

OPINION

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Provide Health Care to Children

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Demonstrating that he is more interested in protecting the interests of big business and funding his own personal crusade, President Bush recently struck down a bill, supported by both Democrats and Republicans, that would have expanded health insurance benefits available to poor children.

It is estimated that 9 million children are uninsured nationwide, and that number continues to climb as employers slim down the coverage they offer to employees. The president's recent actions show that he is not only out of touch with the needs of one of America's most vulnerable populations, they also show that he



simply doesn't care.

Congress wanted to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which helps families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but can't afford private coverage, obtain health insurance for their children. The bipartisan group proposed a bigger budget for the program, increasing spending by \$35 billion over five years so an additional 4 million children would be covered by the program; SCHIP currently serves 6 million children.

President Bush says he cares about poor children, but wants to limit government spending and intervention in what he consid-

ers 'private' matters; he thought the program was too expensive, even though Congress suggested raising the federal cigarette tax to fund the program.

It's interesting that the presi-

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dent thought the program was too expensive. Not providing poor children with health insurance actually costs society in the long run. Routine visits to the doctor and dentist will ensure a child stays healthy. When nag-

ging problems are ignored because the family can't afford the care they need, they grow serious and can become costly.

Had the family of 12-year old Deamonte Driver had access to

Bush veto hurts poor, working class

young life. With his veto, President Bush puts poor and working class children and their families at risk.

Fiscal responsibility has not been the president's strongest trait, at least when it comes to things he's passionate about. About \$600 billion of taxpayers' money have been spent on the war in Iraq; the president is expected to request another \$200 billion for 2008. Some experts say war spending could surpass \$1 trillion in the near future. That's a lot of money to spend on an initiative that has no clear goal or purpose and is costing us American lives in disturbing numbers.

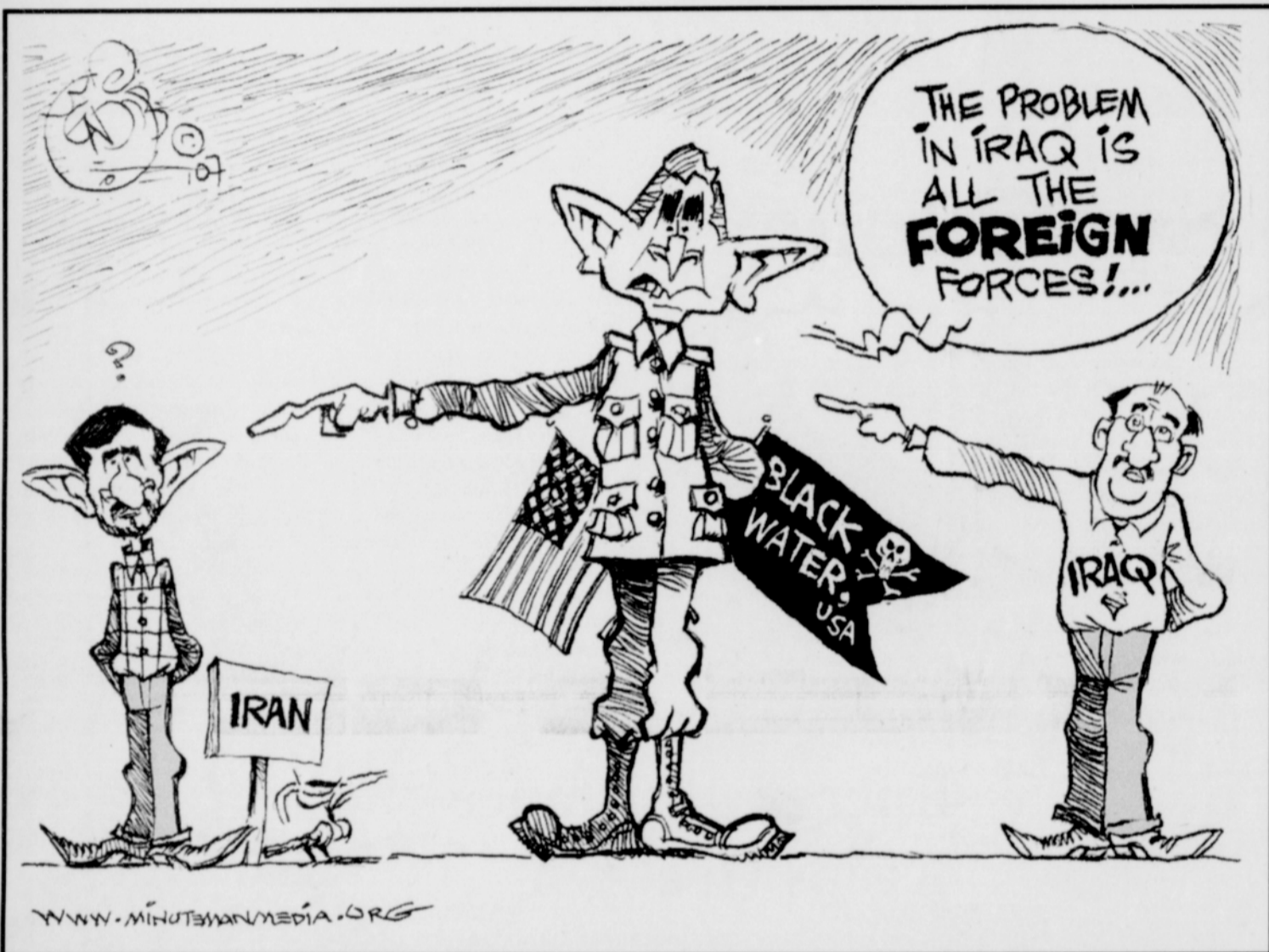
Democrats in Congress are expected to fight the veto, but many experts don't think they have

