

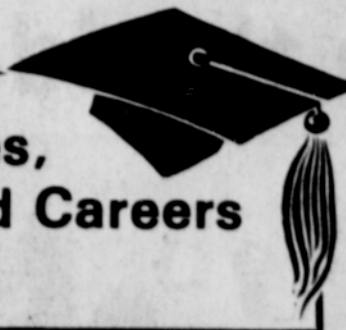


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## Black convention urges unity and dedication

**GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.** — This weekend Portland, Ore. hosted the Fourth Annual Convention of the National Black United Front. Afro-Americans from Chicago, Houston, New York, Washington D.C., St. Louis and Seattle grappled with issues and formulated solutions to solve some of the problems facing people of African descent here in America.

The delegation heard keynote addresses from the national chairperson of NBUF, Rev. Herbert Daughtry, Dean Derrick Bell from the University of Oregon Law School, and cultural disseminators Sonia Sanchez and Dr. Maulana Karenga.

In a prepared text, Dr. Bell updated the national delegation on the situation of Afro-Americans in the State of Oregon. "Please, do not allow these individual appointments in the State to obscure the Black unemployment rate of twenty percent as compared to less than ten percent overall. You might see a few Blacks on the streets of Portland and virtually none outside the city. But the cellblocks of the State prison contain the highest percentage of Blacks as compared to the state population of any state in the nation save our sister state of Washington."

Bell says he believes the Supreme Court's desegregation decision has affected only a small percentage of the nation's Afro-American population. "No one here could have predicted that its impact on Blacks

would have meant so much for a few and so little for so many.... I suggest to you that there are few Black families today who do not have blood relatives dead too soon, locked away in prison too long, or seeking with suicidal fury an escape through drugs or drink from a life of subordination and poverty which in its own way is more devastatingly destructive than the existence when the law for Blacks was taught at the end of a whip."

Bell also believes that the industrialization of the last twenty years has helped to sap the strength of the Black family. "As large numbers of Blacks migrated to the cities from rural areas, Black males were unable to find work. As a result 48 percent of the Black families with children under 18 are headed by single parent females. These households are not less appropriate for the care and raising of children. But the 1979 median income for Black female-headed households was \$6,610 as compared with \$20,000 for all families."

Bell concluded by saying, "We must speak out for justice in a climate where the laws take bread from the needy so the rich may eat cake. We must seek justice as we patiently point out the obvious: that generations of overt discrimination have rendered half our people unable to take opportunities, and without the type of remediation we bestow on the worst forms of Right

Wing governments abroad, and on every billion-dollar corporation that has bungled its way to the brink of bankruptcy at home."

The National Black United Front started as the dream of a small group in New York. The chairperson of the National BUF, Rev. Herbert Daughtry, said that in the beginning many doubted the resiliency and strength of the concept of an organization formulated to voice the concerns of the conservative, moderate, reform, radical, nationalist and revolutionary constituencies in the Black community. "In 1979, there were many who thought we would not last the year. But we have survived and prospered."

"When we study the political scene it is significant that where political gains have been made you will find a Black United Front chapter playing a key role."

The growth of NBUF has been remarkable and testifies to the willingness of Afro-Americans to now set its own course to direct their future and control the present. Daughtry says, "We started with an organization of five local chapters to twenty chapters and a presence in forty cities. So, you can tell the detractors that NBUF is here to stay."

With Unity the theme for this year's convention, Rev. Daughtry concluded his remarks with, "Forward Together, Backwards Never!"

(See related stories on pages 2 and 5)

## Loophole may threaten Federal minority contractors

by Charles Goodmacher

The U.S. Department of Transportation published a final regulation in the July 21 *Federal Register* which creates a loophole by which minority business participation in the department's financial assistance programs for highway and mass transit may be avoided by local agencies. The regulation is a Reagan Administration interpretation of section 105(f) of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 as passed by Congress.

The new rule requires state highway agencies and transit authorities to have a plan to include disadvantaged businesses in their DOT-assisted programs in a manner

assisted programs in a manner similar to the current DOT-Minority Business Enterprise regulations. Each agency or authority must submit an annual overall goal for the participation it hopes to achieve that year. The rule does not require proof of actually having signed contracts with minority businesses.

If the Department does not approve the goal the recipient has requested, the Department, after consulting with the recipient, may establish an adjusted overall goal that represents "a reasonable expectation" for disadvantaged business participation in the recipient's programs. Thus, even in cases where the Department is not presented with proof that a lower goal is necessary

a ten percent goal may still not be required.

A recipient would be in noncompliance with the new rule only if it did not have an approved program or an overall goal or, having been unable to justify its failure to meet its goal, failed to take "appropriate" remedial steps to correct the situation.

The regulation provides that inability to meet an overall goal will not, in itself, result in loss of federal funds. Neither will the State or City be disqualified from receiving future Federal financial assistance of any type. The Reagan Administration apparently believes that merely being required to do some paperwork is punishment enough.

