

# OPINION

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## Losing Ground

### Affirmative Action under attack

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The day after the Nov. 7 General Elections, many progressive thinkers celebrated the Democratic victories. Civil rights activists, however, were mourning what appears to be the beginning of the end of affirmative action as we know it.

Affirmative action was implemented by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 as a way to assist oppressed groups in achieving equality. Over the years, affirmative action policies have taken hits, but the courts, both low and high upheld the law. Now, it's the American people voting down affirmative action, state by state.

On Election Day, Michigan voters decided to do away with affirmative action. The law's opponents are ecstatic; they say affirmative action is nothing more than reverse discrimination and believe that, ultimately, it will harm America.

Since the courts have failed to agree with this thinking, there are plans to take this issue to each state and give it to the people to decide. Michigan was the latest victory in this misguided cause. But, this country only has to look to California to see what happens when there are no laws in place to protect historically oppressed populations.

Ten years ago this November, the people of California voted to prohibit public institutions from giving preferential treatment based on race, sex, or ethnicity. According to Newsweek magazine, the law school at the University of California at Berkeley enrolled only one black student the year after Proposition 209 passed; 268 students were admitted to the law school that year.

Ten years later, the University of California at Los Angeles projected that only 96 of the 5,000 freshmen enrolled in this fall were black. Stu-



dents aren't the only ones losing out: Without the guarantee of a certain percentage of government contracts, many minority firms in California went out of business. With no law in place to protect them, historically underrepresented populations - i.e. people of color and women - no longer have the access to the opportunities they need to thrive.

Women and people of color aren't the only ones who'll lose ground if other states follow California and Michigan and vote down affirmative action policies. Already, this country is losing ground in the global marketplace to countries like

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China and India where many of our engineering and customer service jobs are outsourced. These countries are producing more college graduates at much faster rates than

the U.S.

If large segments of our population are unable to access a quality education, this country will never be able to compete. Without affirmative action, minority owned businesses won't be able to compete with larger corporations and many of this country's citizens will never be able to realize their version of the American dream.

Until a better solution for addressing race and gender disparities in hiring and education is developed, this country must support and uphold the policies that currently stand.

Racial and economic justice is a national issue; the states and individuals cannot be left to make this decision. If America is to sustain herself, affirmative action must stay.

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

## Letter to the Editor

### Thank You Supporters

I cannot begin to tell you how impressed I am and frankly, honored by my friends and neighbors.

Obviously I'm disappointed in the results in my race for county commissioner. 24,152 north and northeast Portland neighbors voted for me in the District 2 race. The difference as of the last count was 4,242 votes. I am curious to

see where those votes were concentrated. I believe we saw a sense of people feeling once again enfranchised and voting. I hope they will not be discouraged.

I am proud of our campaign. We focused on the district, both as a place and as a unique assembly of neighbors. We focused on people and their needs and hopes.

We sought to show the voters in the district what kind of commissioner I would be.

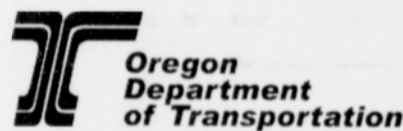
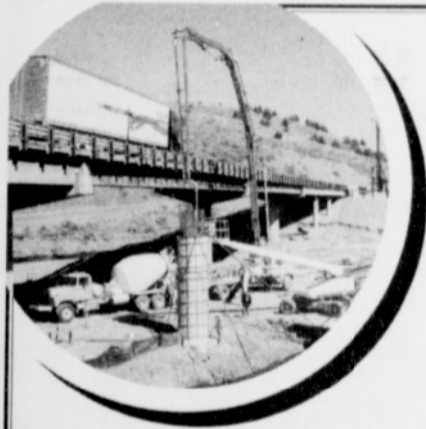
I am also proud to have been funded largely by relatively small donations from people who live and work in the district. It is an unfortunate reality of modern politics that money, wherever it comes from, is the means to get a candidate's message to voters. In the case of District 2, which is not a financial center, huge amounts of outside cash can simply flood mailboxes as well as radio and TV time, overwhelming a grassroots candidate.

