

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Tax bill important to low and moderate income families

by U.S. Rep. William H. Gray, III

Low- and moderate-income American taxpayers will get a major break if the much-debated tax reform bill becomes law this year.

Before adjourning last month, the House of Representatives passed legislation which—if approved by the Senate—will grant much needed and long-overdue tax relief to millions of families who were written out of President Reagan's massive 1981 tax cut.

Our legislation would provide important relief in two ways:

- First, it would sharply reduce the tax burden on as many as 6.5 million low-income households by removing them from the tax rolls. This means that whereas families with two children now pay taxes when their incomes hit a mere \$9,739, under our bill, they would pay no federal taxes until they earn \$14,475.

- Secondly, it would lower the tax burden for middle-income families—those earning \$20,000 to \$40,000 a year—by as much as 10 percent.

Clearly, the House's tax reform bill addresses one of the ironies and inequities in the Federal tax system—its bias against poor people.

Since President Reagan took office, the proportion of income that Americans at the poverty line pay the federal government has jumped dramatically. In 1973, a poverty-line family paid 1.9 percent of its income to Uncle Sam; but for 1985, that same family will pay 10.4 percent of its income to the federal government.

Many observers, therefore, view the tax bill as the most important, positive legislation development in years for low- and middle-income America—and I'm inclined to agree.

For example, under current law by next year a four-member family with earnings of \$12,000 would owe \$1,271 in federal income and Social Security taxes.

The legislation we passed in the House would reduce this to \$399—a cut of 69 percent.

This cut is important not only to the typical American family.

It's important, also, to our neighborhood stores and businesses. By our cutting individual tax rates and preserving such provisions as the full credit for child care expenses, low and moderate-income American families will have that much more money to spend on goods and services in their neighborhoods.

Finally, the tax bill is important because while it provides equity for millions of ordinary taxpayers, it also makes sure that profitable corporations and upper-income persons pay their fair share.

The House legislation shows that by zeroing in on individuals and businesses who currently pay little or no taxes, we can provide relief for most taxpayers.

At the same time, we have provided incentives for a stronger economy through a significant cut in tax rates for corporations which currently pay their fair share. These businesses will have an added incentive to make productive investments rather than seek tax shelters.

Our bill is not perfect by any means. It leaves unsettled, for instance the inequity of our regressive Social Security tax.

But we made a realistic and major step toward a fairer tax system. The House has acted decisively toward this goal.

Let's hope that the Senate can do the same to make our tax system more fair and more efficient for all Americans.

## Letters to the Editor

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed or neatly printed and signed with the author's name and address (addresses are not usually published).

We reserve the right to edit for length. Mail to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

### Neighborhood planning emergency

To the Editor:

Northeast Portland, in my opinion, is about to be ripped-off again. For years we have qualified the city for millions of dollars in poverty funds, only to have the money spent elsewhere, or wasted on poorly-planned programs run by people downtown.

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) plan for Northeast Portland is another example. A series of budget hearings are now taking place at City Hall. The Portland Development Commission (PDC) walked out with over \$6 million, just for housing alone. Northeast was beat down to \$21,000, and even that has to be turned back to PDC control. If PDC can't run all the housing programs in Northeast, they won't cooperate.

But the final plan is not completed. It must first be approved by City Council. And before that can happen, there must be a public hearing at 7 p.m., Jan. 23, at the King Center. If you don't like city policy, you better come to the hearing and protest.

The major issue is simple. Who sets the policy for Northeast? Federal law says we have that right. It is called the right of local control. Most neighborhood associations want the mayor to appoint a special, high-level board of directors for Northeast, to administer our housing, employment and economic development programs.

Members of this Northeast board must be residents of Northeast, representing the neighborhoods served by the program. The city already promised us \$250,000 per year, for three years, to improve and coordinate Northeast programs. The problem is that PDC gets millions of dollars to do the same thing, but they don't want to cooperate with us. Neither do some of the favorite private agencies in the community. They line up with PDC to fight us.

They are paid off with a pitance and go their separate way. Meanwhile Northeast suffers from all this infighting and lack of accountability. How can you fight PDC, when they have a multi-million guaranteed budget?

The Sabin Community Association has joined Vernon, King and Humbolt neighborhoods to protest the PDC steamroller. We have asked the private agencies to help us. Let's stop fighting among ourselves long enough to give the mayor a chance to establish a public agency for Northeast, accountable to City Council, with administrative authority and enough program control to make sure Northeast Portland gets its fair share. What good are all these programs if

they don't serve the people? All we are asking for is \$500,000, a far cry from the millions controlled by downtown agencies.