## Immigration laws used unfairly

by Robert Lothian

Refugees from political violence in El Salvador and Guatemala are migrating north in large numbers, yet U.S. immigration policies recognize them as fugitives from poverty only, and so they are detained and deported when caught as illegal aliens.

An estimated 500,000 Salvadorans are in the U.S. now, nearly 10% of that country's population. According to the Congressional testimony of Sen. Edward Kennedy, as many as 1,000 per month are being deported. Many are tortured and killed upon their arrival at San Salvador airport, according to Amnesty International.

U.S. immigration policies allow fugitives from left-wing regimes — Cubans, Vietnamese, Poles — to enter

the country with relative ease. They are even offered millions of dollars in special programs at U.S. taxpayers' expense. Yet desperate peasants fleeing from right-wing dictatorships supported by the U.S. government are driven to enter the "land of the free and the home of the brave" illegally.

"Basically there's no way they can get here legally unless they've got money, relatives or connections," according to Terry Rogers, coordinator of CAMINO, the Central Americans in Oregon Refugee Support Committee. CAMINO is lobbying for liberalized immigration policies that will allow refugees to stay in this country legally, and against the efforts of conservative congressmen to make it even harder for the refugees to be here.

According to Robert Krueger, district director of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service in Portland, legal immigration from most countries is limited to 20,000 per year. There are long waiting lists, he said, and each year about half of the two million persons who apply are turned away.

Once refugees enter the U.S. illegally and get picked up by immigration authorities, they have three options: voluntary departure, extended voluntary departure or political asylum.

Those applying for asylum must qualify as someone who is "persecuted, or has a reasonable fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political (Continued on Page 4, Column 4)



Having a broken leg in the summertime must be hard on a guy like Terrance Young, almost 3, but the love of a friend like Tiffany Robinson, age 3, sure makes it easier to bear.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

## OPEU nears strike vote

by Robert Lothian

A strike by Oregon public employees could come as soon as mid-August if progress is not made in contract talks, according to a business agent for the Oregon Public Employees Union.

Management's attitude has been "stall, stall, stall," said Gail Washington. "We don't have a contract and we have no reasonable offer from the state," she said.

Washington said that the 17,000 state employees represented by the union have been without a contract since June 30th. Talks have progressed through mediation and fact finding, which means that rejection of management's last offer opens the way to a strike vote. Notice of a strike vote must be filed before a 30-day "cooling off period" ends August 11, she said.

Public employees' wages and benefits are paid out of state tax revenues, and so with hard times and lower tax revenues they are caught in a bind, said Washington.

Union members have done their part to help the state through the recession, she said, by going along with layoffs and a wage freeze. The OPEU has already agreed to a wage freeze for the first year of the new contract, according to Washington, tied to a "reopener" should state revenues increase.

"We took a pay freeze and we have been in that position for a year," she said. Also, she said, a un-

cluded workshops on preventive health care which helped out medical insurance claims. "We are the only union that has initiated these kinds of programs," said Washington.

"The main thing I want to stress is that money is not the issue." The real negotiating issues as far as the state is concerned, said Washington, are fairness, job security and "takebacks." Public employees wonder at the fairness of having to accept a wage freeze while the governor's office is basking in a 16% increase, for instance, she said, and the fairness of management continuing full insurance coverage for itself while not offering the same to workers.

"Contracting out" of some jobs which might ordinarily be done by state employees is a technique the state is turning to ostensibly to save money, but it takes jobs away from union members, said Washington. To ease effects on public employees, the union is asking the state to enter into negotiations with the union when it lets out contracts, but the state is stalling on the issue, she said.

State employee job security is also threatened, according to Washington, by management pushing to be able to interrupt work for up to two 15-day periods within each quarter. Touted as another budget-saving tactic, such interruptions could not only turn employees' lives upside down, they could also cause prob-

lem cost containment program in-lems with eligibility for unemployment, she said. Employees could be laid off for two weeks, called back for two days, then laid off again for two weeks. "We feel this is an erosion of their current rights," said Washington.

Management also seeks to take back hard-won health benefits by demanding that employees must work 80 hours each month in order to qualify instead of the current 32, she said.

With the economy improving, said Washington, management might view the negotiations as a last chance to erode the achievements won by the union in the past. "These are real takebacks," she said. "We've already paid, we've paid with layoffs, we paid with a pay freeze. Being a state employee does not make your expenses any less, and we feel that we should not have to bear the brunt."

"Hyster was a good example" of a complete takeback, she said. "State employees are being treated like all employees right now in terms of takebacks."

"I think a strike would mean public employees will not be treated differently than other employees. They want to be treated fairly."

"A strike is not the ultimate goal, a fair agreement is the ultimate goal," she said. "We want a signed agreement that our members feel is fair and that they can live with. We will settle for fairness, that's all."