enough Republican support to override it.

It's time to put pen to paper: write your federal legislators - Republican and Democrat - and share your stories. Tell them stories of children who were sicker than they needed to be simply because they didn't have access to healthcare. And stories of hardworking families who had to choose between paying a bill and taking their child to the doctor.

Perhaps the voices of those affected will be the push they need to find the courage to stand up to the president.

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



Letters to the Editor

Standing for Equality

The following is an open letter to Mayor Tom Potter regarding his recent decision to end neighborhood exclusion zones for people arrested for drugs or prostitution.

Dear Mayor Potter:

On behalf of the Community Campaign to End Police Racial Profiling, I want to thank you for your courageous decision to allow Portland's drug-free zones to expire. This act is a triumph for compassion and justice.

Information from a report released on Sept. 26 supported the concern that exclusion zones targeted African-Americans for arrests for drug crimes in Portland's three drug-free zones at significantly higher rates than whites or Latinos. Yet we know drug crimes are committed by all segments of the population. We see your stand as an important statement against police bias and a step toward eliminating all racial profiling which is defined as the inappropriate reliance on race as a factor in deciding to stop and/or search an individual.

Our Community Campaign to End Police Racial Profiling also seeks an end to other police enforcement tools, such as pretext stops, warrantless searches and discriminatory curfews targeting specific neighborhoods. We believe these tools encourage and reinforce racial profiling and are destructive to community. These policies, like the exclusion zones, allow the police to be the prosecutor, judge and jury, and increase the degradation, humiliation and unfair punishment that flows from racial profiling.

We applaud your commitment to equality under the law and look forward to working with you to completely end racial profiling.

Pastor Lynne Smouse López, chair
Community Campaign to End Police Racial Profiling

Oregon Land Use and Racism

Taking the state back to yesteryear

BY SEAN CRUZ

Among the many arguments swirling around Measure 37, the softening of land use laws for long-time property owners that was passed by voters two years ago, is a gaping hole that would be apparent to any who observed the many legislative hearings on the consequences of the law.

