EDITORIAL/OPINION

McClure-Volkmer Bill Will Increase Violent Crime

It was ironic that a day after the U.S. House of Representatives approved a Bill weakening the 1968 Gun Control Act, two FBI agents were killed and five more were wounded during a shoot out with two bank robbery suspects in Miami.

The Bill which was sponsored by Rep. Harold L. Volkmer, D. Mo., and James A. McClure, R-Idaho, would make it easier to buy and sell firearms; to carry them across state lines; and limit gun dealers' record-keeping requirements which increases the number of people who can legally sell firearms without keeping records.

In addition, it permits dealers to transfer guns from their commercial inventories to their personal collections, from which firearms can then be transferred to others without keeping records.

Despite opposition of the Bill by police organizations, the House approved the Bill by a 233-184 vote.

The passage of the McClure-Volkmer Bill by the House was a bad decision. For it will lead to more tragic incidents such as the one which occurred in Miami.

The presence of guns increases the severity of crimes committed. Common sense suggests as much — no other hand weapon is so efficient at killing a human being.

In the U.S., there are 9.7 murders a year for every 100,000 people. Guns are a factor in more than half the murders that result from arguments between husbands and wives of other people who know each other.

The vote by the House circumvents efforts by law enforcement officials to control violent crime in this country. Instead the House caved in to the National Rifle Association (NRA), who spent an estimated $1.6 million to get the Bill passed. And by doing so, will increase the level of violent crime in this country.

EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY

World of Voluntarism

By Governor Vic Atiyeh

There are thousands of stories in the world of voluntarism. This is one of them.

A retired Salem fireman heard an emergency call on his CB radio, and it turned out to be from a motorist stranded somewhere north of Anchorage, Alaska.

The Salem man, whose CB picked up the long-distance dispatch because of unusual weather conditions, phoned state police in Anchorage. They followed up on the tip. Not only did they find the motorist, but they also reported back that in another hour he would have frozen to death.

This is an unusually far-reaching example of the work of members of Oregon REACT — Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams.

On April 23, I will recognize Oregon REACT as the Civic Division winner of the 1986 Governor's Voluntarism Awards.

I began these awards for exceptional Oregon volunteers in 1983 because I wanted to recognize — and to encourage — the generous work of Oregon's tens of thousands of unselfish volunteers.

You may know REACT best as the people who serve coffee, tea, chocolate and pop at rest areas on the weekends; on a busy holiday weekend, they may serve 500 gallons of beverages at a single rest area. Our donations pay for most of REACT's volunteer work.

Other Oregonians whom I will recognize as winners of this year's voluntarism awards are:

Individual Division: Joseph E. "Joe" Burns of Hermiston whose wide-ranging community service includes heading the city council, chamber of commerce, library and hospital boards, airport committee, school and city budget committees, and Hermiston Development Commission. The development commission was instrumental in obtaining the Coachmen housing and Lamb-Weston potato plants for the Hermiston area.

Business Division: Davidson Industries of Mapleton, whose ever-present voluntarism includes building the high-school track, renting a van to send the basketball team to the state tournament, providing computers for schools, painting a local church, and donating money, material and equipment to build a million-dollar, Olympic-size pool.

Special Recognition: The crew of the U.S.S. Cushing, now in Portland, more than 30 of whom volunteered to collect, split, deliver and stack firewood for low-income seniors. Even after the worst of winter's weather had passed, these men still were helping. Most of the crew members come from outside the Northwest.

Each of these winners — Oregon REACT, Joe Burns, Davidson Industries and the U.S.S. Cushing crew — are making their communities better than they found them.

Volunteers set a powerful example.

For example, during the holidays Davidson Industries gives its employees hamburger, much of which quietly reaches the kitchens of the elderly and the needy.

That is why voluntarism was the centerpiece of my first inaugural address in January 1979.

"The increasing role of government in our lives," I said then, "has been a temptation to abandon our sense of community.

"Instead of caring for one another, we hire government to do the job.

"Aging parents who gave us love turn, in their need, to social workers.

"Children who need firm hands on their shoulders are committed to the custody of the courts.

"Our tax dollars have too often been used to buy escape from personal responsibility, and we are the poorer for it.

"When we trade the joy of helping others for the anonymous exercise of paying tax dollars to buy services, we — all of us — are the losers.

"My friends, government can do many things, but it can't hire love."

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The Challenge to Black Journalists

Along the Color Line by Dr. Manning Marable

One of the greatest challenges confronting Black journalists today is what can be termed the "paradox of desegregation." On one hand, the popular images of Afro-Americans have become more positive overall since the demise of Jim Crow. There are Black newscasters on radio and television, and Blacks on editorial boards. Black professionals in the media seem to have overcome racial barriers.

But this is more of an illusion than reality. A recent profile of American journalists was done by Indiana University Professors David H. Seaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, which was funded by the Gannett Foundation. The study, entitled "The American Journalist," stated that Blacks, Asians and Hispanics account for roughly 4 percent of editorial workers, compared to more than 5 percent in 1971. White females, by way of contrast, have increased their margin from 1 in 5 in 1971 to 1 in 3 today. Seaver and Wilhoit discovered in their research that the typical journalist is white, male, a "political middle-of-the-roader" who knows little about minorities or their conditions.

Such journalists have few reasons to question the retreat from racial equality, which is the foundation of Reagan's civil rights agenda. They believe in the myth of value-free journalism, which asserts that the reporter has no right to adhere to certain ideological views in their interpretation of society. They accept the position that a Black journalist is simply a journalist who happens to be Black, and that he/she has no justification to engage in "advocacy" in regards to Blacks' deteriorating rights. What they fail to recognize is that their value free, middle-of-the-roadism is just a cover for failing to confront the systemic, institutional factors which preserve and perpetuate white racism in America. The white media generally refuses to admit that virtually all journalism is a form of "propaganda" in the interests of certain political, economic, and social class interests — and that Blacks' interests never surface on the agenda.

