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Goldschmidt Calls For Retention of Oregon Youth in Schools

Labor Day is just around the corner, and for many of us that means another school year is about to begin. For most children, the first day of school is an exciting time of renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. It's a time for anticipating the new skills and knowledge to be learned over the next nine months.

But for too many of Oregon's youth, the first day of school is no different than any other day.

In Oregon, one out of every four high school students drops out. For those who drop out and never return, the cost to themselves and to all Oregonians is enormous.

The loss of human potential alone is an expense Oregonians cannot afford and must never accept. But there are other, more measurable costs. Students who leave school before graduation lack the basic skills needed by today's employers. In many cases, that means the state's taxpayers must support dropouts through welfare or other public services.

Worse yet, many of those who drop out either have, or will develop, drug or alcohol problems. Crime often becomes their only option, and the state's correction system often becomes their home.

Whether it is unemployment, underemployment or crime, we all pay for the dropout problem. It's expensive but it is preventable.

We must reverse this situation. That's why I asked the Legislature to approve a far-reaching Student Retention Initiative. Legislators responded with enthusiasm, and you will see the evidence in many of your local schools this Fall.

The Initiative begins by early identification of youth (those with problems that lead to dropping out). Then we work to help them overcome the problems that contribute to their leaving school.

Some Oregon communities already have effective programs to help youth deal with these problems **before** they drop out. In some cases, programs are available to help those who already have dropped out return to school or to alternative community programs.

Experience has shown many of these programs work—they keep kids in school.

What these efforts have also shown is that the earlier we help the student the better. If we can help at-risk youth in elementary school versus high school, we are less likely to see them drop out.

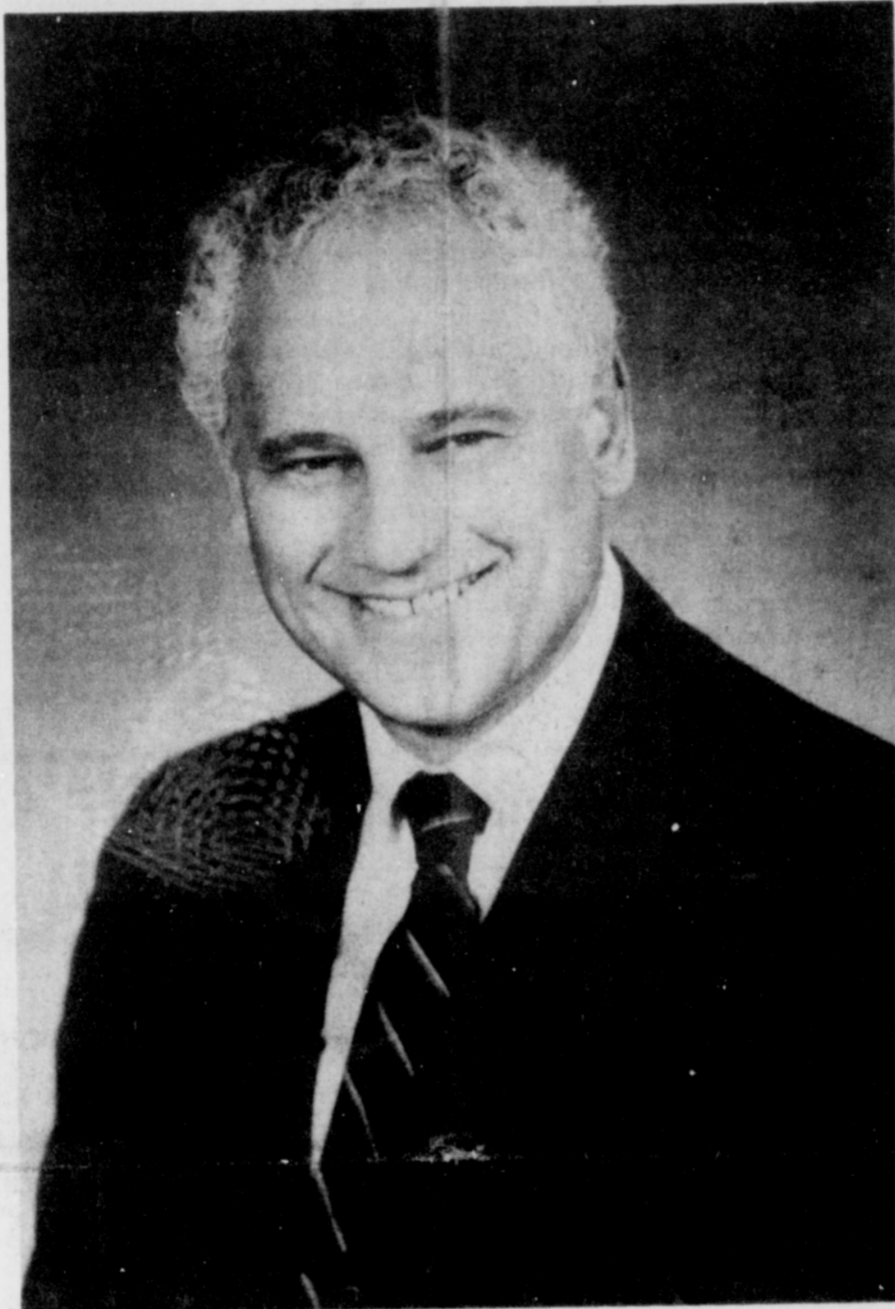
The Initiative is designed to help school districts and communities throughout Oregon start programs for at-risk youth. To accomplish this, it offers local areas a partnership with the state.

