



# Opinion

## The Portland Observer

USPS 959-680

Established 1970

### STAFF

EDITOR IN CHIEF,

PUBLISHER

Charles H. Washington

EDITOR

Larry J. Jackson, Sr.

BUSINESS MANAGER

Gary Ann Taylor

ASST. PUBLISHER

Michael Leighton

COPY EDITOR

Joy Ramos

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Robert Parker

4747 NE Martin Luther King,

Jr. Blvd.

Portland, OR 97211

503-288-0033

Fax 503-288-0015

e-mail

news@portlandobserver.com

subscription@portlandobserver.com

ads@portlandobserver.com

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to

Portland Observer

PO Box 3137

Portland, OR 97208

Periodical Postage  
paid in Portland, OR

Subscriptions are  
\$60.00 per year

### DEADLINES

FOR ALL SUBMITTED MATERIALS:

ARTICLES:

Monday by 5 P.M.

ADS:

Friday by noon

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1996 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

The Portland Observer—Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication—is a member of the National Newspaper Association—Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association\* Serving Portland and Vancouver.

# New Report Clears the Air on Taxes

By CHARLES SHEKETTOFF  
OREGON CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

A new report finds that the tax burden in Oregon is near its lowest levels in the last 20 years.

State and local taxes, as a share of income in Oregon, have gone from 11.8 percent in 1988 to 10.2 percent in 1999, steadily declining over the past 10 years. Compared with six other Western states, Oregon's household tax burden is in the middle and its business tax burden is the lowest.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy used a variety of data sources to analyze the current and past tax burdens Oregonians face, in an attempt to inform the debate over taxes. "Annual surveys show Oregonians generally are not knowledgeable about state government revenue sources and expenses," noted Jeff Thompson, an economist at the Silverton-based research institute and

the report's author. "Much of this is no doubt due to the zealous misinformation campaigns by groups who seek to de-fund important public services such as education and health care," he added.

"Despite faltering public education and a shredded safety net for the poor, children, and the disabled, anti-government activists continue to press for further tax cuts that primarily benefit Oregon's most economically comfortable. Their thirst for tax cuts seems to know no limit as they soak Oregonians with misinformation about our tax system," said Thompson.

"Contrary to claims of anti-government activists, tax levels in Oregon are not high and have not been rising. Total state and local tax collections have trailed behind economic growth in Oregon for some time now," said Thompson.

The most remarkable aspect of

Oregon's overall tax structure is its regressivity. While Oregon's single-largest tax, the personal income tax, is partially based on the ability to pay, the overall tax structure places a higher burden in low-income households.

The total effective state and local tax rate of the lowest-income 20 percent of Oregon households is 12.3 percent, compared to the 11.8 percent rate of the highest-income 20 percent.

Oregon taxes low-income households at higher rates than upper-income households because of the regressive components of the tax structure—property and excise taxes—and because Oregon taxes families at income levels well below poverty. Oregon levies the eighth highest income tax on four-person, poor working families. Oregon levies the nation's third highest tax on four person families who are slightly above

the poverty level.

In addition to the declining total state and local tax burden, the effective federal tax rates on middle-income families have also fallen in recent years.

"Data from the Congressional Budget Office show that federal taxes on middle-income families are at their lowest point in the last thirty years," noted Thompson.

The study, "Clearing the Air on Tax Day: Assessing the Tax Burden in Oregon," is available on the OCPP web site, [www.ocpp.org/2001/es010415.htm](http://www.ocpp.org/2001/es010415.htm).

The Oregon Center for Public Policy is a non-profit research organization that analyzes budget, tax, and program issues important to low- and moderate-income Oregonians, the majority of Oregonians.

## Mississippi Vote Deeply Disappointing

NAACP President & CEO Kweisi Mfume called Tuesday's decision by the voters in Mississippi to retain the confederate emblem on the state's flag "deeply disappointing."

Mfume said, "it is too bad that the voters of Mississippi have chosen to stay buried in the past instead of moving forward into the 21st century. That, not withstanding, the

NAACP will not give up its fight to remove from public property any and all symbols that celebrate the twisted philosophy of bigotry and hatred in this country. The historic Mississippi State conference of the NAACP is to be commended for leading the fight on this issue.

