

Election 2002

Democrats Advocate Reforms

Medical accessibility, affordability promoted at Senior Center



U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., (from left) visits northeast Portland to promote health care reform Thursday with Bill Bradbury, the Democratic candidate for Oregon Governor, and Howard Dean, the governor of Vermont.
PHOTO BY DAVID PLECHL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

**BY DAVID PLECHL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER**
A powerful group of lawmakers, including Oregon's Democratic candidates for U.S. senator and governor, gathered at the Northeast Multicultural Senior Center on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Thursday to advocate for health care reforms.

Bill Bradbury and Ted Kulongowski joined current U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Vermont Gov. Howard Dean to consider if it was possible to develop a health care system in America that would include everyone.

"We have had eight years of

inactivity in the fight to reform health care," Wyden said. "It's time for citizens and elected officials to take the issue back from special interests and build a better health care system from the grassroots up."

The roundtable discussion gave families and Oregon's seniors the opportunity to discuss challenges they face meeting the rising costs of prescription drugs and comprehensive health insurance.

"I think everyone recognizes that the rising cost of health care is just unacceptable," said Kulongowski, the Democratic candidate for governor.

Wyden took the opportunity to

address the importance of preventative measures in medicine.

"It's not health care in this country, it's sick care. We wait until people are flat on their backs," he said.

Gov. Dean, a possible presidential contender for 2004, was lauded for his work as one of the nation's forerunners in innovative health care programs. Vermont has one of the highest medical coverage rates of people under 18 in the nation.

"It's not expensive to take care of children," Dean said.

The lawmakers also shed some light on the high and low points of Oregon's health care system.



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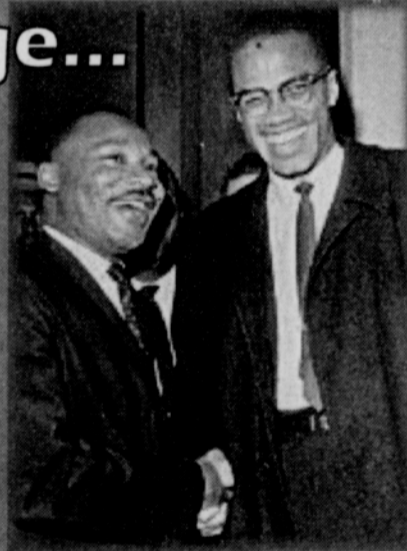
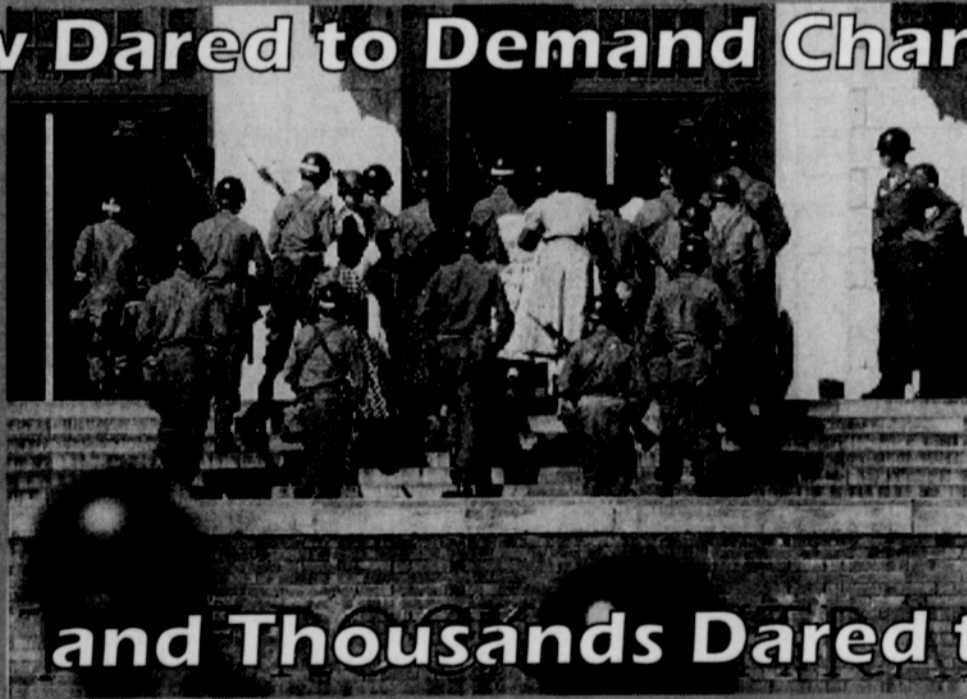
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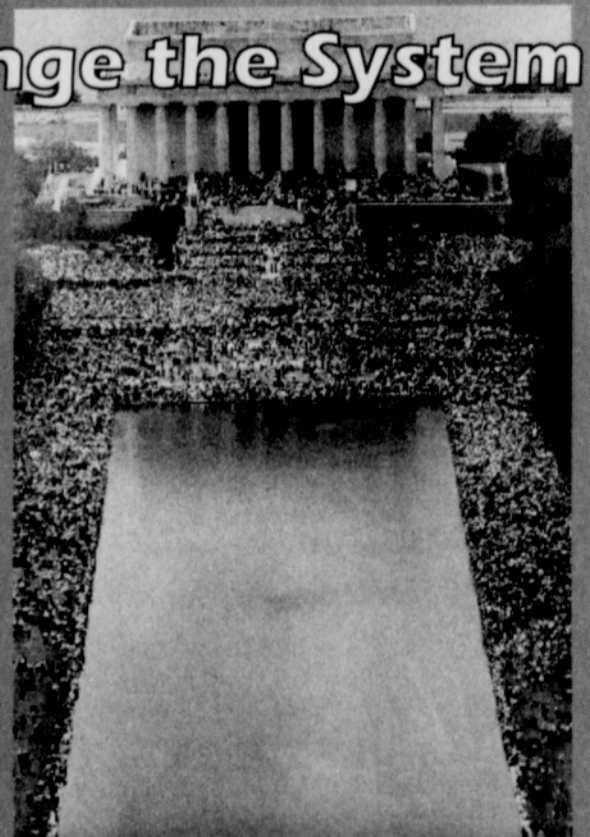
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