The state provides technical assistance, information about model programs, strategies for developing adequate local funding, and seed money to help school districts and communities start programs for at-risk youth.

Local teachers, professional youth counselors and community leaders have been invited to form local planning groups. They identify gaps in services and develop an action plan. School board members play a key role in setting the plan's specific goals.

The focus is on local decision-making. People from the community, not from state government, make the final decisions.

Both state and federal funds are being used for the Initiative. Part of the money will go toward competitive grants awarded to communities that



develop the best program proposals to help keep young people in school. These grants are a catalyst to help school districts and communities try out something new; they are not a substitute for long-term local funding.

More and more Oregonians are recognizing that school dropouts are a drain on society—because of missed opportunities for earnings and paying taxes, and because dropouts need financial support through welfare, corrections or other tax-supported public services.

The Student Retention Initiative is an investment that will return enormous dividends, both for our children and for Oregon's future.

Congressman Tours PCC

"In a word, I'm impressed," Montana Congressman Pat Williams said at a Portland Community College press conference Wednesday, August 26, after touring two of the college's five campuses and centers.

Williams, who chairs the chief policy committee on higher education for the U.S. Congress, the subcommittee on Post-secondary Education, picked PCC as a model to visit because "This community college does as good a job meeting its goal . . . to serve the people of this area . . . as any school in the United States."



Montana Congressman Pat Williams was escorted on a tour of the PCC Cascade Campus August 26 by PCC Director Monica Little, a Northeast Portland resident who represents college Zone 2.

The tour started in Seattle, Washington, with a hearing on the Endowment for the Humanities and will continue on to Palo Alto, California, for a tour of Stanford University.

Williams said the purpose of the tour was to compile information to take back to his committee when Congress convenes after the summer recess. "I'm trying to find out how to do it correctly," he replied.

Youth Gang Task Force Acts Now

by Dennis Payne

A Youth encampment at NE 9th and Alberta led the Northeast Coalition to convene what has now become the Youth Gang Task Force.

By acting now, the Task Force hopes to prevent the spread of organized and violent youth gangs in Portland. "A gang is only as strong as the community allows it to be," says Sharon McCormack, Crime Prevention Coordinator for inner northeast.

This initiative has now expanded to North and Southeast Portland which are also experiencing increased youth violence and involvement in

Stop Deadly Police Force

They must believe we are all fools. They must believe that we will accept any nonsense even if it contradicts reality. This, we assume, is the thinking behind the recently released report by a 5-member New York State commission which investigated the use of deadly police force. As the nation's first state-wide review of possible police abuse, the panel's report has national implications.

