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OPINION

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Police Brutality Settlement was Justified

But serious concerns continue

BY ALEJANDRO QUERAL

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The Northwest Constitutional Rights Center is pleased with the city's decision to settle a lawsuit filed by the family of Raymond Gwerder who was killed in cold blood by Officer Leo Besner in 2005.

The rights center remains deeply concerned however, about the continued pattern of excessive use of force and the city's inability to conduct impartial and effective investigations of allegations of excessive force and

constitutional rights violations by some police officers.

We call on Police Chief Rosie Sizer and Mayor Tom Potter to fully and impartially evaluate the fitness of Officer Besner to continue serving our community.

As described by Portland attorney Tom Steenson, there appears to be a significant pattern of abuse by Officer Besner that cannot be overlooked. We are confident Chief Sizer will make every effort to ensure the continued integrity of the Police Bureau.

We also call on the Independent Police Review division to conduct an evaluation of every officer in the Bureau who has been the subject of two or more complaints of excessive force within the last two years to be presented as soon as possible to Mayor Potter and Chief Sizer for their evaluation in order to prevent future tragic incidents.

These measures are necessary in order to have a police department that is more effective and trustworthy within the community.

Until the community feels like individual officers who engage in this type of abuse will be held accountable for their actions, lawsuits like these will continue to plague the police bureau and cost the city millions of dollars.

The rights center also applauds the work of Portland attorney Tom Steenson, whose zealous representation of the Gwerder family has brought to light the importance of having a system of accountability that will protect the rights of citizens while at the same time make the police bureau an institution that is respected and recognized as a national model for other law enforcement departments when it comes to protecting the civil rights of individuals.

The need for a truly independent and impartial police oversight system is imperative in light of this and other recent cases of misconduct by police

in order to prevent such tragedies from occurring again and again.

Police already have a very difficult and dangerous job. Community support of law enforcement will increase when the community is secure in knowing that an effective mechanism is in place to deal with patterns of abuse before they become tragic incidents.

Alejandro Queral is the executive director of the Northwest Constitutional Rights Center, founded in 2004 to safeguard the rights of people of color, immigrants, political dissenters and other vulnerable individuals from government abuse.

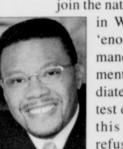
Justice Department's Record of Failure

Enough is enough

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Over the last several months, a number of incidents have occurred in this country, sending waves of shock, concern and fear through African-American communities.

The common denominator in all of these is the federal government which has done little, if anything, to assure the black community that it cares about our civil rights and our safety.



thousands of African Americans will join the nation's civil-rights leaders

in Washington, D.C. to say 'enough is enough' and to demand that the U.S. Depart- with hate crimes. ment of Justice make immediate changes. A national protest day is in needed to show this government that we refuse to take this neglect years ago. any longer.

The hangman's noose has been in the news a lot lately, showing up on a high school campus in Jena, La. and college campuses in New York and Department's voting section, re-

On Friday, Nov. 16 hundreds of Maryland. Parents fear for the safety and emotionally well-being of their children while community leaders demand that those guilty of this act of violence and terrorism - be charged

> But the Justice department hasn't been listening. The department prosecuted just 22 people with hate crimes last year, a 71 percent decline from 10

> Hate-crime prosecution is not the only area where the Justice Department has failed African Americans. John Tanner, who heads the Justice

cently made several racist comments the human and civil-rights gains made in defense of the law that would require minorities to have a photo ID in order to vote.

Tanner suggested, among other things, that black people would already have an ID, because they use it when they go to check-cashing stores. Tanner's comments undermine the generations of work the Justice Department has done to protect the civil rights of African Americans. Anything short of his full dismissal is a slap in the face of the legacy of the civilrights movement.

Under this current administration, ference.

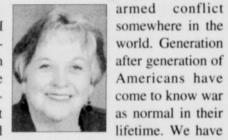
by blacks have taken a hit. Without a mass demonstration, the government may not realize just how committed we are to ending these assaults against our very rights.

This is a crucial moment in history; the human and civil rights of African Americans are being threatened. The Nov. 16 march is key to putting the Justice Department on notice.

