The Hortland Observer

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# **OPINION**

Opinion articles do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of The Portland Observer

# **Zero Tolerance** for Wrongdoing

#### Build a stronger voter-owned system

#### BY CAROL CUSHMAN

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Portland is committed to creating a quences. more open and fair system for city field with strict and meaningful safeguards against fraud.

Emilie Boyles violated the strict spending rules of the Voter-Owned elections system and we are committed to learning from these startup issues to build a stronger system moving forward.

The League of Women Voters of Portland and the grassroots eoalition behind Voter-Owned Elections were the first to call for a full and swift investigation into the Boyles campaign. The penalcampaign should send a clear Portland.

message that if you violate the The League of Women Voters of system, there are harsh conse-

The League of Women Voters elections, but also a level playing has zero tolerance for wrongdoing. Our coalition will continue to be watchdogs over this fair, open and accountable system, one that was supported and advocated for by a diverse coalition of grassroots organizations representing tens of thousands of Portlanders.

I'm encouraged by the auditor's quick and strict response to spending abuse by the Boyles campaign as well as careful review and denial of Lucinda Tate's certification due to rule violations.

Carol Cushman is the president ties levied against the Boyles of the League of Woman Voters of



# **Massachusetts Moves Toward Universal Health Coverage**

#### BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

With the rising costs of healthcare, it is becoming more and more difficult for many Americans chusetts is positioned to to access necessary medical services. Realizing that the U.S. has a bona fide crisis on our hand and with no help coming from the federal government, the Massachusetts State Legislature has approved a bill that would require all residents to buy health insurance.

Supported by the state's Republican Governor and reported Presidential hopeful Mitch Romney, the bill would require all uninsured adults to purchase some kind of

insurance policy by summer 2007 or face a fine.

With this bill, Massabecome the first state to provide nearly universal health care coverage to its residents. While this is a great accomplishment on the part of the Massachu-

this responsibility alone. The federal government needs to follow Massachusetts' lead and provide universal healthcare coverage for all Americans.

Past studies by the Congressional Budget Office have shown that a universal health care system would save the country hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

private health care system, where Americans are free to "choose." Unfortunately, most Americans are forced to choose between food and President Bush says that a gov- medicine, between heat and a trip to

setts, the state shouldn't shoulder ernment-run healthcare system the doctor. There are about 45 isn't the way to go. He prefers a million Americans without health insurance and, while many of them are poor, a significant number are working class people that simply can't afford to have the fees required by their employerpaychecks.

Under Massachusetts' plan, residents of the state would be able to shown that a universal health care choose from a wide selection of system would save the country policies, private and government hundreds of billions of dollars each the Southern Christian Leadership subsidized, that would accommo- year.

date a range of income levels.

Low-income residents wouldn't have to pay a premium and would only be responsible for small fees for visits to the emergency room and doctor's office. If residents fail to

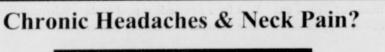
purchase the required insurance, they will still be treated – and will face their fines later.

The healthcare lobby is very powerful and has been able to convince or pay policymakers to believe that universal healthcare covprovided plan deducted from their erage would be too expensive. The truth is that past studies by the message is heard loud and clear. Congressional Budget Office have

Currently the U.S. spends more on health care than any other industrialized nation - and all of those countries provide health insurance to all of their citizens!

The unlimited spending power of the healthcare lobby shouldn't dictate whether or not Americans have adequate healthcare coverage. Write your local legislators and demand they push for universal healthcare. As candidates gear up for the next election cycle, research and support those that support a universal system. The U.S. government should serve the needs of its citizens, not corporate interests. Your vote can make sure the

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



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## Retters to the Editor **Jefferson Closure Talk**

closed because it is the high school Jefferson. with the smallest number of students. This reasoning fails to rec- bers and parents repeatedly asked ognize that the Jefferson attendance PPS to get feedback from neighborarea actually has the largest num- hood families during the recent ber of high school students living Jefferson redesign process to dewithin its boundaries. The num- termine what programs and other bers are Jefferson-1,950; Marshall- changes were needed at Jefferson 1,864; Wilson-1,697; Grant-1,622; to retain and attract more neighbor-Madison-1,524; Franklin-1,476; hood students. But it never hap-Roosevelt-1,395; Cleveland-1,379; pened. and Lincoln-1.323.

Left Behind law and Portland Pub-

suggested Jefferson should be aged students to transfer out of hood students and result in further

The school's design team mem-

So, rather than adopting changes For years, the federal No Child that will increase student enrollment, PPS sealed Jefferson's fate by approving narrowly focused programs (two single gender programs, and two technology-based programs) which will appeal to a

An Oregonian editorial last week lic Schools policies have encour- smaller fraction of the neighbordeclines in enrollment. Only 34 students have applied for those programs so far.

> Statements in the district's reconfiguration proposal (which are being parroted by the Oregonian and others) suggest that we can expect a closure announcement in 2009 for Jefferson and even earlier for Marshall, Madison, or Roosevelt.

> Those statements indicate to me that the district and others are banking on the failure of schools that serve a higher percentage of low income and minority students.

Nicole Breedlove North Portland

### **OHSU Shield Unfair**

they could double their pensions. More egregiously, with the protec- tion. tion of the Oregon Tort Claims Act, the OHSU Medical Group solidified its immunity from malpractice liability while shamelessly concealing its negligent doctors.

Adding to the serious problems of patient safety and rising costs, the absence of accountability makes the prognosis grim for our state's health care system.

I support the legal challenges to tort immunity by Ken Ackerman and others, as I think that OHSU

OHSU privatized its doctors so physicians now enjoy an irresponsible shield of corporate protec-

> While this discrepancy may be unfair to non-OHSU physicians, I am more concerned about my patients, who I may need to refer to OHSU. They deserve full constitutionally guaranteed protections of our civil justice system.

> I pray that a jury will level the playing field for all patients and physicians, helping to heal our health care system.

Tom Saddoris II, M.D. Northeast Portland

### Supporting Foxworth

Foxworth has been the best role and between the white community model for African Americans in the and the black community. Rose City's 160-year history.

Foxworth was cool, dignified, rea- one newspaper story. sonable and sensible.

He did much to heal the rift be-

Without question Derrick tween the police and the public;

Let us hope it will not take an-As Northeast Precinct Com- other 160 years to find a role model mander and later as Police Chief, as good as the one shattered by

> Charles E. Long Northeast Portland