

EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily Reflect Or Represent The Views Of The Portland Observer Newspaper Or Its Staff

CSD Needs Kay Toran

CSD like many government agencies is enmeshed in bureaucratic processes that are often problematic for a smooth operation. Just name it.

But good managerial leadership could make the greatest difference in the world. And in the case of CSD Administrator Kay Toran, her leadership has continued to pinpoint those inherent problems for tailored solutions.

That the agency made procedural mistakes does not demonstrate the weakness of its overall administrator and shouldn't call for personal attacks and therefore is not a yardstick for measuring her abilities.

We agree with Gov. John Kitzhaber that Toran has the ability to put CSD back on its feet.

CSD's problems did not start with Toran. It needs this administrator.

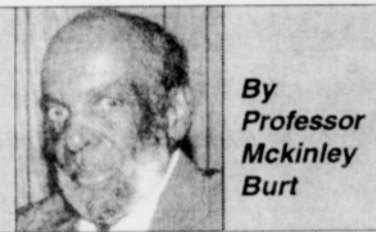
perspectives

It's Crazy Out There: Different Terrors For Different Folks

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

As the dust settles over Oklahoma City and the wails of the sirens of ambulances and emergency vehicles subside -- to be replaced by the sobs of the bereaved and the sad cacophony of funeral dirges from many faiths and cultures -- we are all reminded of Rodney King's plaintive plea, "Can't we all get along?"

Those who have listened to the strident voices that can be heard on much of talk radio would never cop such a plaintive (naive?) plea. The American Indians



By Professor McKinley Burt

frontations between federal land agencies and environmentalists. Those who have invoked extreme measures in what they call the growing threat to the health of the planet say that they are not terrorists at all, but are fighting against the terrorists of lumber companies, industry, the government and renal politicians.

And the long-time corporate workers who thought they were rested in their jobs (as well as their pensions) are beginning to scream

"foul" and are assailing the big corporations as "economic terrorists". Now that phrase sounds familiar, but we find that so many of the

baby boomers have never heard of Karl Marx or his anti-capitalist philosophy. These "communist" were considered terrorists by the system.

Yes, I saw the recent headlines describing "The Pain Of The Children", "The Grief, of Parents", and I saw and heard the many media reports of the terror, anguish, fear and anger that has gripped Oklahoma City in the steel vise of a special kind of urban terror. But is the cumulative onslaught of congressional cutbacks in support for the poor and disadvantaged without countervailing life-support -- or the vicious destruction of businesses and jobs by greedy manipulators of junk bond dealers -- any less of an act of terrorism than the equally barbaric act of blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma?

For those who may not know it (or ignore the fact), the nation's Inner-Cities are also "Heartlands of America".

And the bleak economic future that faces those residents as well as those of rural areas where gung-ho environmentalists have shut down their livelihood presents a bleak future for many of the people in this land of "happiness and freedom of opportunity". And those who see no future at all as Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity for women, the aged and ethnics are threatened with their own special terrors.

Yes it is "Crazy Out There, With Different Terrors For Different Folks." And it may become an even more dangerous place to live.

The Contract On America's "Common Sense Legal Reform Act" has two titles: Civil Justice Reform and Reform of Private Securities Litigation.

Both make it more difficult for individuals harmed by corporate or professional misconduct to use the civil justice system to be compensated by the responsible parties. Recently passed by the House, it should really be called the "Non-Sense Deforming Justice Act."

Next Week The Senate Will Vote On it!

The Senate will be voting (W? Th?) on the so-called "Products Liability Fairness act," which is not fair at all. It threatens to take away protections that we now have against death, injury or disability caused by dangerous or defective products. The bill caps "punitive damages" -- damages awarded for the purpose of punishing a corporate offender for irresponsible conduct -- and leaves only the rich the ability to recover just compensation. Securities litigation "reform" would effectively eliminate the right of consumers to bring class action lawsuits when they have been the victims of stock or bond fraud.

