



Family

City, county release draft domestic partner registry ordinance for comment

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The City of Portland and Multnomah County are asking for public comment on a draft ordinance to establish a domestic partner county registry, posted on city and county websites today. Under the registry being proposed by Mayor Vera Katz, City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, and County Commissioners Serena Cruz and Lisa Naito, domestic partners would have their unions officially registered.

"We wanted to do this to create an equal opportunity for unmarried couples, be they same or mixed gender, to register their civil commitment to one another," said Katz. "The City of Portland has been very clear in its support of all families — no matter what their make up. This cements that support."

"I'm happy that we are now able to introduce this ordinance. It represents a significant step forward for our community," said City Commissioner Dan Saltzman. Since Fall 1999, a working group, including representatives from City Commissioner Dan Saltzman's office, Basic Rights Oregon, OGALLA (Oregon Gay and Lesbian Law Association), the City Attorney's office, and former State Rep. George Eighmey, and State Senator Kate Brown, has looked at "best practices" of other jurisdictions that have implemented registries and worked through the legal and policy issues of implementing a registry.

"Families are diverse. They come in all shapes sizes and colors. Our proposal is a step toward making all families feel welcomed in our community," said Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz.

"It's high time the government allows all couples the right to formalize their relationships and families," said Commissioner Naito.

The group plans to hold a community meeting, Thursday, July 6 at the Gresham Public Library, 385 NW Miller, from 6:00-8:00 p.m., in order to seek feedback on the proposed process. The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners will then hold two hearings on the proposed ordinance which would establish the registry. The first reading will take place July 20, the second July 27. Written comments can also be submitted by e-mail to mayorkatz@ci.portland.or.us.

To take part in the registry, both parties would have to

appear in person and with identification at the County office designated for the registration. They would sign a certificate declaring that they are:

1. residing together and sharing the common necessities of life;
2. not married or registered as domestic partner in any jurisdiction;
3. at least 18 years of age;
4. not related by blood kinship closer than would bar marriage in the state of Oregon and are mentally competent to consent to the contract; and
5. each other's sole domestic partner with the intent to remain so indefinitely, and are responsible for each other's common welfare.

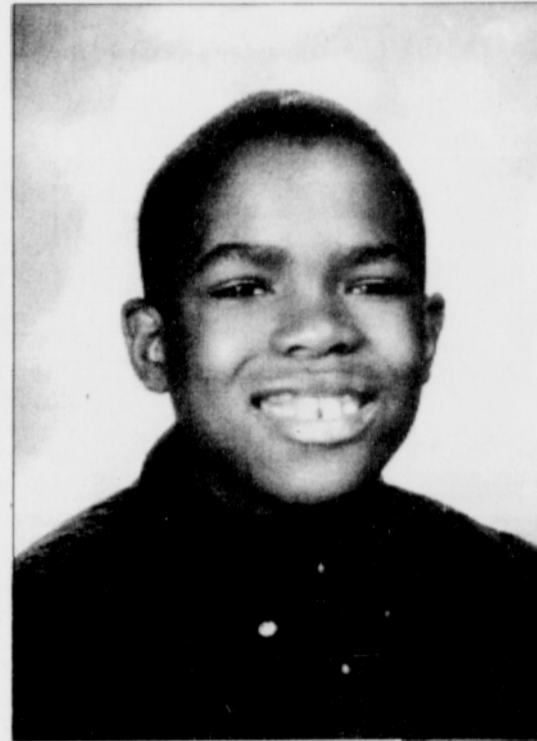
The couple would also agree to file a "Statement of Termination of Domestic Partnership" if the partnership is terminated (except by death), or if any of the facts in the above requirements change. And they would also have to certify that they had not signed a domestic partnership certificate with a different individual within the prior six months. The couple would keep the original signed certificate. The County would maintain a public record database containing the names, date of registration, and certificate number only, as well as a record of partnership terminations. A fee, to be set by later resolution, will be assessed to cover costs at the time of registration.

Originally, Katz had hoped to model the registry after that of Ashland's, which allows people to register their certificate anonymously. However, attorneys for the City and County determined that anonymous "registration" would undermine the core purpose of the new registry — which is to provide those people who wish to have a formal opportunity to register their domestic partnership officially — with an opportunity to do so. Couples who are not comfortable with their names being public record will be given information on how to document their domestic partnership relationship on their own.

While the registry will be available to domestic partners of any makeup, in particular for gay/lesbian couples and families, the registry would provide a means for them to establish the reality of their domestic partnership. Under the groundbreaking Court of Appeals decision in *Tanner v. OHSU*, this has important legal significance in regards to public sector benefits.

Congratulations to our local scholars

Ricky Booker, Jr. of Ockley Green Middle School recently became a National Award winner through the United States Achievement Academy. He was chosen as one of America's best students for excelling in Mathematics. Very few are selected nationwide to receive this high honor. He is exceptional for his age and grade level, especially since the Academy recognizes mostly high school students doing well in one or more of 18 academic disciplines ranging from Agriculture to Science. Ricky received national recognition after his nomination from his teacher, Mr. Chad Wolyn for his mastery in Mathematics and serving as a math tutor at Ockley Green. Other noteworthy achievements include competing in a statewide chess tournament sponsored by OMSI in 1998. A hobby of his is using his computer to design web pages for friends. Besides his high academic achievement, Ricky was chosen on many other considerations: interest and aptitude, leadership qualities, responsibility, enthusiasm, motivation to learn and improve, citizenship, attitude and cooperative spirit, and dependability. As an added bonus provided by USAA, Ricky's biography will be featured in the Academy's "All-American Scholar Directory" among other scholastic achievers. And, he will be qualified to compete for grants awarded by the Academy. Every year, the organization makes available \$500,000 in scholarships to students on the high school and collegiate level. Another academic scholar within the Booker family is Ricky's sister, Ebony Booker.