I continue to believe that it is vitally important that the commissioner who represents north and northeast Portland has strong ties to the community he or she represents.

I continue to believe that north and northeast Portland deserve a seat at the table, a seat with a vote, when decisions are made. I believe that the voice of the community must be in the room when decisions are made.

I wish Jeff Cogan the best, and encourage you to contact him as the new commissioner.

Lew Frederick



## ODOT IS KEEPING OREGON ON THE MOVE

### Interstate 5 is under construction!

Be safe, be prepared and be patient as the Oregon Department of Transportation repairs and modernizes our highways and bridges.

Drivers will pass through more than 20 active construction zones on I-5 between Portland and Medford in 2007. In the

Portland metro area, crews are currently replacing two highway bridges outside Wilsonville and will begin a project between Capital Highway and the Tualatin River this spring.

How can you prepare? Stay informed with up-to-the-minute information about traffic and construction by visiting TripCheck.com or calling 5-1-1.

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## Poker Sets for Kids? Think twice before anteing up

BY JEFF MAROTTA

Has Santa's workshop moved to Las Vegas?

Get ready for what has become an annual marketing onslaught of gambling-related toys, books and paraphernalia as we approach the holiday shopping season. My current favorite example is the Pink Poker Night "It's A Chick Thing" Kit, where

for \$29.95 you can have "everything a chick needs to host a fabulous girls' night in."

So what's the fuss? I received this e-mail from a concerned mother of two:

"I want to know how much I should be worrying about gambling and the health of my kids. They watch poker tournaments on TV, their friends wear clothing with references to poker, and I heard my son talk about playing poker with friends."

She is not alone in wondering about the effects of ongoing exposure to gambling. Today's is the first generation to grow up in a society where gambling is widely accepted, advertising is ubiquitous and gambling activities are commonplace.

Research indicates that 60-90 percent of youth engage in gambling, and that youth problem gambling rates are 2-4 times higher than those of adults. Surveys of Oregon teens tell us drugs, alcohol and gambling often travel together, yet many parents see gambling as a relatively safe pastime and encourage it as an alternative activity.

Although we don't know the ultimate effects of today's gambling popularity, we do know both children and adults can and do get caught up in gambling in a way that is harmful to themselves and others around them.

This is not to say that if your child is gambling you need to panic -- most kids engage in some form of gambling and most don't develop gambling problems.

But you do need to recognize that gambling carries risk and approach it accordingly, as you would tobacco use, drug use or fastening your car's seatbelt.

What do you look for if you're concerned your child might have a problem? Watch for signs such as lying about gambling, gambling superseding other activities, using money to gamble that's supposed to be used for other things, borrowing money to gamble, or stealing and letting schoolwork suffer.

Another suggestion I gave the concerned mom was to talk to her kids about gambling. Help children make sense out of what they see on television, in the news and in the community. Discuss rules and expectations for behavior, and follow through with consequences.

Be clear about your own values but avoid sweeping statements (all gambling is bad) or threats ("if I ever catch you betting money..."). Kids feel immortal, so scaring them doesn't work; threats invite rebellion.

As a parent, you play the most important role in preventing problem gambling behaviors in your children.

Jeff Marotta is problem gambling services manager in the Oregon Department of Human Services Addictions and Mental Health Division. For additional information on youth gambling, visit [oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/gambling](http://oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/gambling) or call the Oregon Problem Gambling Help Line at 1-877-2-STOP-NOW.

## NEW SEASONS MARKET

Party platters  
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SATURDAY AND SUNDAY 11am-5pm

One of the greatest pleasures of the holiday season is that we seem to find the time to visit with friends and family. To help you get ready for your party, or just to prepare for unexpected visitors, this weekend we're focusing on party platters. We'll be sampling some of our favorite ingredients and offering tips on how to put together a quick and delicious presentation. We'll make it easy for you to take home whatever you need for your holiday pantry. Don't have enough time? We'll custom-make your party platters for you. Check out our options on page 13 of our Festivities booklet, available at any of our stores, or online.



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