But now PDC has been joined by the Portland Private Industry Council (PPIC). PDC took away our housing program. Now PPIC has taken away our employment program.

But the battle is not over. You can still help. Come to the hearing at 7 p.m., Jan. 23, at King Center. Help us get our programs and our money back. Call 248-4575 for information. Call me at 287-0826 if you want to help the neighborhood associations present our side of the story to City Council. United we stand, divided we fall.

Ray Hanson

### United Way thanks

To the Editor:

With the local United Way campaign now completed, I would like to express my gratitude to *Portland Observer* readers for helping to make 1985 a record-breaking year. Thanks to your assistance, the campaign brought in nearly \$17 million—more money than United Way of the Columbia-Willamette has ever raised before.

Essential to that success were the thousands of local volunteers and contributors who, despite economic uncertainty, gave generously to provide hope and opportunity for neighbors less fortunate than themselves.

As always, contributors can rest assured that their donations will be used in an efficient and worthy manner. Last year, United Way's 100 member agencies provided human and health care services to half a million people, or one out of every

three local residents.

What's more, the success of this year's campaign reaffirms something that should make us all feel proud—that the spirit of caring continues to thrive in our local community.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Anderson

Volunteer Campaign Chairman, and Executive Director, Port of Portland

### Children are the future

To the Editor:

Thank you for featuring the children this holiday season on your front pages of the Christmas and New Years issues.

The children are the future of our country and during such trying times they need every bit of encouragement they can get. *Ebony* does a good job of showing successful Black America but children often find it sadly neglected as how to get there. Whenever possible feature stories about people doing a good job working with children and youth will give encouragement.

Thank you for a fine, outspoken newspaper. I heard a quotation read from the *Portland Observer* over the radio when President Reagan was at the University of Portland. In fact it was from an article I had given him.

Thank you again.

Gertrude Beckwith

### Proper credit

To the Editor:

Enjoyed the article on the PIC. It deserves much publicity. Must point out however that Margaret Strachan was the initiator of the leaders roundtable. The Mayor got credit but she's the one that started it along with Roger Breezley of the U.S. Bank.

Thank you,

Bud

J. E. Bud Clark, Mayor

### Northeast dialogue

With The Name Allah  
The Gracious, The Compassionate

To the Editor:

Re: Dr. Cherovee's letter in the Jan. 8 issue.

I don't hold out much hope of constructive dialogue because of the tone of the brother's letter, but I am willing to try. I'm not going to take up valuable space in this paper trying to respond to the additional issues raised by Mr. Cherovee, but I will say this: if the brother will go back over my letter he will see that I did not call him a liar. I did acknowledge the validity of the position in regard to legalizing prostitution.

He claims that there is not an atom of truth in what I said. Come on brother! You can't really be sincere about community dialogue if you claim *everything* I said is other than the truth.

You asked, "what do you really know about Darwin's theory?" My point in writing to the paper is not to impress you or the readership with my

knowledge. It was to express my concern with an issue that I think is much more important than is commonly thought. Just for clarification though, I do believe that man has always been man and that man did not evolve from the ape. Dr. Darwin believed otherwise. Whether he is agnostic (is not convinced of the existence of God) or atheist is not at issue.

I will restate: prostitution is not an instinct, it is a social/cultural phenomena, and if you want to argue that, do so with someone more patient and understanding than I. Why don't we set up a time and place that this issue may be constructively discussed and debated? Least it be overlooked in the heat generated by bruised egos, the issue is prostitution in our community. I have said what I said and do much of what I do out of love and concern for my people, especially those mothers and potential mothers involved in prostitution.

Hope you are likewise motivated.

Your Brother  
Nabeeh

## POSAF ON SOUTH AFRICA

### Johnny Mathis boycott

During the past few years there have been numerous national and international protests against entertainers who have performed in South Africa. A number of artists have pledged not to return to South Africa until the apartheid system ends. Their names have been removed from the United Nations boycott list. They include Tina Turner, Chick Corea, the Temptations, and Barry Manilow.

