

OPINION

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Imagine Rosa Parks Way

Getting on board

Editor's note: The following is from Rev. Willie Banks, the first community leader to petition the city to name a street (Sandy Boulevard) in honor of Rosa Parks. Banks is now lending his support to a proposal by City Commissioner Dan Saltzman to re-name Portland Boulevard in honor of the late civil rights leader:

A street named 'Rosa Parks Way' is a very simple way of keeping her name in our community. It is a wonderful idea and a wonderful way to honor her civil rights achievements.

The more 'Rosa Parks' is said, the more those who already know her will be reminded of her great



community center. Business owners will advertise on 'Rosa Parks Way' rather than 'Portland Boulevard'. The name 'Rosa Parks' will be throughout the pages of the phone book. The name will promote pride in the surrounding neighborhoods and encourage new businesses.

'Rosa Parks Way' will be posted on a large highway sign on Interstate 5, leading people to the beautiful neighborhoods of north and northeast Portland. Even the Internet will be affected. As people map out driving directions on MapQuest, Google Local, Google Earth, Yahoo Maps, Microsoft Virtual Earth mapping web sites will have 'Rosa Parks Way' in their database. Rosa Parks will not be forgotten in Portland and

The more 'Rosa Parks' is said, the more those who already know her will be reminded of her great place in history.

place in history and those who do not know her will be provoked to ask "Who was Rosa Parks?" and learn about her life.

When people ask where is 'The Peninsula Park Rose Garden,' they will be told "700 N. Rosa Parks Way" rather than "700 N. Portland Blvd." Buses displaying 'Rosa Parks Way' will drive students to Portland Community College. Kids will dance at the Faubion SUN Community School at 3039 N.E. Rosa Parks Way and working men and women will take the Max to the 'North Rosa Parks Way' transit station.

The community will walk, drive, and take the transit system up and down 'Rosa Parks Way' to the Peninsula Park pool and com-

neither will civil rights or the fight for freedom. In northeast Portland where the two streets intersect, Rosa Parks will meet up with Martin Luther King Jr. once again. This will be a fitting tribute to these two great people and to all who have fought along their sides for the equality we sometimes take for granted.

Please show Commissioner Dan Saltzman you support this name change by emailing him at dsaltzman.ci.portland.or.us or by calling his office at 503-823-4892. Also, show your support by attending the public hearing on the proposal April 19 at 6 p.m. at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate Ave.

—Rev. Willie Banks

FROM THE GOOD NEWS / BAD NEWS DEPARTMENT:



Unwelcome Outlook for College Graduates

Financial aid, jobs worsen

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Rising college tuition and cuts in federal Pell grants and state aid programs have caused more students to rely on loans to pay for their education. As such, the average student's debt increased by more than 50 percent over the last 10 years.

With an increase in student loan interest rates looming — rates are scheduled to go up July 1 — current and future student loan borrowers will see large percentages of their future income go towards repaying their education debt.

With the increasing cost of higher education, one would expect that a college degree would guarantee a secure future. That is no longer the case. As more and more American jobs are taken overseas, we will see more of our young people invest in a college education that cannot guarantee them a job in a rapidly changing



global economy.

We can blame Congressional budget cuts for the pending rise in student loan interest rates. The increase will result in payments that are 20 percent higher than those made on loans locked in under lower rates. A drop in direct aid — money that doesn't have to be paid back — also contributes to the rise in student debt. Congress hasn't

increased the Pell Grant, the most common direct aid for low-income students, since 2003. As a result, low-income students are carrying a disproportionate amount of student debt. Not surprisingly, people of color are carrying more than their fair share of student debt.

According to the Project for Student Debt, one-fourth of low-income students, many of them African-Americans, have more than \$27,000 in loans.

A country's economic growth is significantly impacted by the number of adults that have a college degree. By making it difficult to pay for higher education, America is

jeopardizing its chances for continued success in the global marketplace. Countries like China and India, that educate a large numbers of students, are posing a serious threat to the way the U.S. does business. Already, nearly half a million Americans have been laid off because their jobs were outsourced to for-

ever, as it currently stands, America is asking its citizens to invest time and money in an education that doesn't guarantee sustainable employment.

With the cost of education so high and no relief in sight, it's no wonder that more young people are putting off college. If policymakers

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oreign countries, where the labor force is educated and much cheaper.

Experts expect the number of outsourced U.S. jobs to grow to 3.3 million by 2015; causing about 250,000 layoffs a year. While discussing the outsourcing trend, President Bush recently remarked "...let's make sure people are educated so they can find — fill the jobs of the 21st century." There is no doubt that an education increases an individual's ability to compete in the workforce. How-

want to ensure America's place in the marketplace, they must enact legislation that controls the cost of higher education while increasing aid to students. This country's future as an economic powerhouse rests on its ability to ensure a college education is within financial reach of its citizens.

Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Respecting the Vote in New Orleans

Clear confusion for fair elections

BY U.S. REP. JOHN CONYERS

In December, our country provided Iraqi immigrants in America the opportunity to vote in Iraq's elections. We provided satellite polling locations across the United States where they could vote just the same as if they were in Baghdad.

Is it asking too much that we extend this same courtesy to our own citizens that have suffered devastating losses and were dispersed across the country following Hurricane Katrina?

The sad fact is that the state of Louisiana is about to conduct an election with the largest disenfran-

chisement in the history of this nation.

What is happening in New Orleans is that special elections, scheduled to be held on April 22, have been planned with no notice that the Voting Rights Act applies to the state of Louisiana.

According to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, any proposed changes to voting dates or precinct locations must be pre-cleared by the Department of Justice. So far, this has not happened. In fact, 300 of the city's 442 precincts are unavailable for voting because of the damage from Hurricane Katrina.

And yet, the state has pushed for early elections, when in fact, suitable conditions will not yet ex-

ist for free and fair elections.

Voter confusion and disenfranchisement will be the clear consequence of the April 22 New Orleans municipal elections.

When we passed legislation addressing the possibility that a terrorist attack on the U.S. Congress would require special elections to reconstitute Congress, even in those remarkable circumstances it was held that the Voting Rights Act was inviolable.

There is absolutely no circumstance for which the Voting Rights Act is too cumbersome to uphold, and we must act now to ensure that the state of Louisiana respects the voting rights of every citizen of the city of New Orleans.

Congressman John Conyers is from Michigan. He is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

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