



We see the world
through Black eyes

Corrections program needs support

The recent study of the justice system in Multnomah County by the Community Corrections Advisory Board found once again that Blacks and other minority people are discriminated against by the police and by the court system.

The process, which results in nearly twenty percent of the prison population being Black in a state that repeatedly has less than three percent Black population, begins with the police department. Although Oregon law allows police officers to issue citations rather than arrest persons charged with minor crimes, only seven percent of the Blacks charged are cited and 93 percent are jailed.

This jailing can be for a few hours, if the person is fortunate enough to be arrested during the daytime, or can last through the trial. Blacks are less apt to be released on their own cognizance because they are less likely to have jobs, references and other criteria necessary for this kind of release. With less access to bail money, they remain in jail.

The study also states that persons coming to trial while still in jail are more likely to be found guilty by a jury. Since minorities are more often confined in jail prior to their trial, this fact alone

increases the percentage of convictions. Add to this the lack of access to adequate legal counsel, the absence of Blacks in juries, and the racism that is prevalent in society and therefore must be present in jurors.

This high percentage of convictions, along with longer sentences, makes a highly disproportionate prison population.

The Community Correction's program adopted by Multnomah County will attempt to keep persons who commit minor offenses out of jail by diverting offenders — both before and after trial — into alternative programs that address the causes of crime. This is an ambitious program and to be successful will need the full cooperation of the police, the District Attorney's office, and the courts. With the police indiscriminately arresting minorities, the District Attorney calling for bigger and better jails, and the judge imposing longer and longer sentences, this program doesn't stand much of a chance.

The County Commission (with the exception of Don Mosey and Alice Corbett, who voted against the program) are to be commended for taking this step. But the hard job of selling it to the public and to the justice system is still ahead.

Money goes to wrong pocket

This is called a time of tax-revolt, when taxpayers are getting so tired of paying more and more taxes that they are threatening to endanger even the basic services provided by local government.

City councils, county commissions and most public bodies are trying to determine where they can cut costs and save money. They are being careful not to give the appearance of flagrant spending.

Yet at its last meeting the Portland School Board gave Superintendent Robert Blanchard a \$3,000 per year raise. Already one of the highest paid public administrators in the state, and in a district where the children's school days had to

be reduced because of lack of money, does the superintendent really need a raise?

At what point does a "public servant" reach a salary where he doesn't need a cost of living increase? Can we look forward to paying \$60,000 in another year or two?

When the President is calling on labor and business to hold the line on wages and prices, when social security and welfare recipients are denied "inflationary" increases, is it reasonable to give a substantial raise to a school superintendent?

We believe this action provides a degree of justification to those who are denouncing the public schools and local government in general.



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Determined will strengthens coalition impact

by Herb L. Cawthorne

For the whole of fourteen years, the Black community of Portland has endured a massive process of reorganization of its schools. Children have been sent to the far corners of the city. It was only after continued instances of abuse, of children being left standing in the cold rain at bus stops, of teachers being disbursed, of the expulsion rate soaring that the reality of the devastation began to crack the thick complacency of Black residents. And dissatisfaction finally found expression in stronger voices — voices no longer afraid, no longer willing to call such policies equitable when they are not.

A coalition formed. It seemed as though the Black community stood firm to say, "We will study; we will think; we will recommend; we will embrace our supporters and persuade our enemies; we will stand up for our children." One thing was sure: Few were willing to allow the Board of Education to continue to make decisions and to determine the fate of our future for us.

The Community Coalition for School Integration was born last August 24th when nearly 60 individuals from all over the city gathered at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus. Much to the credit of the Black community, the Coalition grew to include more than 100 individuals, 36 organizations, and raised more than \$56,000 to conduct its work.

A research committee was created. Its focus was determined by a tolerant, open decision-making process. The beginning stage in-

volved a series of community forums. Held all over the city, these forums gave the Coalition a chance to listen, to share, and to create from community concerns a preliminary framework for the research effort.

A total of 15 forums were conducted. Over 400 citizens participated. It was an extensive dialogue, something many had written off as virtually impossible. The Coalition's research process was launched with a consideration of the four major concerns which arose during the community forums. Those concerns were (1) inequity, (2) interracial understanding, (3) quality education, and (4) neighborhood integrity.

The Community Coalition for School Integration will present its report and its recommendations to the public and the Board of Education in November. The document will be comprehensive, a thorough record of the past and present situation with regard to desegregation. Recommendations will be specific and far-reaching.

No process of community participation in Portland public education has been so complete, so open, so carefully managed. And no process has seen the Black community so totally involved in the review of the school system's response to the desegregation movement here.

In spite of its competent work, the Coalition will not maximize its impact without a consolidated will within the Black community to insure that, for once, the Board of Education will not ignore our wishes and use our children as pawns, and

thrust upon us the lonesome burden of integrating this city's schools.