You pretty much were white to have a Measure 37 claim.

Those hearing rooms were always filled with white people. In fact, if the lobby area outside of a hearing room was packed with angry middle-aged white people, then the chances were it was about Measure 37.

The drafters of the law wanted to take Oregon back to yesteryear, those halcyon days when the state's minority communities were effectively barred from owning real estate and obtaining the keys to wealth building that home ownership offers.

In those days, just a few decades ago, redlining was the norm. Financial institutions wouldn't have lent an African-American citizen the money to buy property outside of certain areas in Portland, much less prime real estate in the Willamette Valley.

Oregon's citizens of Japanese descent were locked away into internment camps during World War II, their properties becoming unreimbursed losses. Many others sold their property under extreme duress, a direct windfall to the white

citizens who scooped them up.

Oregon's Latino and Chinese communities were also effectively barred from the wealth-building opportunities that real property ownership affords. Native Americans were continuing to suffer from overt racism and actual genocide. Much of the Indian land was parceled out for free, exclusively to whites.

The fact is that Measure 37 claimants have already benefited from the institutional racism embedded in Oregon laws and the Oregon Constitution. They have benefited

residing in the state and purchasing real estate for more than 100 years. The state's founding fathers sure knew how to put a selective damper on immigration.

An overwhelming majority of voters finally removed the last of that racist, exclusionary language from the Oregon Constitution just seven years ago. But 300,000 Oregon citizens voted to keep the racist language in the Constitution; again only seven years ago.

It is difficult to argue persuasively with people who are unfamiliar with history, who take the present for granted.

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from the fact that they bought their properties at a time when Oregon's racial and ethnic minorities were excluded from the marketplace and competition was stifled, keeping prices lower than they would have been had the market been truly free and fair.

The further one goes back into Oregon's history, tracing property ownership, the closer one gets to the days when the land taken from the Indians at the point of a gun was redistributed for free—exclusively to white settlers.


This is not an argument, but a reading of the actual history of the state, and not so long ago. The Oregon Constitution itself barred racial and ethnic minorities from

One would think from watching the Measure 37 hearings that the desire to build a few homes for retirement or to pass on to family members is a whites-only phenomenon, embedded in the genetic code.


Fairness was the argument of proponents of Measure 37. Fairness, indeed.

I'm supporting Measure 49, the November General Election ballot that clarifies what lands can be developed in Oregon. I'm also supporting Measure 50, the children's health-insurance initiative.

Sean Cruz is active in Oregon state and local politics. He serves as Sen. Avel Gordly's legislative aide and chief of staff.




Annual Wellness Village & Health Disparities Conference



A Healthy Community Starts With You!

<p>Friday Oct. 19th, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.</p> <p>3rd Annual Health Disparities Conference: We Can Make a Difference Ambridge Event Center (formerly Portland Convention Center) 300 NE Multnomah Street</p> <p>For community members, health care providers, and policy makers to generate solutions to health disparities in Oregon.</p> <p>Keynote address by Dr. Marilyn Gaston and Dr. Gayle Porter: "Let's Talk Family Secrets: the Impact of Mental Health on Health."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Registration (\$200 for lunch) • 12p.m. - 12:20 p.m. Introduction • 12:20 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Keynote Address by Dr. Gaston & Dr. Porter and Lunch 	<p>Saturday Oct. 20th, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.</p> <p>12th Annual Wellness Village at The Blazers Boys & Girls Club 5250 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.</p> <p>Free health services and activities at the Wellness Village include:</p> <p>Health Screenings & Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flu shots • Dental • Vision • Hearing • Diabetes • Massage therapy • HIV & STD screenings • And more <p>Activities & Exhibits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African drumming by Chatta Addy • Cooking demo & tastings • Gospel choir • Children's activities • Raffle prizes
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For more information contact the AAHC at 503-413-1850 or visit www.aahc-portland.org



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