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

War is Not Normal

BY M. LINDA JARAMILLO Several years ago, I watched a television series entitled "Violence: An American Tradition." The



Americans have will never know the actual num- otic. Many others said nothing Guatemala, and Nicaragua. and its continued escalation. We

armed conflict U.S. troops died or were injured or disrupted forever. Thou- were on -- the people or the or to the grocery store. somewhere in the during the conflict; the intent of sands spoke out in opposition powerful. We will never know world. Generation which we were told was to stop to this war; they were highly how many lives were lost in have joined in the protest against after generation of the spread of communism. We criticized and labeled unpatri- places like Chile, El Salvador, the initial launching of this war

Stop this American tradition

Thousands around the world

series looked back into history and provided insight into all the international and

involved.

domestic conflicts in which this come to expect it and seem relatively young nation has been powerless to find another way. The television series ran dur-

It made me realize how many ing the time that the United of the last 230 years we have States was engaged in a war in been involved in some kind of Southeast Asia. Thousands of



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Part 31. Treatment for Lower Back Injury

aching for months. But I'm afraid of chiropractors, so I haven't seen a doctor. What should I do?

: Back pain is one of the most A common medical complaints for people ages 45 to 65. It's also one of the most common reasons people miss work. Fortunately, not many people need back surgery because non-invasive treat-

My lower back has been | ments help control most back pain. | closely with other specialties re-If you have recurring back pain that makes it difficult or uncomfortable to complete your day-to-day activities, experts suggest you see a doctor who specializes in spine diseases and injuries, and who works

lated to the spine. A chiropractor will first rule out any serious conditions you might have, and then work with you to determine the best way to treat you pain.

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ber of Southeast Asian lives lost because they felt powerless

What began as an action against Iraq to stop the reign of terror became the massive destruction of an entire society.

to find another way.

During that same era, a number of Central and South American governments were being taken over by military dictatorand helicopters were deployed to areas in support of those dictators, under the guise of stopping the spread of rebellious actions.

so I wonder whose side we homes even to go to the doctor

Thousands in the United States provided sanctuary and found ways to oppose our nation's actions. Others said nothing because there seemed no way to stop it.

war that is centered in Iraq, but it spans throughout the entire region. We are now in the fifth year of a war that we were told was to end the oppressive government led by dictator Sadam Hussein and locate weapons of mass destruction that were ships. United States warplanes stockpiled there. The weapons were never found.

What began as an action against Iraq to stop the reign of terror became the massive destruction of an entire society. Some of these countries had Iraqi parents are now afraid to democratic societies that were send their children to school. governed by electoral processes, They are afraid to leave their ministries in the United

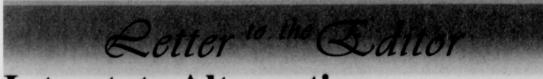
now must do more than simply pull our troops out of Iraq, we must find another way to end this deadly conflict and rebuild a society that has been destroyed.

Our democratic principles pro-Today, we are engaged in a tect our right to speak out, but it seems that we have chosen to be silent rather than be labeled unpatriotic. I believe the most patriotic thing to do is exercise our freedom of speech.

> We must use our voices in nonviolent protest and action that shows that there is another way. We must find a way to be heard in this nation that seems to view war as a normal part of life.

> The violence of war is not normal and must stop being an American tradition.

> M. Linda Jaramillo is the executive minister for justice Church of Christ.



Interstate Alternative

Most people in Portland have watched, heard or read the ongoing saga of Interstate Avenue. Some people in the Latino community want to change the name of the street to honor national community activist and labor leader Cesar E. Chavez.

Portland's political leaders are up the air and jockeying for what they hope will be a compromise to what has been a flawed process in naming the street. Well hold on to your seat belts, here is the solution that everyone should be happy.

Rename the north portion of Waterfront Park to Cesar E. Chavez, Waterfront Park. What a great testament. The other part of the park would continue to honor the late Governor Tom McCall and is bordered by Southwest Natio Parkway. Talk about being culturally inclusive.

Here is an opportunity for everyone to buy into this. It will not impact businesses; nobody will have to change letterhead, business card or any brochures.

Many years ago, the citizens asked to have Union Avenue changed to honor Martin Luther King Jr. Today, politics and bureaucracy have simply reduced the memory of this great leader to nothing more than "MLK" Blvd. Even young African-American kids are not really sure what it means.

Latinos are in a good position to make sure that the memory of Cesar Chevez is kept alive since Cinco deMayo, Rose Festival, The Bite, Blues Festival, Beer Fest and many other events will help propel the name of Chevez.

This is just a suggestion, but it is up to the city leaders and the Latino community as to what they want to do. I believe my suggestion would serve all.

Roy Jay, president of the African American Chamber of Commerce and Oregon Business Network

General Manager