

Education

Schools win support

Summerbridge

Northeast lawmakers carry education bill

Sen. Avel Gordly, D-Portland, successfully carried the K-12 education budget bill that builds the foundation of the negotiated \$4.35 billion package for Oregon's schools and school children. School activists and parents have been lobbying legislators in Salem throughout the legislative session to fund schools at \$4.3 billion dollars.

The bipartisan negotiated figure of \$4.35 billion has been criticized as incomplete even though it does provide the revised amount requested by school administrators, parents and school activists. The education budget bill (SB 5519) provides base funding of \$4.15 billion with an addition \$50 million for one time classroom expenditures such as textbooks (HB

2192). Another \$5 million was successfully negotiated by Rep. Margaret Carter, D-Portland, for security related expenses. Gordly is an elected representative from northeast Portland and Carter represents both north and northeast Portland. The spending plan requires \$150 million to be referred to voters as a lottery backed bonding authority. If the \$150 million lottery backed bonding authority fails in November, then local option authority is provided (HB 2855). Gordly delivered an impassioned

explanation of her support for the education accountability legislation (SB 880) negotiated by the Governor with Republican leadership. Gordly commended the Governor for his "role and leadership in helping to frame a compromise." Gordly challenged House and Senate colleagues stating that support of the bill "is not about exchanging principles for dollars...and is not about teacher bashing." Gordly described her long history of education reform work as a parent activist, Saturday School coordinator and community activist dating back to 1979.

land, studying International Relations at Brown University in Rhode Island. "The kids love the challenge to do extra work that motivates them," said Summerbridge Portland's executive director Lurlene Shamsud-Din, noting the program also gave participants the opportunity to "make new friends all over the city." The Portland program, which alternates sites every other year between Portland Episcopal School and The Catlin Gabel School, is one of 35 similar programs nationwide. Shamsud-Din called the local pro-

gram "a total immersion into the teaching profession...a tuition free program that prepares high-potential middle school students for the demands of rigorous high school programs." "Summerbridge serves as a training ground for a new generation of enthusiastic and dedicated teachers," she added, reminding that "though there are plenty of opportunities for having fun, our program is a serious one." The program also stresses leadership, heightened self-esteem and creativity. It was modeled after the original Summerbridge program in San Francisco.

Law for computer donations applauded

State Schools Supt. Norma Paulus applauded legislation allowing state agencies to donate computers to Oregon public schools. House Bill 2443, signed by Gov. John Kitzhaber, will allow state agencies, through the Department of Admin-

istrative Services, to donate surplus, obsolete or unused computers and related hardware to the schools. Paulus said these donations will add to the 7,000 computers Oregonians have donated to a statewide recycling program. Half of those

computers are in the schools. "Schools aren't the only beneficiaries," said Paulus. "These donations go directly to high school students who evaluate, repair and refurbish the equipment before it goes to schools."

"This give students experience in computer repair, business management and computer networking skills," she added. She said the legislation will help create more partnerships between state agencies and schools.

Coalition convenes symposium on race relations

On the anniversary of its creation, National Voices for an Inclusive 21st Century, a unique coalition of leading human relations and civil rights groups committed to working together to combat racism and prejudice and to creating an inclusive society, began a two day Symposium on Best practices in Promoting Improved Race Relations.

Fortuitously following on President Clinton's call for a national dialogue on race relations, these groups are going the next step by bringing the best thinkers and practitioners together to brainstorm and share information on the foremost strategies for improving race relations in America. Joining in the effort are the National Conference, Founded as

The National Conference of Christians and Jews, the National Urban League, the Anti-Defamation League, National Council of La Raza and Leadership Education for Asian Pacific. Sen. Chris Dodd, was the keynote speaker for the opening dinner, and Christopher Edley, the architect of President Clinton's race initiative. Dialogue for special panels focused on key race relations issues and the best ways to address them. A variety of relevant discussions included affirmative action, with Wade Henderson, Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and Nancy Zurkin from the Ameri-

can Association of University Women. Other panels covered: police/community relations with Rose Ochi of the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service and Lt. Col. Jone Moss, Deputy Chief of Police for Prince George County. Anti-immigrant policies and attitudes, drew such participants as Frank Sharry, Executive Director of national Immigration Forum and Karen Narasaki, Executive Director of National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium. A panel on talk media was represented by Kojo Nnamdi of WHMM-TV.

Texaco seats equality task force

Texaco announced the formation of the independent Equality and Fairness Task Force, which is charged with evaluating potential improvements to Texaco's human resources programs and monitoring the

progress made in those programs. The seven-member Task Force, selected by Texaco and plaintiffs' counsel, was established as part of the settlement the company reached in November 1996 with current and

former African American salaried employees. Judge Charles L. Brient of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York will swear-in the panel at the federal courthouse in White Plains.

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