

# Making Changes One Step at a Time

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boosting the income of more than 100,000 people. He worked toward the passage of the temporary Multnomah County income tax to keep Portland schools from damaging cuts and prevent cuts to senior and public healthcare services. He's volunteered with Portland's Gang Task Force, Stand for Children, Coalition for a Livable Future and Oregon Center for Public Policy.

### From activism to politics

Shields said he is proud to earn the support of two popular lawmakers from Portland's black community, Sen. Avel Gordly, the first African American woman to be elected to the Oregon Senate and Sen. Margaret Carter, the first African American woman elected to the Oregon House of Representatives. Working with the minority community to find fairness in the public policies that affect them has been one of his top priorities.

The outreach to diversity included hiring his legal assistant, Marshal Jevning, a local African American graduate from the University of Oregon School of Law. Jevning has also worked with Portland State University, bringing mi-

nority outreach to community high schools.

"He's an incredible workhorse," Shields said of Jevning. "His legal training has been an incredible compliment to my social work training."

It's being connected to the local community that allows Shields to understand the importance of neighborhood issues.

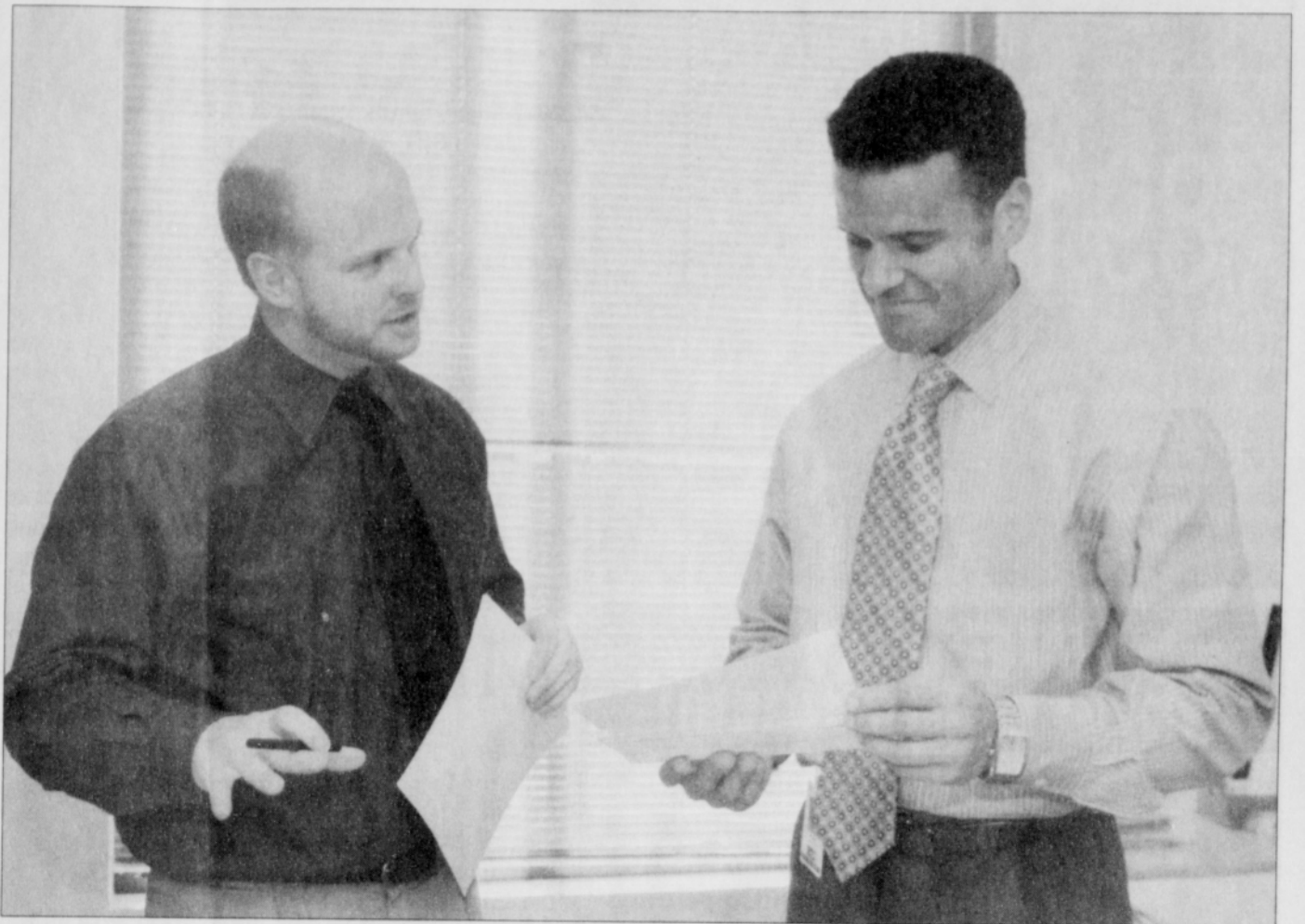
"When I moved out here, I saw there was a big need," Shields said. "We're incarcerating more people than ever before and the (social) services could be improved."

