

OPINION

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Alabama Judge Far Beyond Mainstream



Nominee's record in human rights is dreadful

By Wade Henderson

The U.S. Senate should reject the nomination of William Pryor to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit.

When it comes to the rights of women, minorities, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, Pryor's wretched reactionary record demonstrates a desire to return to America as it was before Congress enacted legislation protecting those rights.

As Alabama attorney general, Pryor worked to turn back the clock on federal protections against discrimination based

on race, gender, age, and disability. He has pushed his extremist agenda through and in numerous public speeches.

William Pryor is far beyond the mainstream of America. His words and abysmal record in protecting civil, constitutional and human rights demonstrate that he is an avowed extremist and legal activist. His ideological agenda of limiting Congress' ability to pass laws aimed at protecting

Pryor has urged Congress to consider eliminating a key provision of the Voting Rights Act, which protects the right to vote for African-Americans and other racial minorities,

- Wade Henderson

against discrimination and inequalities should certainly disqualify him from a lifetime appointment to the federal judiciary.

In his role as one of the architects of the so-called "states' rights" movement, Pryor not only challenged the constitutionality of the Violence Against Women Act, but has also argued that the Supreme Court

should cut back on the protections of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Pryor has urged Congress to consider eliminating a key provision of the Voting Rights Act, which protects the right to vote for African-Americans and other racial minorities, stating that it is "an affront to federalism and an expansive burden that has far outlived its usefulness."

He also criticized the Supreme Court's decision in *United States v. Virginia*, which found unconstitutional the denial of admission to women by the Virginia Military Institute, a public university.

Over the course of his career in the attorney general's office, Pryor has also been a vocal opponent of the rights of criminal defendants. In one infamous case, he vigorously defended Alabama's practice of handcuffing prison inmates to hitching posts in the hot sun if they refused to work on chain gangs or otherwise disrupted them, arguing that the practice did not violate the prisoner's right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. The Supreme Court rejected Pryor's arguments, citing the "obvious cruelty inherent in this practice."

Wade Henderson is the executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

Greatest Honor to Serve

Dear Portlanders,

One of the greatest honors of my life is to serve you as Mayor since 1993. Your civic interest and involvement inspires me to always do my best. I hold sacred the trust you place in me to lead this community. I seek to govern by setting an example of hard work, innovation and accountability.

Over the past 10 years, we've made Portland a better place to live. I am overwhelmed with gratitude when I think of all the people I worked with who helped complete a list of accomplishments that makes Portland the envy of many other American cities.

I am proud of projects such as the extension of light rail lines to the airport and Expo center; completion of the streetcar; expansion of the Oregon Convention Center; creation of new neighborhoods in the River District and South Waterfront; launch of the River Renaissance; construction of North America's largest Chinese Classical Garden and the Eastbank Esplanade; restoration of our historic City Hall and the Civic Stadium; and the rebirth of Oldtown/Chinatown, North and Northeast Portland neighborhoods — with the Central Eastside, St. Johns, Gateway and Lents on the way.

I am also proud of groundbreaking policies and initiatives that reshaped city services like the City's first comprehensive economic development strategy; significantly-increased funding for the arts; the Youth Gang Anti-Gun Task Force that stopped a rapid escalation of gun and gang violence in the mid-1990s; our graffiti abatement and auto theft programs; the annual Regulatory Improvement Workplans; the Fair Contracting and Employment Strategy to assist women and minority owned businesses; maintenance of our triple A bond rating; reduction of administrative costs that saved millions of dollars; and the protection of our schools by keeping them open

and funded until the Legislature acts.

With these and other efforts since 1993, Portland is safer; countywide per capita income has grown; citizens rate the livability of neighborhoods higher — results that helped *Money* magazine rate Portland as the most livable city in America in 2000.

Have we succeeded at everything we tried? No, but it is necessary to take some risks and face a few disappointments to push Portland's progress forward. Have we solved all problems? Obviously not, for with each success is a set of additional challenges to work on. We must reform our business taxes; protect our ratepayers as PGE is sold; implement the updated economic development strategy to prepare for our economic recovery and get more Portlanders back to work; close the student achievement gaps in low performing schools; complete the transfer of Ross Island to the city; decide the future of Memorial Coliseum; launch the build out of South Waterfront; finish the necessary work to arrive at a final decision on baseball; complete a comprehensive review of policies and practices at the Portland Police Bureau; and set plans to extend Light Rail along the transit mall...just to name a few tasks on my "to do" list.

With the local and national recession lingering, what Portland needs most over the next year and a half is a Mayor who is completely dedicated to the job at hand.

After 32 years in elected office, what I want most a year and a half from now is to focus my energies on new adventures and challenges, and spend more time with friends, my son and my grandson.

For these reasons, I will not seek reelection as Mayor. I have another year and a half as your mayor to continue leading this city to a more prosperous future, and I intend to do just that.

With warm regards,
Vera Katz
Mayor

In Funding Head Start, First Do No Harm

By Jim Jones

In full disclosure, I admit I am not privy to the conversations between the Senate majority leader and the president of the United States. Nonetheless, it is clear that Dr. Bill Frist has never schooled President Bush in the physicians' golden rule, "First, do no harm."

In two years, President Bush turned a \$280 billion surplus into a record \$455 billion budget deficit. His unnecessary tax cut for millionaires led to economic turmoil, leaving the largest number of youth without summer jobs since 1948. His superfluous dividend tax cut doesn't apply to 90 percent of Latino children, and his fiscal policies contributed to record numbers of black children living in poverty.

In 2000, he vowed that education was his priority, then proposing the smallest increase in seven years. This year's budget for Title I - centerpiece of the

administration's education reform - falls \$6.1 billion short of what was planned in the president's education bill. Now, the president is explicitly dismantling Head Start.

The Head Start program begun 38 years ago as a promise to America's poor children, addressing the complex nature of poverty and providing them with opportunity.

While there is no single panacea for eradicating poverty and no one program to alleviate its debilitating effects, Head Start represents the best of what we offer to our nation's poorest children.

Head Start serves only three out of every five eligible pre-school children and only three out of every 100 eligible infants and toddlers. Instead of providing more resources to truly expand the program, the Administration proposed an "increase" barely enough to cover inflation. It further proposed to devolve authority and funding mandates on ill-equipped states, themselves

facing budget deficits of \$70 billion - 85 billion for 2004. Nearly every state has a deficit in the current fiscal year. As a result, 32 states have cut their commitment to early childhood services. The president wants to pass the buck without passing the bucks.

States cannot duplicate Head Start's standards. There's no evidence that state-funded programs are more successful than Head Start in closing the "achievement gap" between poor and higher-income children. State pre-kindergarten initiatives fall far short of the federal standards.

Now that the House, by a single vote, has passed this block-granting scheme, perhaps the Senate majority leader review the basic philosophy of his profession. And, when the Senate considers Head Start in the fall, Dr. Frist could start the debate by advising his colleagues to "First, do no harm." Jim Jones is vice president, programs and policy, Children's Defense Fund.

Not What Was Meant

A headline in a letter to the editor in our July 27 issue did not convey the opinion of the writer and we regret the error.

Northeast Portland resident Linda Kanzinger did not suggest another community forum with police over the Kendra James' shooting.

She proposed a forum without the police, for the public at large to hear the injustices suffered by people of color.

In Kanzinger's letter, she said police and city officials at last month's James forum were not interested in hearing the public's concerns.

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