

# Urban League Sees Black Male Crisis

## State of Black America challenge

If the United States does not take immediate steps to address the black male crisis, the nation risks losing its "greatest untapped resource," said National Urban League President Marc H. Morial on Monday in presenting the league's annual State of Black America report.

"Empowering black men to reach their full potential is the most serious economic and civil rights challenge we face today. Ensuring their future is critical, not just for the African American community, but for the prosperity, health and well-being of the entire American family," Morial said.

This year's report includes the opinions of Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Marian Wright Edelman, essays by NAACP Legal Defense Fund head Theodore Shaw and Dr. Silas Lee, as well as a foreword by Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.

It contains the Equality Index, a statistical measurement of disparities or "equality gaps" between blacks and whites across five different categories—economics, education, health, civic engagement and social justice.

The report finds that African-American men are more than twice

as likely to be unemployed as white males and make only 74 percent as much a year. They're nearly seven times more likely to be incarcerated, and their average jail sentences tend to be 10 months longer than those of white men. In addition, young black males between the ages of 15 and 34 years are nine times more likely to be killed by firearms and nearly eight times as likely to suffer

from AIDS.

Overall, African Americans made negligible gains at best in narrowing the equality divide with whites. On most fronts—economics, education, health and civic engagement, the gaps narrowed marginally compared to last year. But in the realm of social justice, blacks lost some ground.

"The Urban League's efforts are tremendous, and we are making progress, but as our report shows,

the disparities are not shrinking. And we realize that we cannot do this alone," Morial said. "We have to look to corporations, the government and other organizations to bring about comprehensive solutions to the problems faced by black males, who are dropping out of school at higher rates, dying younger and earning far less than their white counterparts," he said.

Despite the less-than-glowing results presented, there were still bright spots. A higher percentage of young black children are enrolled in early childhood education programs such as Head Start than young white children—66 percent compared to 64 percent. And the youngest blacks have made strong improvements in the areas of school readiness—scoring at 94 percent of that of whites, up from 81 percent in 2006.

A major disconnect, however, occurs after elementary school as blacks, especially males, begin to fall behind whites. Disparities in writing proficiency scores widen as blacks grow older.

In an effort to resolve some of these issues facing black men, Morial unveiled five major recommendations for public-policy makers to implement to empower blacks, especially males, to become full-fledged

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— National Urban League President Marc H. Morial

from AIDS.

"I could rattle off the names of African-American men who have overcome the odds and have risen to national prominence until I am blue in the face. But for all the Barack Obamas, Tony Dungys and Colin Powells out there who have broken through economic and color barriers to succeed, there are many more black men who face very lim-

ing housing the Maseeh College of Engineering.

He led efforts at PSU and in Oregon to internationalize both the student body and the curriculum, reaching out especially to students in the Middle East and Asia. He oversaw plans to make the campus better connected with the city through the Portland Streetcar, and soon MAX light rail.

Also notable during Bernstine's tenure was the increases in research funding at PSU, which grew from \$17 million to \$40 million a year, and the initiation of PSU's first comprehensive fundraising campaign, which brought in \$114 million to the university, exceeding the original goal.

"In other words, President Bernstine's impact on PSU has been enormous and long-lasting. We will miss his intellect and creativity, his deep commitment to students, his sense of humor, and the spirit of hope and opportunity he brought to PSU and to the University System," Pernsteiner said.

Prior to joining PSU in 1997 as president, Bernstine was dean of the Law School at the University of Wisconsin.

## Portland State University President Leaving

### To guide Pennsylvania law council

Portland State University President Daniel O. Bernstine has accepted a new job as president and chief executive officer of the Law School Admissions Council, located in Newtown, Penn.

"I must say that we are happy for President Bernstine, but saddened by the loss of such a strong, generous leader," said George Pernsteiner, chancellor of the Oregon University System.

Pernsteiner credited



Daniel Bernstine

Bernstine with many accomplishments at PSU, including increasing enrollment by more than 7,000 students. Last year, more than 5,000 students received degrees and cer-

tificates from the school, by far the most ever.