Ricky Booker Jr.



Ebony Booker

Foster parents sought

Multnomah County Animal Control is recruiting volunteers to act as "foster parents" to pets from our shelter. These animals are either too young, need further socialization, or have treatable illnesses requiring special attention which prevents them from being adoptable candidates at this time. They are however, excellent pets which the shelter staff feels have an excellent chance for adoption once they are older, or healthy again. Need is especially great during the spring/summer kitten season, when

pregnant cats and mothers with litters of kitten (and in many cases their mothers) are brought to our shelter. Until the kittens are old enough to be weaned, separated from the mother, and spayed or neutered, kittens cannot be put up for adoption. Many foster parents pay for the full care of their foster because of the County's budget constraints. A special fund has been set up to help with the care of pets that need rehabilitation. You can make tax-deductible donations to the Animal

Care Trust Fund at 1700 W. Columbia River Hwy, Troutdale, OR. 97019 Foster parents provide a safe environment for these animals to mature, become more socialized or heal from an existing wound or illness. Once these pets are adoptable, they can be adopted by the foster parent, or if needed, returned to the shelter for adoption. The Multnomah County Animal Shelter is located in Troutdale at 1700 W. Columbia River Highway. You can also find us on the web at multcopets.org.

BBB urges caution to consumers

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Summer is here, offering consumers the chance to enjoy many of the outdoor festivals and fairs that take place during the Pacific Northwest's break from the rain. As you browse at the Rose Festival, The Bite or any of the outdoor gatherings in your community, you may spot opportunities to enter a drawing for a free vacation or a free car. Before filling out your entry form, keep in mind that odds are better that you will end up on a telemarketing or direct mail solicitor list rather than tooling around in your dream car or enjoying a fabulous paid vacation in the

Bahamas. The information that you fill out on the entry form will most likely become a "lead" for a telemarketer or for direct mail solicitation. A typical marketing call you might receive may require you to attend a sales presentation before you receive the free vacation. Then the "free" vacation may end up not being free after all and may require you to pay up-front fees to claim your prize or require you to purchase an additional travel ticket for a companion. Once you become a "lead" for solicitors, your name, address, phone and any other information you have provided may be sold to other companies that may solicit you by

phone and mail as well. The Better Business Bureau offers these tips to consumers attending summer events: Be aware that filling out an entry form for a drawing or give-away may increase chances of mail and phone solicitations. Do not give out personal information such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, and date of birth. If you enter a drawing be sure that you have company name and contract information for the company conducting the drawing. The BBB's consumer hotline is accessible 24 hours a day. In Oregon, consumers can call (503) 226-3981, and in Western Washington (206) 431-2222.

Medical care & prescription drugs available for free

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Financial Assistance Network in Washington, DC has just published a new booklet, "Free & Low Cost Medical Care". The booklet includes information on a how and where to get free and low cost medical care under the Federal Hill-Burton program. The Hill-Burton program has been effect for over 50 years providing more than 35 billion dollars in free and low cost care to qualified participants. The program was established in 1946 to assist in the construction and modernization of hospital and medical care facilities. Nearly 6 billion dollars in grants and loans were given to 7,000 facilities in

over 4,000 communities. In exchange, the facilities agreed to provide a reasonable amount of services to persons residing in the local community who are unable to pay. "There are currently 687 facilities that provide free or low cost medical care. Over 1100 prescription drugs are also available for free or very low cost to qualified individuals. Unfortunately, many qualified people do not take advantage of these programs because there is rarely any publicity inform the public." Says Paul Navestad, Founder of Financial Assistance Network. "A step by step outline guides consumers through the processes of finding a participating facility, and organization established by volunteer dedicated to helping people who

cannot afford medical care or prescription medication. The primary purposes of Financial Assistance Network are to inform potentially qualified applicants about the patient assistance programs for which they appear eligible and assist them in the enrollment process. Consumers can receive a copy by sending \$5 to cover the cost of printing, postage and handling to: Financial Assistance Network - Free & Low Cost Medical Care Booklet - Dept. MCB-0608-P.O. Box 60848, Washington, DC 20039-0848. Consumers can also get more information about free and low cost medical and prescription drugs by calling 202-595-1039, or visit the organization's web site: www.FinancialAssistanceNetwork.org

Yes! It's your time! You couldn't have dreamed it better if you'd tried. You've learned that hard work and long hours definitely pay off and that getting ahead is easier when there's family behind you. That's the way it is with American Family Mutual Insurance. Like you, we understand it's consistent performance that builds strong reputations. That's just one of many reasons why year after year, we're awarded an A+ (Superior) rating from the respected insurance rating authority, A.M. Best.

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