"The governor and business leaders worked hard in this effort to create a new Missis-

issippi. It is a shame that many voters did not share their views. It is important for people to embrace symbols of unity and not symbols of divisiveness: The Confederate symbol represents bigotry and hatred not only in America, but also around the world. Our thanks to the multi-racial board based coalition that worked with the NAACP in this struggle," Mfume added.

## Cycling Center Needs Bikes!

The Community Cycling Center is a local non-profit agency dedicated to providing bicycles to low-income members of the Portland community. Donations of adult-sized bicycles are needed for use in its teen and adult programs.

Over the next several months, in what we call the Create A Commuter program, we will give refurbished and fully-outfitted

commuter bicycles to 100 Portland residents in need of affordable transportation to their places of employment. Kick off your spring cleaning and help make this project successful by donating your unused bikes.

Call 503-288-8864 for details, or drop bikes off at our shop located at 1700 N.E. Alberta.

We can use any bikes you have, except really rusty

ones! What can't be used as a bicycle might get used to make recycled art or other things.

We can use everything from fancy road bikes, high tech mountain bikes and classic cruisers to your basic 10 speed from the '70's. Everything goes to a good cause!

Sincerely, the Community Cycling Center

4 BIRDS.  
1 CAT.  
3 SQUIRRELS.  
7200 VOLTS.  
YOU'D BE AMAZED  
WHAT'S HIDING  
IN YOUR TREE.

Contact with a power line can cause serious injury. Before doing any yard work this spring, look up. If you see a line give us a call at 1-800-544-1794.

PGE  
Portland General Electric  
WWW.PORTLANDGENERAL.COM

# GREAT VALUES!

**Attention SENIORS**  
NEW FOR SENIORS ONLY...  
**Safeway Senior Shuttle Service!**  
Introducing a great new service for our neighborhood senior citizens. FREE grocery shopping "shuttle service" to your nearby Astorworth & MLK Blvd Safeway Food & Drug and Renaissance Market. TWICE a Month! On or around the 3rd and 15th of each month. This Service is FREE to seniors age 60 and over. Please Seniors, Grandchildren and others WILL NOT BE PERMITTED on the Shuttle at any time.  
LOOK FOR OUR SPECIAL "RAZ TRANSPORTATION" TROLLEY SERVICE SCHEDULE FLYER AT YOUR MLK BLVD SAFEWAY and RENAISSANCE MARKET FOR COMPLETE DETAILS!  
Sponsored By:  
SAFEWAY FOOD & DRUG  
Renaissance Market  
AFRICAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF OREGON  
For More Information Call: 503-572-0012

**Beef Chuck 7-Bone Roast**  
Bone-In.  
**1.18 lb.**  
SAVE up to \$1.11 lb. Safeway Club Price

**1-lb. Red Ripe Strawberries**  
Grown in California.  
**2 for \$4**  
SAVE up to \$1.96 on 2 Safeway Club Price

**12-Pack Safeway SELECT Soft Drinks**  
12-oz. cans. Assorted Regular, Diet or Caffeine Free varieties. Limit 4. Plus Deposit in Oregon.  
**1.98**  
SAVE up to 88¢  
Safeway Club Price

**Oven Joy Bread**  
22.5-oz. White or Wheat.  
**3 for 99¢**  
SAVE up to \$1.62 on 3  
Safeway Club Price

Now the savings are in the Card!

ALL LIMITS ARE PER HOUSEHOLD PER DAY!

PRICES EFFECTIVE APRIL/MAY 2001

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
29	30	1		25	26	27 28

Prices shown in this ad are available at your local Safeway store. No sales to dealers, restaurants or institutions. Sales in retail quantities only. Quantities of some items may be limited and subject to availability. Not responsible for typographical or printing errors. We reserve the right to correct all printed errors. \*On Buy One Get One Free, both items must be purchased. The lower item is then free. © 2001 Safeway Stores, Inc.