Part of the paradox of desegregation is that some Black journalists, in their desire to acquire acceptance in the mainstream media, often close their eyes to the omnipresence of racial bias and distortion. When we read *Le Monde*, does anyone doubt that we are encountering the interpretation of French journalists, with all the historical, cultural and political baggage of that tradition. When we read *Pravda* or *Izvestia*, no one doubts that the perspectives of Soviet writers advance a particular view on society and politics. And when we read the *New York Times*, everything from the selection of stories to the orientation of the editorials represents a type of bias towards the white corporate establishment.

What is the social responsibility of Black journalism in the period of color blind racial discrimination? Black writers must see themselves as part of a rich historical tradition, as the latest generation in the heritage of free, democratic-oriented journalists. A brief list would include: Mary Ann Shadd Cary, editor and founder of the *Provincial Freeman* in 1853, the first newspaper published by a woman in North America; Ida B. Wells, the anti-lynching activist and editor of the Memphis *Torchlight;* abolitionist editor Frederick Douglass, publisher of the *North Star;* T. Thomas Fortune, editor of the *New York Age;* W.M. Trotter, editor of the militant Boston *Guardian;* W.E.B. Du Bois, founder of the NAACP and editor of the *Crisis* magazine; trade union leader A. Philip Randolph, editor of the *Messenger;* and human rights spokesman Paul Robeson, editor of Harlem's *Freedom* newspaper in the 1950s.

What is a **Black** journalist? As writers, as part of this tradition of Afro-American critical thought, we have a responsibility to comprehend that racism still exists, and that we should never apoligize for taking an uncompromising attitude against racial inequality in our work. Poverty and hunger still exist, and are becoming worse. Unemployment, educational underdevelopment and political underrepresentation have not yet been overcome. And our task and challenge, as Black journalists, is to raise questions revealing these problems, and to write with a critical vision of social justice and human equality, the basic values which were embodied by the lives of previous generations of Black writers.

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of political sociology at Colgate University, Hamilton, New York. "Along The Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

Legislative Report Shows Oregon's Income Falling Behind National Average

The income of the typical Oregonian lags further behind the nation than at any time in the past fifty years, despite the economic recovery of the past three years, according to a legislative report released today.

The report shows that in 1984, Oregon per capita income of $11,611 was nearly $1,200 below the national average of $12,789. For every dollar of income received by the typical American, the average Oregonian receives only about 91 cents. This is the lowest ratio recorded since 1929, when such statistics first became available.

Catching up to the national average will not be easy, according to the report. Many of the factors propelling Oregon's economic decline involve the national and global competition confronting Oregon businesses. The key to reviving Oregon's economy is focused efforts to increase value-added in basic manufacturing and service secors in which Oregon has a comparative advantage because of its natural resources or trained labor force.

State Senator Joyce Cohen and Representative Jim Hill, Co-Chairs of the Joint Legislative Committee on Trade and Economic Development, said that the report indicates the need for a continuing emphasis on dealing with economic problems in the state's basic timber, agriculture and diversified manufacturing industries.

The report, titled "Losing Ground: The Growing Gap between Oregon and National Income" was prepared by the Committee's staff, and is based on economic data collected from 1929 to 1984 by federal and state agencies.

"The data show that the programs Oregon had in place through 1984 have done little to counteract the powerful negative trends in the national economy," said Senator Cohen.

"We expect that the $85 million lottery-funded economic development program enacted by the 1985 Legislature to begin helping in 1986 and later years," added Representative Hill.

At the same time, the Committee released a staff memorandum describing "Ten Innovative Economic Development Policy Ideas." The ten ideas, drawn from local Oregon community programs and from other states, range from a new state economic development strategy to computerized export assistance. The ideas will be used by the Committee in drafting proposals for the 1987 Legislature.

The thirty-page report, prepared by the Committee's staff, contains a detailed analysis of Oregon economic trends over the past decade. The major causes of the decline in Oregon income, according to the report, are related to the decline in the competitiveness and productivity of basic Oregon industries. The major causes include:

- A decline in the demand for Oregon wood products;
- A loss of growth in electronics and other diversified manufacturing;
- The reverberation of economic decline in growth dependent sectors such as housing and construction; and
- the inability of Oregon firms to benefit from the national defense build-up;

This relative income decline is evident in many changes occurring in the Oregon economy. The report indicates that incomes have declined due to slow growth and declines in the after-inflation wages paid to Oregon manufacturing workers, and the replacement of high-paid jobs lost in the recession by low-paid jobs during the economic recovery. A shift from wage and salary earnings to retirement benefits, unemployment compensation and welfare has also lowered Oregon income, according to the report.

Projections of future income levels show no immediate reversal of the past downward trend in Oregon income levels. Data derived from the state econometric model — used to predict future state tax revenues — shows that Oregon's inflation-adjusted per capita income is expected to grow very little through 1989. These projections show the income of the typical Oregonian dropping from 91% of the national average in 1984 to about 85% of the national average by 1989.

The relative decline in Oregon's income since 1979 has had a marked effect on the state's fiscal condition. The report estimates that if Oregon income had been at the national average, Oregon would have collected nearly $100 million in additional state income tax revenues.

The report concludes that the only way to increase Oregon incomes is to increase the value-added by production in basic manufacturing and service sectors of the economy. Increasing value-added, according to the report, depends on increased investment and productivity in industries for which Oregon has a comparative advantage.

Copies of the full report are available from the Joint Legislative Committee on Trade and Economic Development, State Capitol, Room 132, Salem, Oregon 97310.

For further information, contact: Joseph Cortright, 378-8811.