Admittedly, there have been some criticisms of the development of the Coalition — some are founded, others are not. Too many whites hired as staff, too many white people involved, Black members not representative, a useless and wasted effort, a cluttered process, that integration is unworkable — these include some of the criticisms voiced time to time.

However, the present circumstances call for the Black community to stand together, to minimize the minor criticism and rally around the cause of better education for the children who constitute our hopeful future.

The impact of the Coalition's report, I believe, depends on the political will of the Black community. The Board will not act out of goodness, but out of political need. The great majority of the white community will not act from a set of high moral ideals, but out of a political need. It is the contention here that the consolidated will, the uncompromising drive, of this community can create the proper political need or atmosphere to insure an equitable response to the Coalition's report.

To project his determined will, and to demand and obtain equity, the criticisms and disagreements must for the time being be forgotten. We must focus on the chance to maximize a better opportunity for Black children in this city.

The stakes are too high to do otherwise.

Full representation for Washington DC

by Vernon Jordan

The Congress is considering a proposed constitutional amendment that would finally give full Congressional representation to Washington, D.C.

Such a move is long overdue. There can be no justification for depriving the people of the District of so basic a right. A nation whose founding revolution based on the principle of no taxation without representation can no longer refuse representation to citizens of its capital.

Along with the overriding philosophical principle of representation, there are important arguments supporting an amendment that would end the colonization of Washington, D.C.

Its size is one. Home to 760,000 people, the District is already more populous than ten states. Its people pay well over a billion dollars in taxes — more than was returned from nineteen states. Its per capita tax payments were higher than all but three states.

So the argument that giving the District two Senators and a voting representative would be unfair to the states, whose voting power in Congress would be diluted slightly, is meaningless. States with smaller populations and states generating fewer tax revenues have been admitted to the Union and receive their

share of two Senate seats and one or two Representatives.

The District has always been treated like a political colony. It has not had a voting representative in Congress since 1800. Since 1970 it has had only a single non-voting Representative. It wasn't until 1964 that District citizens had the right to vote for Presidential and Vice Presidential electors. For a hundred years, until 1974, its local government was appointed.

That's a disgraceful record, made the more disgraceful by the continued disenfranchisement of its citizens who are taxed but have no say in how their taxes are used.

The blatant unfairness of this situation makes voting rights for the District a major civil rights question. And that aspect is heightened by the District's large Black population — about 70 percent of the total. Thirteen years after passage of the Voting Rights Act, Black and white, Washingtonians are still deprived of basic electoral rights.

Some may fear that the District's two Senators will be Black and liberal. But such an objective is too base even to surface into the open. Simple fairness demands change, and Blacks and liberals have never objected to the right of representation for areas that are all white or predominately conservative.

The House of Representatives has already passed a resolution calling

for granting the District two Senators. House members and Presidential electors based on population, and participation in the ratification of Constitutional amendments. The Senate is considering a slightly different measure, but both agree on the substance of Congressional representation for the District.

It is important that an amendment draft be passed for consideration by the states. Three-fourths of the states have to back it for the measure to become part of the Constitution, making voting rights for the District effective. The 23rd Amendment, which gave District residents the vote in Presidential elections passed swiftly, which indicates that a new amendment extending the right to vote would also be backed.

The Senate should not allow itself to be sidetracked by competing proposals to make the District a separate state or to make it part of Maryland. Those suggestions deny the District's special character and are complicated, tortured means of arriving at the basic end — Congressional representation.

As befits a major civil rights issue, there is a broad consensus behind voting rights for the District. Both parties endorsed the right to Congressional representation in their 1976 platforms and the fight for the amendment is a bi-partisan effort. It should succeed.

Letters to the Editor

Prison open house

To the Editor:

EDDYVILLE, KENTUCKY — For the first time in the 91 year history of the prison here, the iron doors were opened to allow the 850 prisoners met with their families. Approximately 1,200 visitors, including wives, children and other relatives, stepped inside the cavernous institution during the recent holidays. Corrections officials said they opened up the iron doors to the state's only maximum security facility to show they mean business with a new incentive program designed to make prisoners want to live better lives. The open house visitation permitted visitors to enter prisoner's cells as well as roam the prison's grounds.

"I can't say how I feel," prison Superintendent Don Borden Kircher said afterwards. "I'm choked up, and I'm not supposed to choke up. We've watched history."

"I saw a man pushing his little boy across the yard on a tricycle. If that won't make a man want to get out of this place, what will?" said Dr. Davis Bland, Commissioner of Corrections, after watching the visitation.

Reginald I. Cox #38332

Provides service

To the Editor:

Congratulations on the award that you have won! You certainly do perform a valuable community

service by getting out the news and commentary we can't get elsewhere.

The Book center fills the same kind of need — we try to be a resource for all women. Besides selling books by and for women, non-sexist children's literature, records by women and periodicals for women; we have a lending library, a joint monthly newsletter with the Women's Resource Center that lists women's events and carries news of local women's projects, and referral and reference information.

Our lending library includes subscriptions to women's newspapers and magazines from all over.

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