

OPINION

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Pulling Together in Tough Times

Supporting our community

BY PAT REITEN

Throughout our nation and our state, people and communities such as north and north-east Portland are being challenged as never before in our lifetimes.

Layoffs, foreclosures, even the weather seem to conspire to paint a bleak and stressful picture. These are surely times we will hold up as a yardstick by which to measure future events.

But the true measure of the times won't be the lessons about financial hardship and widespread economic strain, but the stories of courage, community spirit and working to make things better, together. Those stories will point to people and organizations that made the difference for us all, as a community, when things were good, but also when things were toughest.

These people and organizations are on overdrive serving our community, right now. Our company has had the privilege

to know and work with them for many years, organizations like the Urban League, New Kids on the Block, Children First and the Albina Rotary.

So we're proud to be partnered with community organizations that stand so tall during difficult times and ask that everyone who can, join us all. Their work has never been more important.

These organizations bind the community together with strong bonds, even in tough times. Take a minute and look around - perhaps because they may be able to help someone you know, or because you may be able to help others, as a partner. Or at the very least, please just say thanks. They need and deserve all of our support now more than ever, on behalf of our community and our neighbors. Doing that is truly how we should measure ourselves.

Pat Reiten is the president of Pacific Power.

NEWS ITEM: FAVORED BY TWO THIRDS OF AMERICANS, SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE IS STILL NOT SEATED AT THE TABLE.



Arrested over Health Care

But it won't stop me from speaking out

BY DR. MARGARET FLOWERS

On May 5, eight health care advocates, including myself and two other physicians, stood up to Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., and the Senate Finance Committee during a "public roundtable discussion."

We posed a simple question: Will you allow an advocate for a single-payer national health plan to have a seat at the table?

The answer was a loud, "Get more police!" And we were arrested and hauled off to jail.

The fact that a national health insurance program is supported by the majority of the public, doctors and nurses apparently means nothing to Sen. Baucus.

The fact that thousands of people in America are dying every year because they can't get health care means nothing. The fact that over 1 million Americans go into bankruptcy every year due to medical debt - even though most of them had insurance when they got sick - means nothing.

And so, as the May 5 meeting approached, we prepared

for another one of the highly scripted, well-protected events that are supposed to make up the "health care debate" using standard tools of advocacy. We organized call-in days and faxes to the members of the committee requesting the presence of one single-payer advocate at the table of 15.

In that moment, it all became so clear. We could write letters, phone staffers, and fax until the machines fell apart, but we would never get our seat at the table.

The senators understand that most people want a national health system and that an improved Medicare for All

sonal pocketbooks.

And so, we have entered a new phase in the movement for health care as a human right: acts of civil disobedience. It is time to directly challenge corporate interests. History has shown that in order to gain human rights, we must be willing to speak out and risk arrest. We must engage in actions that expose corporate fraud and corruption. We must make our presence known.

And that is why the eight of us, knowledgeable health care advocates and providers, most of us parents, some of us grandparents, spoke out one-by-one at the Senate Finance Committee. And it is why we will continue to speak out and encourage others to do the same. Our voices must be strong enough to drown out the influence of corporate dollars.

Health care must become the civil rights movement of this decade. The opportunity is here. And we can create a single-payer national health care system.

Yes, we can.

Dr. Margaret Flowers is a pediatrician in Baltimore and co-chair of the Maryland chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program.

Our voices must be strong enough to drown out the influence of corporate dollars.

Despite thousands of calls and faxes, the only reply - received on the day before the event - was, "Sorry, but no more invitations will be issued."

We knew that this couldn't be correct. We had heard Sen. Baucus say on that very same day that "all options were on the table." And so, the next day, we donned our suits and traveled to Washington. We had many knowledgeable single-payer advocates in our group. And as the meeting started, one of us, Mr. Russell Mokhiber, stood up to say that we were here and we were ready to take a seat. And he was promptly removed from the room.

would include everybody and provide better health care at a lower cost. These facts mean nothing to most of them because they respond to only one standard tool of advocacy: money, and lots of it.

The people seated at the table represented the corporate interests: private health insurers and big business and those who support their agenda. The people whose voices were heard all represented organizations which pay huge sums of money to political campaigns. These interests profit greatly from the current health care industry and do not want changes that will hurt their large, per-

Congrats to Mayors Johnson and Bing

You can do it too

BY MARC H. MORIAL

Last month I wrote a column about how too many inner city boys are putting basketball be-

fore education, only to be left with no futures once their playing days are through.