Shields realized that although it was important to help a multitude of people through volunteer work, nothing would really be revolutionized until laws were changed.

"When public policy is beating the community over the head with a 2 by 4," Shields said, "are you really getting anywhere?"

During his campaign, he put feelers out to get to know the community even more.

"I knocked on probably 5,000 doors," he said. "In this district, there's a wide variety of people. You've got affluent people in Irvington and struggling people in the Humboldt area. When I knocked on doors at noon or 1 o'clock,



Freshman State Rep. Chip Shields of north and northeast Portland relies on his office's legal assistant Marshal Jevning (right) to help him maneuver through a session of the Oregon Legislature.

*When public policy is beating the community over the head with a 2 by 4, are you really getting anywhere?*

—STATE REP. CHIP SHIELDS, REPRESENTING NORTH AND NORTHEAST PORTLAND IN SALEM



Rep. Chip Shields (left) meets with Service Employee International Union members to discuss employment contract negotiations with Legacy Emanuel Hospital.

I was amazed at how many people were home and unemployed for a significant amount of time. Those are the people that I've worked with since 1998. It's the main reason that I ran - to fight for people who are struggling."

This meant dealing with matters like repealing Measure 11 (mandatory minimum sentences) and working to make drug free zones fair to people of color.

"Someone once said the impossible things take a little longer," Shields said.

"We're now at a point where we're spending more on prisons than we're spending on community colleges. We're paying more for you to go to the state penitentiary than for you to go to Oregon State University. We're going to have a lot of prisons open that we won't be able to operate and the state will be crippled. It's much better if you can deal with things before the crisis."

### Lessons in law

Shields was warned about the frustrated legislative process, "but I felt like

I could focus in with laser-like intensity on a couple of issues that I knew about," Shields said. "I feel like being down there, I've been able to move the ball."

He's also been able to stop the wrecking ball with some issues, like House Bill 2141, which would give the Department of Corrections and Oregon Youth Authority the ability to transfer inmates to a mental institution whenever they see fit.

Shields said it had the best of intentions, but that it meant overriding a long tradition of civil commitment procedures to prevent such transfers. He was really concerned that if 15-year-old convicted on a Measure 11 crime is branded as

mentally ill, they could get sent to the state hospital.

"I started scratching my head and I got my first street lesson. In a bill, if you're just changing a particular section, you have to include the changes that you're making. What I learned that week is that if you're taking out an entire section, you don't have to include the changes," Shields said.

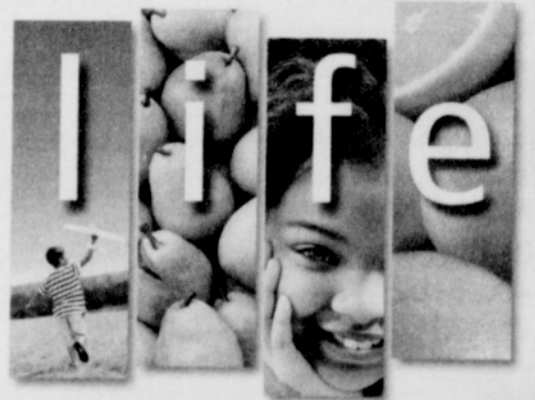
Along with Jevning, he looked over the deleted section and went to action in getting a large number of people to vote against the bill, which isn't easy.

"Republicans have a very iron fist in the

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