Since 1968 the United Nations has been issuing regular appeals to countries and organizations to suspend all sporting and cultural ties with the apartheid government in South Africa. In an ongoing attempt to bolster its international image, South Africa lures entertainers with astronomical fees for performances. "Sun City" is a favorite spot for

performances. This multi-million dollar gambling resort is located in Bophuthatswana, one of the ten so-called tribal "homelands" the South African government has established as part of its segregationist policy of apartheid. The homelands serve primarily as dumping grounds for Black South Africans who are not employed in the 87 percent of the country officially designated as "white" areas. Like the other homelands, Bophuthatswana is located on some of the most arid and impoverished land in South Africa. Although it is one of the four homelands that have been granted "independence" by the South African government, no other country in the world recognizes it as an independent nation.

In 1982, singer Johnny Mathis performed in Sun City, Bophuthatswana. He continues to refuse to recognize the United Nations boycott. Until he publicly announces that he will not return to South Africa, Mathis will be boycotted across the country. POSAF is asking Portlanders to boycott his upcoming performance at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, and to join us in picketing that performance at 7 p.m.

Portlanders Organized for Southern African Freedom (POSAF), a local multi-racial citizens action group that supports Black majority rule in Southern Africa and an end to U.S. support for apartheid. For more information call 230-9427.

## Healthwatch

by Steven Bailey N.D.

Interferon, a naturally-occurring chemical component of the immune system, has recently been found to relieve many symptoms of the common cold. While this chemical has been studied for its value in treating cancer (with limited success), the new potential for anti-viral chemotherapy is both promising and frightening.

The common cold, and for the most part, viral infections have long eluded researchers' attempts to find adequate antibiotic tools for treatment. A multitude of reasons exist as to why viruses are a more difficult enemy than most bacteria. However, the question I pose is: should we utilize natural immune products such as interferon for the common cold?

As sophisticated as modern medicine appears, as a whole, it has been following the historical misdirection of our chemical-agro-business. It comes as little surprise that the percentage of crops lost to infestation is now equal to that of 1900. The decreased loss of crops in the early years of chemical use was soon followed by the need to dramatically increase the amount of chemicals used per acre to kill off the insects. Soon most insects became resistant to levels more than 10 times that of the early years. Now insects have shown complete resistance to many chemicals. Not only do we consume higher levels of trace chemicals in our foods, but we also have devastated natural predators to the insects (spider, etc.), added millions of gallons of poisons to our

soil and water, begun food irradiation programs and are pursuing in blissful ignorance the development of bacterial pesticides. The blindness of these agricultural practices seems to walk hand-in-hand with medicine's approach to human infection.

Similar to the resilient nature of insects to pesticides, we have seen bacteria become less and less sensitive to our antibiotics. I have seen penicillin-resistant infections in children who are under one year of age, who have been given penicillin derivatives numerous times for infection prior to seeing me. Oregon, like many other states has reported two separate strains of penicillin-resistant gonorrhea. Medicine, like agriculture, is having to use higher dosages of stronger types of chemicals to maintain the same degree of protection.

While there is an undeniable need for antibiotic therapy, there is also a need for a more scientific application of antibiotics by many medical doctors. All too frequently, I encounter patients who have been given prescriptions with no identification of the bacterium, nor test to see if the particular strain is sensitive to the prescribed antibiotic. Like the pesticides, many antibiotics, and particularly tetracycline, can kill off many of the checks and balances of the normal human flora, leading to increased future susceptibility to less-hardy organisms like the yeast, candida.

The aspect of introducing inter-

feron to common viruses so that their resilient nature (fast reproduction cycle) can make them resistant to one of our body's strongest anti-viral chemicals, may be an unnecessary lesson in futility, and further progress our species to an overall level of immune incompetence. I believe that the immune system needs to function to completion, just as our muscles need exercise, our heart needs aerobic activity and our minds need stimulation. Though interferon may have a role in serious infections, let us hope that we don't take a giant step backwards for the relief of a few colds in the '80s.

I wrote in the *Observer* nearly two years ago, in which I stated my belief that the misuse and overuse of antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs was an important contribution to the predisposition of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). This I still contend; I also feel that the false security of drug therapy leads many to ignore the obvious symptoms of inappropriate lifestyles. To many it is much simpler to take a drug than to practice safe birth control, eat properly, get adequate rest or manage their stress appropriately. In the meantime, when you get a common cold, rest, drink plenty of fluids (not soft drinks, milk or coffee); supplement with Vitamin C (1000-4000 mg daily), beta carotin (25,000-50,000 IUS daily) and zinc (100 mg daily), and look back to your life prior to infection, maybe you can identify some obvious habits to avoid in the future.

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