Bernstine also won praise for presiding over a construction boom during his tenure, opening the Native American Center, the Urban Center and Plaza, innovative "green" student housing, and a new engineering build-

## Actress and Advocate Alfre Woodard

Critically acclaimed actress Alfre Woodard will be the keynote speaker at the 15th annual YWCA of Greater Portland Leadership Luncheon at the Oregon Convention Center on Tuesday, April 24.

Woodard, who has given outstanding performances on shows such as Hill Street Blues, LA Law, The Forgotten and Beautyshop, is most recently recognized for her role as Betty Applewhite on the hit show Desperate Housewives.

Off screen, she is an activist who supports progressive causes in the



Alfre Woodard

United States and Africa.

Local YWCA supporter, Oregonian columnist and domestic violence victims' advocate S. Renee Mitchell will also be a featured speaker.

The YWCA Leadership Luncheon began in 1992, and in the past 15 years has raised more than \$2.5 million for programs that provide safety, support, education and training, shelter, housing, physical fitness and camping programs to women and families.

For more information, visit [ywcapdx.org](http://ywcapdx.org).

## Help Offered For Student Success

Local parents and guardians can connect with other families to learn how to help their children succeed and tap into school district resources on Saturday, April 21, at Benson High School, 546 N.E. 12th Ave.

The sixth annual Parent Leadership Conference, sponsored by the

Community and Parents for Public Schools, will be from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Workshops will be offered on parent involvement and building community in schools; advocating for your child; school-level organizations; school and district com-

munication; measuring student progress; and children's social development.

There is no cost, and child care and translation services will be available. Preregistration is suggested. Call 503-220-0577 or go to [cpsportland.org](http://cpsportland.org) to register.

chance" programs to help high-school dropouts and ex-offenders return to the mainstream; restore the federal Summer Jobs Program to its pre-2000 state as a mandatory standalone program with its own budget; and drive home the message to children that education pays dividends later in life.

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The Portland Observer Established 1970

USPS 959-680

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211

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The Portland Observer—Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication—is a member of the National Newspaper Association—Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association, Serving Portland and Vancouver.

Send address changes to Portland Observer, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Subscriptions are \$60.00 per year

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## The Portland Observer

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Wednesday • October 3, 2004

**Week in the Review**

**Terrificated After Vision**  
A 17-year-old Seattle girl who received eight times the dose of crushed and recalled 200 feet down a crater may have been saved by her own determination, which prevented the ingestion of a blood clot in her brain, doctors said. Lewis Health's family had almost given up on the child, and doctors' reports had all the negative details. But she was still alive and healthy, and she had a chance to live again. Lewis Health's family had almost given up on the child, and doctors' reports had all the negative details. But she was still alive and healthy, and she had a chance to live again.

**Many Americans Qualify as Working Poor**  
The U.S. economy is still in a recovery phase, but a growing number of people are struggling to make ends meet. According to a study by the Urban Institute, 18 million Americans are now considered "working poor," meaning they have jobs but their income is not enough to cover basic needs like housing, groceries and child care.

**Overlooked**  
Christie Brown often used to be known for her work in the community. But now she's known for her work in the community. Christie Brown often used to be known for her work in the community. But now she's known for her work in the community.

**Book Review: Laughed Off**  
Comedian and author Bob Taylor's laugh-out-loud memoir is a hilarious and insightful look at the life of a comedian. Taylor's laugh-out-loud memoir is a hilarious and insightful look at the life of a comedian.

It's his theater and his basketball combined when Portland's Michael (left), a former, first-time, and Dan Brown, a great high school athlete and professional Oregon Charter Theater student, star in the production "The Fisher King" (The Basketball Champion).

**ONE-ON-ONE**

Premiere bonds live theater to live basketball

Live theater and basketball combined when Portland's Michael (left), a former, first-time, and Dan Brown, a great high school athlete and professional Oregon Charter Theater student, star in the production "The Fisher King" (The Basketball Champion).

**Election Ballots On Way**

People of color find a political fit

As an early ballot drive gets underway in the weeks before the election, voters are encouraged to return their ballots by mail or drop them off at a designated voter dropsite. Call 1-866-673-8683 to find a location near you.

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**The Portland Observer**  
Call 503-288-0033  
or email [ads@portlandobserver.com](mailto:ads@portlandobserver.com)