Your family will be endangered! Under this legislation, corporations who manufacture dangerous products have no incentive to remove

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

De-Forming Justice

them from the market. Ford made Pintos with exploding gas tanks. Lilly made an arthritis drug that caused kidney and liver failure and eventually death. Neither company voluntarily took its product off the market -- they acted responsibly only after they were taken to court and slapped with large punitive damage judgments. Newt's legal "reform" allows manufacturers to put their greed before our safety.

Legal "reform" discriminates! This bill discriminates against women, children, retired persons and those with moderate or low incomes by limiting punitive damages to the greater of three times the "economic injury" or \$250,000. For example, consider two different lawsuits, both based on the exact same corporate misconduct. If one victim is an insurance executive earning \$1 million-a-

year and the other a mother who stays home with her children, the executive would be able to recover \$3 million. However, the mother, because she does not earn wages or a salary, would be limited to \$250,000 in punitive damages. This unfair legislation means that corporations do not have to show as much respect for people living on fixed or low incomes.

The Senate bill contains other anti-consumer provisions. Currently, if several companies are each responsible for a victim's injuries, the victim can sue these companies together. The Senate bill would require victims to prove each wrongdoer's degree of fault individually. This places an unfair burden on victims who have far less information, expertise and money than corporate defendants.

Legal "reform" favors the powerful! This bill is yet another effort by the new Republican majority to turn their backs on us. It provides corporate America with a shield to hide behind while leaving us out in the cold. "Legal reform" is detrimental to our struggle for justice.

Proponents of "legal reform" portray it as a way to "get" greedy lawyers who have sparked the "litigation explosion." Not true! In reality, it is an attempt by big business to escape responsibility when they profit from harming the public. We must recognize, for example, that a successful attempt to weaken securities fraud lawsuits in the name of "lawyer-basing" will act as a precedent for challenges to the legal protections in the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Yet these senators are still undecided on their vote or how strongly to resist, including leading a filibuster: Carol Mosely-Braun (D-IL); Barbara Mikulski (D-MD); David Pryor (D-AR); Dianne Feinstein (D-CA); Arlen Specter (R-PA); Olympia Snowe (R-ME); Fred Thompson (R-TN); Robert Byrd (D-WV); Kent Conrad (D-ND); Byron Dorgan (D-ND); and Strom Thurmond (R-SC).

Call 202-224-3121 and ask to speak to your senator's office; or call 1-800-70-Justice to send a Free telegram to your senator Today!

Civil Rights Journal

Code Words, Mixed Messages And Heartless Cuts

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

The Children's Defense Fund is now estimating that one in three children in the United States, the world's richest country, is poor. Look around you. One in every three children you see is poor.

Our nation's children are under attack in Washington right now. They are the ones who will suffer the most from the Contract with America, as various parts of the Personal Responsibility Act take effect. If our children are our future, then fully one third of our future is under attack in Washington right now.

But in order to really understand what is being said in Washington right now, you need a translator grounded in history. You need someone who knows how code words have been used in the past in order to translate the code words being used

in the present.

Part of the fear felt in the hearts of most African Americans today comes from the use of the current term "state block grants." It's just a little too close to the old code words "states' rights" used by southern states in particular to buttress their right to keep African Americans from fully participating in government or from receiving benefits. Just as some states discriminated against blacks then, many of us are fearful that once again states will hide behind this veil to deny services and rights to poor people of color. We're afraid of the inequity of benefits which even now means that welfare payments range from \$120 to \$703 depending on what state you live in. We're afraid that as states face increasing budget problems, it is the poor who will be cut first and hunger and homelessness will only increase.

Part of the distrust of the Contract with America felt by people of

color comes from the mixed messages which this country is now sending. We say to mothers on welfare you must work even in menial jobs with little opportunity for training and without health benefits or child care while we pay farmers to do nothing -- not to grow crops which our country does not need. We say to mothers on welfare that poor people are lazy freeloaders while we bail out savings and loan institutions which were used like private bank accounts. We say we still believe in the Horatio Alger story when the number of poor people in this country is growing by leaps and bounds every decade while we lose jobs to other countries.

Part of the lament heard in communities of color across this nation comes from the heartless cuts which now threaten the social contract and the social fabric of this nation. As the Republicans move not only to reform welfare, but to dismantle the six decade-old understanding that pov-

erty is a national problem and that we as a nation have a responsibility to reach out to the least of these, we are frightened for our nation's soul.

