

Portland  
Observer

# 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 97208Periodical Postage  
paid in Portland, ORSubscriptions 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.

## Bush Lukewarm to Voting Reforms

(AP) — President Bush, who still faces stinging criticism over the way he won last year's election, gave a lukewarm embrace last week to voting reforms recommended by former Presidents Carter and Ford, calling their proposals only guidelines.

Bush, casting himself as an election reformer, accorded Carter a Rose Garden ceremony to unveil the report by the National Commission on Federal Election, which he led with Ford. But Bush avoided taking a stand on specific proposals, including making election day a national holiday, restoring voting rights to felons and allowing voters challenged by poll workers to cast provisional ballots anyway.

"Today I accept their report and recommend the key principles drawn from the report as guidelines for meaningful reform," Bush said, with Carter standing beside him. Ford could not attend because of a scheduling conflict.

"I commend the commissioners for their statesmanlike work. They

have risen above partisan emotions and put forth practical suggestions for improving democracy and the United States Congress



George W. Bush accepts a report on voting reforms from former President Jimmy Carter at the White House. (AP Photo)

should listen to them and follow their lead," Bush added.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., said the Carter-Ford panel "took a serious look at our election laws and found ways to improve them. I think this commission gives us a framework from which to work

from."

The 19-member commission calls for a voluntary embargo on airing Election Night projections by the news media until polls have closed everywhere in the continental United States. Failing that, Congress should consider legislation to ban disclosure of official results until 11 p.m. EST or to set a uniform national poll

closing time.

The panel asks news organizations to voluntarily refrain from the state-by-state calls that caused so much confusion in the 2000 presidential race between Bush and then-Vice President Al Gore.

"If necessary, Congress and the

states should consider legislation, within First Amendment limits, to protect the integrity of the electoral process," the panel concludes.

Steering clear of those specifics, Bush endorsed the panel's broadest and least controversial findings: Give states and localities the prime role in running elections; modernize ballots and election equipment; protect the rights of U.S. troops voting from overseas; and enforce civil rights laws.

Bush has been under pressure, particularly from Democrats, to correct problems that arose in last fall's Florida election. Bush was declared the winner 36 days after the voting, following a 5-4 Supreme Court decision that effectively halted a partial recount in Florida.

The president may face even more pressure from Carter, who already has been critical of the administration.

Carter was quoted in a recent article criticizing Bush's positions on missile defense, Alaska oil drilling and global warming and said he has been disappointed in almost

everything Bush has done. In a follow-up statement, Carter said he respects Bush despite their honest differences of opinion. The White House refused direct comment on either statement.

On one of the most critical debates on how to craft reform, the 100-page report endorsed grants that would require states to make certain improvements if they were to receive federal money. A substantial minority said the federal government should go further and mandate standards for better elections. The report laid out a detailed recipe for improving elections, from improving voting machinery and ballot design to strengthening state registration procedures. It acknowledged the extent of the problems across the country, but concluded that the framework already exists to bring the system up to expectations.

"In a world of problems that often deny any solution, the weaknesses in election administration are, to a very great degree, problems that government can solve," the report says.

## Faith Based Initiative Laudable, but Unconstitutional

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson delivered the following statement regarding the passage of President Bush's faith-based initiative called the "Community Solutions Act."

"Today's action in the House is contemptuous to the memory of the many warriors of the civil rights movement. In a matter of minutes, my colleagues in the House of Representatives have negated years of struggle for equality and fairness. H.R. 7, the "Community Solutions Act," is laudable, but unconstitutional.

"As Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I am committed to continuing to work with our religious leaders who have been some of the best leaders in our communities for decades.

I know first hand about the good that the church can do in the com-

munity. However, we cannot forget that the use of federal funds, which are collected from the hard earned tax dollars of all of the people cannot and should not be used to discriminate.

"Churches and religious institutions have been on the front lines of dealing with societies' woes since the beginning of time, and in the African-American community these are called the churches ministries - the homeless ministry, the sick and shut-in ministry and a host of others.

So, using the faith we have in our church to try to address the problems that many people face isn't new. "But, the Charitable Choice provision in its current form threatens to undermine

nearly 60 years of federal civil rights protections against discrimination.

Additionally, H.R. 7 would override state and local civil rights laws and ordinances that currently protect employees.

We cannot afford to roll back the strides made in the civil rights movement by allowing this provi-

sion, which would allow religious institutions to receive federal funds, but would also allow for them to discriminate in the use of those funds. I just don't think that we should let that happen.

"For these reasons, yesterday, the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus unanimously passed

a resolution to express our opposition to H.R. 7.

Unfortunately, many of our colleagues in the House did not share our sentiment for the hard fought merits of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Our only prayer is that our colleagues in the Senate will be more reverent."

## Oregon Braces For West Nile Virus

STORY CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

There have been no human cases of mosquito-borne encephalitis in Oregon over the past 30 years.

According to Christopher M. Wirth, supervisor of Multnomah County Vector and Nuisance Control, "To most people, mosquitoes are just an annoying pest, but these insects carry serious diseases."

The health division received a \$90,000 grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to track the disease-carrying mosquitoes.

Vector and nuisance control officers will collect field-captured mosquitoes and have them tested for West Nile virus, as well as St.

Louis and Western Equine Encephalitis.

According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control, typical West Nile viral infections in people are mild inflammation of the brain with symptoms that include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands.

"More severe infection may be marked by headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and rarely, death," the report said.

## What Can I Do?

STORY CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

tainers, turning containers that hold water upside down and keeping trash receptacles from collecting water.

Lawns and gardens should be kept free of standing water, old tires that collect water should be thrown away or filled with sand, and water in wading pools, pet watering dishes, and birdbaths should be changed every few days.

Officials say swimming pools and hot tubs should also be maintained with proper chlorination and working equipment. The vegetation in and around ornamental ponds should be thinned and mosquito fish are available to eat the insects.

It's a home run and it's sailing... straight through your windshield. NOW WHO'S GOING TO COME THROUGH FOR YOU?

A talented Little League batter hits the ball all the way out of the park... and straight through your car windshield! Taking care of claims like this is what American Family Insurance is all about. Over 70 years of experience means fast, efficient service and auto protection you can trust. Should a baseball ever come through your windshield, nothing feels better than knowing American Family comprehensive coverage covers the bases to come through for you fast! Call one of our knowledgeable, friendly agents today. Or visit our website at [www.amfam.com](http://www.amfam.com).

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

**AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE**  
AUTO HOME BUSINESS HEALTH LIFE

**All Your Protection Under One Roof.**

Check your local directory for the agent nearest you.

©2000 American Family Mutual Insurance Company and its subsidiaries. Home Office - Madison, WI 53763 Home Office - Columbus, OH 43240 [www.amfam.com](http://www.amfam.com)