLUS program. We will continue to focus time and resources on the development of students who have not previously experienced success in the educational system, but who demonstrate the potential and desire to achieve in college."

Whereas the Operation PLUS program was isolated and took on the character of an appendage to the university, the E.O.P. will be integrated in every way possible. Whereas many students were placed in the former program based on faulty and discriminatory criteria, the E.O.P. will be a voluntary program which attracts students who seek the tutorial, counseling and instructional services provided.

I must admit that Portland State has been guilty in the past of allowing the Operation PLUS program to serve as the

main clearinghouse for a large portion of the Black participation in the institution. The impression was allowed to develop which indicated that Operation PLUS was a program for Black students. Not only was the university administration at fault for allowing this impression to spread, but the leadership in the former program encouraged this impression. Thus, I found many Black students in the former program, not necessarily because they wanted to be, but because they thought they had to be. Many were of the opinion that Operation PLUS provided the only means for them to attend Portland State. This, in most cases, was completely false.

The Educational Opportunity Program is not for Blacks, or whites, or Chicanos, or Native Americans, or Asian - unless they are in need of special assistance in order to complete the college experience. All students who need this help will have the chance to enroll in the program. Those who do not need the services, regardless of their color, will not be forced into the program simply in order to meet a quota which has nothing to do with the needs of students.

If the federal proposal is approved, the Educational Opportunity Program will conduct several skill development courses next year. Our staff will teach such courses as Elements of Writing, Specialized Reading, Communications, Basic Research Skills, Language Improvement, Vocabulary Development, and other courses which help students maximize the benefits of college.

Arrangements have been completed with the Office of Financial Aids at P.S.U., and students participating in the

program will be assured of adequate financial support throughout their college career. At no institution in the State of Oregon is the commitment to serve low-income students with financial aid more evident than at Portland State.

Counseling and tutorial services have been expanded, and every student in the program will be entitled to a wide range of special services, including academic advising, orientation activities, group workshops, referral and employment services, as well as personal and career counseling.

The E.O.P. is eager to serve students who truly want to benefit from higher learning. And many Black students, some of whom have not been encouraged to think about college although they have the abilities to succeed, would benefit from the atmosphere and services of the program.

Through classes, financial aid, counseling, and tutorial assistance, the new Educational Opportunity Program seeks to improve the ability of students to adjust to the large and often insensitive environment of the institution. Once adjusted and endowed with certain skills, the student can then capitalize on the advantages of higher education.

As W.E.B. DuBois wrote nearly fifty years ago, "The aim of higher learning of the college is the development of power, and the training of a self whose balanced assertion will mean as much as possible for the great ends of civilization." Toward this important end, the Educational Opportunity Program stands ready to make its contribution to the higher learning of students from this community.

Racists oppose affirmative action

by Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

One of my colleagues in the Senate was quoted the other day as saying, "A person is equally unemployed no matter where he may be, but it takes unequal measures to create a job for him."

I'd like to take this idea a step further, only applying it to racism.

Let's phrase the thought this way: a victim of racism is equally discriminated against no matter where he may be, and it takes unequal measures to create a non-racist society for him.

Sounds rather simplistic, but the resistance against creating such a society seems to be growing.

Throughout the country, the attacks are centering on affirmative action measures, which operate on the basis that aggressive positive activity must occur in all parts of the society, in order to end discriminatory practices against minorities.

There is plenty of evidence to show that aggressive, positive activity pays off, if we look at the improvements experienced by minorities in employment housing and education. But these are also the areas where the greatest struggles are occurring.

The opponents of affirmative action argue that affirmative action leads to all kinds of discriminatory injuries to the minority group, which culminates in reverse discrimination.

The proponents of affirmative action state that the only way to end discrimination is to move aggressively against it, with penalties being meted out to those who fail to end discriminatory practices.

Affirmative action opponents think that the outlawing of discrimination is all that is necessary; then all matters dealing with people should be of a "color-blind" nature.

Affirmative action proponents say that the "color-blind" code doesn't work; that minorities start off with a disadvantage (being the recipients of racist acts) therefore to affirm nondiscriminatory conduct means actively working against any and all discrimination!

Naturally these questions can be debated forever, without getting to the heart of the problem.

I believe, however, that most realistic people recognize the fact that racism exists in this country. And that non-whites (especially Blacks) are the major victims of its poisonous venom.

Letters to the Editor

Support conscience

Your editorial of April 7 entitled "Legalize Disobedience" has come to my attention. Thank you for your interest in and apparent support for S. 880 and its companion bill, H.R. 4897.

It has always been recognized by this government, and indeed by many disciplines, whether it be philosophy, political science, or theology, that war is unique within the functions of political rule. Objection to war is not the same as objection to welfare payments, highways or new federal buildings. There is no analogy between objecting to war and killing on the one hand, and citizen objection to other types of programs on the other. To require citizens opposed to war on moral and theological grounds to support killing implicates their conscience, because unlike other governmental activity, taxes supporting warfare directly involve the taking of life.

As the Supreme Court has noted, the

legislative history of the conscientious objector exemption reveals a "deep concern for the situation of conscientious objectors to war, who absent special status would be put to a hard choice between contravening imperatives of religion and conscience or suffering penalties," and that, "there are clear indications that Congressional reluctance to impose such a choice stems from recognition of the value of conscientious action to the democratic community at large, and from respect for the general proposition that fundamental principles of conscience and religious duty may sometimes override the demands of the secular state." Gillett v. United States, 401 U.S. 437, 445 (1971).

In terms of a person's religious beliefs, the violation of conscience is the same whether the person is asked to kill in war or to provide the means by which others may do so. The purpose of my bill,

therefore, is not to "legalize" disobedience, but as your editorial headline states, to extend the principle of legal recognition to those who are caught between firmly rooted convictions and love and honor for their country.

I should add that as Congress requires a conscientious objector to our military service a reasonable alternative in civilian service, so does this bill provide an analogous alternative equivalent payment into a federal fund for humanitarian and peaceful purposes. As you have pointed out so clearly, "In light of increasing military spending this is not a bad idea."

Thank you for this opportunity to comment upon your editorial.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,
Mark O. Hatfield
United States Senator

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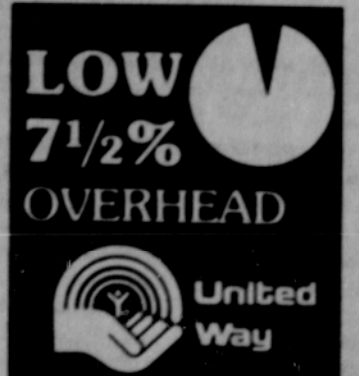
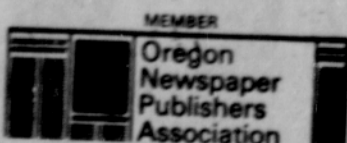
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