The average cost of welfare for each American Taxpayer is \$156 per year. That's less than what the Pentagon was paying for one toilet seat a few years ago, if I remember Senator Fullbright's figures correctly. Yes, we need to reform the system so that generations of people are not on the public dole, but cannot \$156 per year be an investment in the future of poor children? Doesn't this nation's moral consciousness require us to feed all our children and help their parents obtain a liveable wage and a dignified job?

We are treading on dangerous ground if we as a country allow our leaders to speak in code words and mixed messages. We will all suffer from these heartless cuts in the budget. For what will it profit us to gain the whole world and lose our souls?

Civil Rights Journal

Signs Of Hope

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

In these days of drastic budget cuts, escalating violence and trying times, we need to look for signs of hope amidst the despair and the fear. We need encouragement that there are people and organizations which are not being paralyzed by it, but are being mobilized by it. Here are two such stories.

HOPE FOR WOMEN

The Mount Zion Christian Church of Rocky Mount, North Carolina saw hope for their community even when the YWCA decided it could no longer support two facilities. Under the leadership of their pastor, Garland Jones, Mt. Zion stepped forward and offered to purchase the three story building to use for women in transition and for elderly women. "We saw what good

condition this facility was in and how it could be used for battered women and their children and those coming out of institutions as well as for the poor and elderly," said pastor Jones.

The church has even talked with a near-by community college to teach G.E.D. programs and jobs skills classes. "We believe we can work hand in hand with social service agencies to serve women who desperately need affordable short-term housing and help in getting back on their feet," added Pastor Jones. A sign of hope for women and children in Rocky Mount, NC.

HOPE FOR MEN

We all know the statistics. The numbers of young black men being buried is up some 250 percent over the past few years. The number of black men incarcerated is rising at so rapid a rate that sometime in the next century the majority of all African

American men will have been in prison at some time in their life. Two out of five of all American children do not live with their biological fathers.

We all know the statistics, but some of us are doing something about them. Fifteen years ago Hugh Jackson, then president of the Pontiac, Michigan Urban League, and other men in Pontiac realized the impact these statistics were having on young black men in their city. So they began an organization called the Michigan Association for Leadership Development which targets young black males, ages 10-13.

Using the theme, "Males are born, men are made," they established a four point plan which included spiritual knowledge, black history, quality education and economic direction. More than 1,000 African American teens have participated in their programs, which have included

summer math/science camps, poster and essay contests, conferences and workshops on the black family and preventing crime and ending the violence and most of all, hands-on experiences with young black men.

There are many such stories all across the nation -- in our cities, in our rural communities, even in our prisons. Stories of people who realize that they can do something to make a difference. They are signs of hope in the lives of those around them. They are proof that we can take back our communities and our children. They need our support and the commitment of each and every one of us. They need us now.

(Note: Mt. Zion Church can be reached at P.O. Box 2502, Rocky Mount, NC 28803-2502. The Michigan Association for Leadership Development can be reached at 77 Bagley, Pontiac, MI 48341.)

Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:
Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Dear Senator Derfler:

On April 3, 1995, I met with you concerning SB 563. At that time, you told me that you would schedule SB 563 for a hearing. Is there a reason why you have not scheduled SB 563 for a hearing?

Racism is the number one problem facing Blacks in the state workplace and in the academic environment. The Oregon Assembly for

Black Affairs (OABA) asks you and other Republican members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly to take the initiative in establishing public policy in Oregon that will be zero tolerance toward racism and racial discrimination in the state workplace and in the academic environment.

I just returned from attending the American Educational Research Association Annual

Meeting in San Francisco last week. A number of papers on the impact of racism in American education were presented at this meeting. Many of these papers support OABA's contention that racism is the number one problem facing Blacks in the state workplace and in the academic environment.

The Oregon Assembly for Black

Affairs (OABA) requests that you schedule a hearing on SB 563. It is our hope that you and other Republican members of the 1995 Legislature will not let this important issue die in your committee.

Please let OABA know if you will schedule SB 563 for a hearing and work session.

Sincerely, Calvin O.L. Henry,
OABA President

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