

Grand Jury Accuses Police of Cover-Up

Case involves man beaten by two off duty police officers

A grand jury in Portland has issued a letter to Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schunk that accuses supervisors in the Portland Police Bureau of engaging in a cover-up to protect two off-duty officers charged in beating a man after an altercation in a downtown bar. The Jan. 24 incident came to light last week when assault charges were issued against the officers. The police bureau is now conducting an internal investigation. The text of the grand jury's letter follows:

Dear Mr. Schunk:

We the members of Grand Jury #1 have heard over 120 criminal cases in the last three and half weeks. Much of the testimony has come from men and women who are Portland police officers. Their professionalism, thoroughness and dedication to the safety of our community filled each of us with sincere admiration and pride.

For the past several days we have heard evidence regarding the beating of a civilian by two off-duty Portland Police Officers on Jan. 24. The beating and what occurred immediately after has been the subject

of our inquiry. We resolved the first issue by bringing an indictment against one of the officers. The second issue is more difficult and equally concerning. That inquiry focused on conduct that in our minds amounted to a cover-up. We believe this matter would have remained buried had not an anonymous person written to the Police Oversight Commission. It is for this reason that we request that you communicate our thoughts, which are reflected in this letter to the Chief of Police.

As members of the community, and as Grand Jurors, we have grave concerns about the actions and inactions of the police officers and command personnel of the Portland Police Bureau on the night in question. While we considered criminal charges against at least one officer, we do not think there is sufficient evidence to warrant an indictment. The actions and inactions of the police clearly resulted in a cover-up. However, we are unable to say beyond a reasonable doubt that the actions were intentional because there is a reasonable possibility that the actions were the result of gross negligence. In either case, it is not something we expect

from people we employ to be managers, supervisors and officers within the Portland Police Bureau

Following the beating of the victim, it is apparent that no one was in control of the investigation or the situation. It was obvious to anyone looking at injuries to the victim that this was an aggravated felony assault by two off-duty officers. Because the victim did not want to prosecute the matter, everyone used this as an excuse not to pursue a thorough criminal investigation. What

continued ▼ on page A6

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Local Lawmaker Listens to Diverse Communities

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

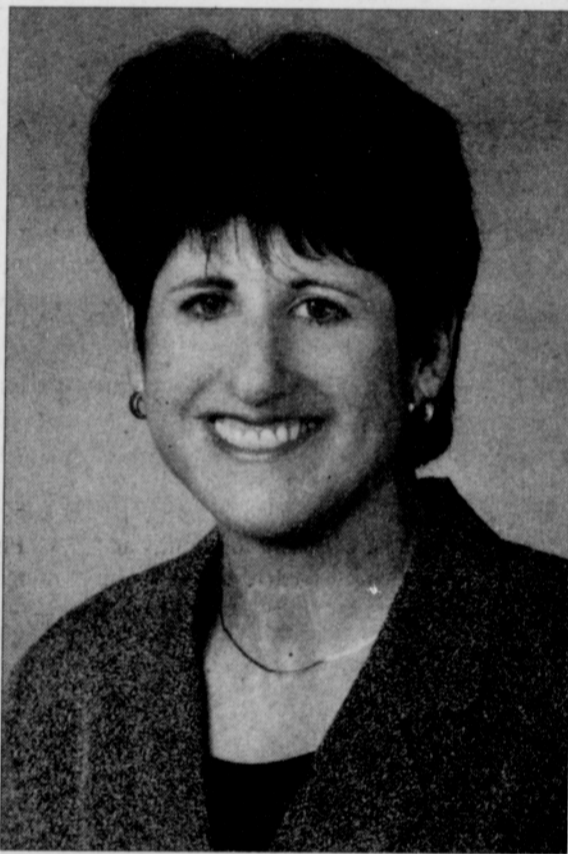
A northeast Portland woman is reaching out to the diverse communities of her city in a bid for election to the Oregon House of Representatives.

Democratic State Rep. Jackie Dingfelder says being a liaison for and listening to the concerns of the different communities in her House District 45, are the most important parts of her job.

The district covers one of the most diverse populations in the state with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders comprising the largest minority at 8.5 percent, Latinos at 6.6 percent and African-Americans at 4.7 percent. It stretches north of the Banfield Freeway, from the Irvington neighborhood to Parkrose.

Dingfelder says people are tired of politics as usual. "Oregon's changed a lot, but the Legislature has been slow to change," she said.

Dingfelder said voters want lawmakers who de-



Jackie Dingfelder

velop good polices that are results oriented, not lawmakers who enhance their own egos.

"We need leaders committed to the long run," she said.

Dingfelder's priorities for office are support for education, an overhaul of the tax system and supporting health care for low-income Oregonians.

"In Portland, public schools are the key to keeping the city a wonderful place to live," she said.

Dingfelder has demonstrated with Portland's school custodians in their fight to keep jobs targeted by budget cuts, calling custodians people who

"take care of our schools."

She's not a supporter of school vouchers, fearing they will create a class of haves and have-nots.

Dingfelder's experience at the state capitol in Salem includes one half of a regular session and two special sessions. She was appointed to the Legislature to represent northeast Portland when former Rep. Jo Ann Bowman resigned more than a year ago.

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