

Opinion

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Death Penalty Flawed

The Clinton Administration should offer the leadership required to guide the United States away from judicial executions.

A Justice Department study has reportedly found significant racial and geographical disparities in the application of the death penalty at a federal level and indicates that minorities—particularly African Americans have been disproportionately targeted.

It also reportedly shows that pursuit of death sentences by federal prosecutors is not uniform across the country despite efforts by Attorney

General Janet Reno to make it so.

"No one should be surprised that the federal death penalty is displaying the same lottery like qualities that plague capital justice at a state level," said Williams F. Schulz, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA "We urge President Clinton to exercise leadership on this life-and-death issue.

Amnesty International and others have consistently documented how prosecutorial discretion, coupled with issues of politics, race and economic status, have rendered the U.S. death penalty arbitrary, discriminatory and

unfair.

"This 'American-roulette' is a human rights scandal for which there is only one solution abolition," Dr. Schulz said.

In an August 1999 letter responding to Amnesty International's finding in its report on race and the U.S. death penalty. Killing with prejudice, the Justice Department agreed that "it cannot be disputed that the circumstances of many of the identified cases... raise concerns." However, the department said that this was a matter for the states and that at the federal level "every effort has

been made to force less race as a factor in the decision as to whether to seek the death penalty." The departments own review seems now to indicate that "every effort" has not been enough.

Amnesty International noted that the U.S. regularly violates international standards on the death penalty, including the use of it against children, the mentally impaired, those denied adequate legal representation, those whose innocence is in serious doubt, and foreign nationals without appeals must take a stand against such violations by saying that it can-

not interfere in individuals states' use of capital punishment.

History shows that countries that have abolished state executions - now more than half of all nations - have not done so on the basis of opinion polls, but have relied upon the courage and vision of leaders to adopt alternatives to this brutal and brutalizing punishment," Dr. Schulz said. "The death penalty is beyond repair. A moratorium of federal executions would be a constructive first step to ending the death penalty once and for all."

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Letters To The Editor

Bush Ad Disgusting

I am writing to express my total disgust with the most recent Republican ad attacking Al Gore's Health Care Plan.

The advertisement, which I understand, was produced by the same people who came up with the "Rats" ad, is clearly misleading and false. It demonstrates the depths to which the Republic's will go to scare, shock and even lie to seniors, like me, to get votes here in Oregon.

As I understand it, Al Gore's plan protects Medicare by placing the entire Medicare surplus in a lockbox, so it can only be used for Medicare and paying down the national debt.

Al Gore's plan will also modernize Medicare and work to eliminate fraud and waste. He will also, make sure seniors can choose their own doctor and a health plan that makes sense for them.

I also believe Gore's plan for prescription drugs is best for all seniors. His plan will establish a voluntary, affordable prescription drug plan and he will ensure 55 to 65 years olds can buy into Medicare.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter.

Lolita A. Darby,
Retired Educator
North Portland

Thank you Portland Observer

I am writing to thank you for this assistance that you and The Observer provide by publicizing our needs for volunteers.

Your newspaper has provided our Senior Corps program with several new volunteers who will impact the lives of hundreds of children in the region. It means a lot, not only to our program, but the schools, children, and families that our volunteers assist. The Portland Observer's commitment and support is a great asset to the entire community.

I look forward to what our future holds because of the service you continue to provide.

Randy Lucas
Senior Corps
Volunteer Recruitment Specialist

Measure 9 Threatens Local Control

Ballot Measure 9 is a direct threat to the local control of our schools that we now enjoy. Local parents, teachers and school boards know what's best for our kids - it's their job to guide our kids everyday; it's not the job of a special interest group with a narrow agenda.

Ballot Measure 9 would establish a new dictate from the state, and the bureaucracy that accompanies that, to make decision about how to teach our kids in our own schools.

That violates the local control we value with our schools right now.