Today I want to talk about two former NBA All-Stars, Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, who chose another route.

Both Johnson and Bing grew up in poverty, graduated from high school and college and went on to accomplish great things in business and politics after they retired from playing basketball.

Kevin Johnson became Sacramento's first African American Mayor in 2008 after 12 seasons as a point guard for the Phoenix Suns and a subsequent career as a successful Sacramento developer and civic leader.

The son of a teenage mother, Kevin was raised by his grandparents in the city's rough Oak Park neighborhood. Young Kevin excelled both academically and athletically at Sacramento High School and earned a scholarship to play basketball for the University of California at Berkeley. He graduated from UC Berkeley in 1987 with a de-

gree in political science.

After his stellar NBA career, Johnson returned home in 2000 to serve as the chief executive officer of St. Hope, a non-profit community development corporation he founded to improve education and revitalize city neighborhoods. As Mayor of Sacramento, he has laid out a bold vision for that city's future.

NBA Hall of Famer Dave Bing may have just taken on the toughest job in America. On May 5, the Detroit Piston all-time great was elected Mayor of Detroit, a city that has been hit especially hard by the current economic meltdown. Bing's background and track record have prepared him well for the challenge.

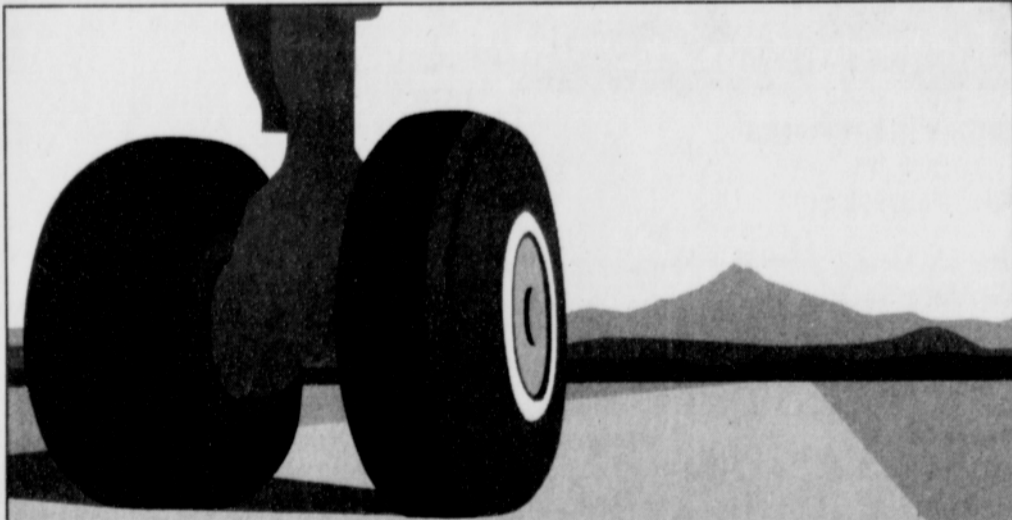
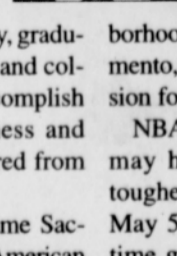
Like Kevin Johnson, Bing was also a basketball prodigy and a child of urban poverty. A graduate of Washington, D.C.'s Spingarn High School, Bing attended Syracuse University where he is known as "the greatest player in Syracuse history." He earned a degree in economics and after a great NBA

career, founded the Bing Group and became one of the leading African American businessmen in the country. Ronald Reagan once named him, "Minority Small Business Person of the Year" and in 1998, Black Enterprise named the Bing Group its "Company of the Year."

Upon accepting that award Bing said, "As a black with the stigma of being an ex-jock, the toughest thing for me was getting people to realize that I had the intellect to get things done and that I was serious about making the leap from athletics to business."

Kevin Johnson and Dave Bing have proven they have both the intellect and the seriousness to be big city mayors. They've used the lessons of teamwork and discipline that they learned on the basketball court, and in the classroom, to succeed in both business and politics. I hope the young men see them as true role models and say, if KJ and Dave can do it, you can too.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.



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