The panel, appointed by Gov. Mario Cuomo two years ago, studied 1,700 incidents from 1981 to 1985. Two hundred twenty-three of these resulted in the death of a victim. Included in the 223 deaths was the brutal killing of Mrs. Eleanor Bumpurs, the 67-year-old African American grandmother who was shotgunned to death by a white policeman during an eviction proceeding. Also included was the case of Michael Stewart, the 25-year-old African American artist who was beaten by 11 white transit police officers during an arrest over graffiti. He was brought—severely bruised, hogtied, and comatose—to the hospital where he died 13 days later.

The panel found that almost ¾ of those killed were African Americans or Hispanic Americans who died at the hands of white officers. But did they find this at all unusual? No, indeed. In fact, the commission took great pains to say that these deaths represented "neither systemic nor pervasive misuse" of police force and that race was not a significant factor in the killings. Rather, asserted the panel, these incidents represented a "public misunderstanding and misperception." Translate that to mean, "It's all in your minds."

Perhaps they should try telling that to the family of Michael Stewart or Eleanor Bumpurs, or Nicholas Bartlett, or Jimmy Lee Bruce—just a few of the many who have died at the hands of the police in New York State over the last few years. It is these deaths which have made the state, and particularly New York City, such a tinder box. And, in an obvious turn-about, Atty. Paul Curran, chairman of the commission, has now criticized the mounting protests against these unending deaths, and characterized the protestors as people who "shoot their mouths off without facts just for emotional purposes."

Rather than thoroughly and impartially studying the problem, the panel has further exacerbated the situation by relying primarily on police department information. As the New York daily, *Newsday*, noted, "the \$775,000 study relied largely on police reports and other official records."

Atty. Curran mentions the need for facts. It's a shame the report doesn't contain more of them. As *Newsday* also reported, during its New York City investigation, the commission staff "rode around in patrol cars with police officers and reported that they [the police] acted responsibly." In fact, the commission had only one staff investigator and did not independently investigate any shooting or beating incidents. Clearly, the commission's methodology was fundamentally flawed. No wonder they found that name-calling by the police was more of a problem than racially-motivated police brutality.

The commission cannot expect the public at large to swallow this newest in a series of white washes of police violence against racial and ethnic communities. The institutional and unwarranted use of deadly police force should not be allowed to find a haven—to be camouflaged—under the cover of a state commission.

Gov. Cuomo should be bold enough to reject this study. For otherwise, by affixing the seal of the State of New York to this travesty of justice, he will be sending the wrong message to every other Governor across the country. And that is that local police brutality has state sanction. Even more dangerous, Gov. Cuomo, by validating this bogus study, will be sending a message to police officers across the nation that they can continue their racist use of deadly police force against African Americans and others with impunity.

Drug House Ordinance Ready to Go

by Ed Blackburn

City Council unanimously passed a new ordinance which will allow the City to shut down drug houses. The City must be able to prove prior knowledge on the part of an owner that his/her property has been used as a place to sell drugs. Houses can be shut for up to a year and civil penalties can be imposed. Property owners will be afforded prior notification and due process.

A year of heightened citizen lobbying resulted in the Drug House Ordinance. The idea was first presented at a neighborhood meeting at the King Facility last August.

The Portland Police Bureau presented a General Order which describes how the ordinance will be implemented to the City Council on July 22nd. City Attorney, Paul Elsner, initiate the first cases in early August, 1987.

This ordinance will not eliminate drug house operations in Portland, but it will give some relief to those neighborhoods hit hardest by drug activities. Thanks to all of you who participated in the passage of this ordinance.

drug activities.

The Task Force wants to kill rumors. It wants to help parents who are afraid their children will be recruited into gangs engaging in illegal activities.

The Task Force has received \$10,000 from Mayor Bud Clark to continue its work.

Sharon McCormack, Chairperson of the Task Force has been joined by Multnomah County Juvenile Court, Portland Police Bureau, Children's Services Division, Youth Service Centers, Mayor's Office, Commissioner Bogle's Office, and County Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury's Office and ONA Staff.