For more information about how Measure 9 is dangerous for kids and dangerous for schools, please contact Jennifer Webber, No on 9 Communication Director at 503-232-7176.

Come to the MBE/WBE/ESB CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP

Are you a minority- or woman-owned business owner or contractor interested in learning more about contracting opportunities and the state minority- or woman-owned business, or emerging small business certification process? If so, this workshop is for you.

WHEN: Friday, September 29, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

WHERE: Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs (OAME), 4134 N. Vancouver Avenue, Portland (Tri-Met bus line 5-Interstate).

WHAT:

- Individual consultation sessions that may help shorten the certification process
- Presentations from various general contractors as they seek to meet their needs from subcontractors

For more information contact:
Tyrone Henry 823-3315 or Loretta Ebert 823-3354
PDC Website: www.portlanddc.org
OMWESB Website: www.cbs.state.or.us/omwesb

Sponsored by the Portland Development Commission (PDC), City of Portland, State of Oregon Office of Minority, Women and Emerging Small Business (OMWESB), METRO and the Port of Portland

Joe Sperm is a bad seed

"Planned Parenthood's Big Sex industry is now exploiting children in the same way Big Tobacco did-with a cartoon," said Ed Szymkowiak, national director of Stop Planned Parenthood International. Szymkowiak was referring to Planned Parenthood's latest affront-a walking, talking, sperm-like cartoon wearing sunglasses.

On Sept. 16, children watching the Celebration Parade in Eugene, Oregon were exposed to Joe Sperm as he marched along with giant condoms and birth control pills-with a bevy of humans, dressed as sperm, chasing others dressed as eggs.

Joe Sperm ads are now on Eugene City buses. "Planned Parenthood has created a cartoon character that will cause even very young children to become interested in sex," Szymkowiak added. "Joe Sperm deserves the same negative response drawn by Camel cigarettes' Joe Camel led kids to think smoking is 'cool.'"

Joe Sperm will do the same for contraceptives and sex. Planned Parenthood's so-called 'safe sex' can lead to sexually transmitted diseases abortion and serious post-abortion problems. The citizens of Eugene should kick Joe Sperm and Planned Parenthood out of town."

Bill Shepherd, executive director of Planned Parenthood in Southwestern Oregon, admitted recently that Joe Sperm is part of a birth control program aimed at the poor in the region. "The beauty of this program for Oregon," he said, "is that the federal government will match our state funding on a 9-to-1 basis. Right now Oregon's putting in \$1.5 million, and the federal government is adding \$13.5 million" (Eugene Register-Guard Sept. 19, 2000). "Obviously, Planned Parenthood is counting on the Joe Sperm ad campaign to help them get a huge chunk of this \$15 million pot of taxpayer money."

Wyden Applauds Oil Swap

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore) is applauding President Clinton's decision to release oil from nation's strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). In a Feb letter to Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, Wyden had called in the Department of Energy (DOE) to initiate a lease exchange or "swap" of oil from the SPR to give consumers some immediate relief from skyrocketing gas prices, and has repeatedly urged the administration to release 30 million barrels to head off supply shocks and severe price spikes

"Tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve shows strong, decisive leadership to help consumers and sustain our economic growth. This will immediately increase the oil supply which should bring down prices at the pump," Wyden said.

Suppose a tree fell through your garage tonight...
WHO WOULD COME THROUGH FOR YOU TOMORROW?



You're inside your house, safe from the big storm. When, boom! Lightning strikes. Next thing you know, there's a tree all the way through your garage roof. Taking care of claims like this is what American Family Insurance is all about. Over 70 years of experience means fast, efficient service and home protection you can trust. Life is unpredictable. That's why it's good to have a homeowners insurance policy you can count on. If a storm should put a tree through your garage tonight, it's comforting to know you can depend on Family to come through for you tomorrow. Call one of our knowledgeable, friendly agents today. Or visit our website at www.amfam.com.

Find out all the ways "Family" comes through for you!



All Your Protection Under One Roof.

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