



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Clarendon Elementary School in north Portland has sat vacant for years, causing some neighbors to complain that it attracts blight.

Empty School Rankles Neighbors

Since Clarendon Elementary School in north Portland closed in 2007, it has steadily morphed from a community hub into an eyesore.

It is poorly maintained, with broken lights and windows, in addition to

grafitti. Portland Public Schools is keeping the space unoccupied, for "swing space."

The district is hoping to begin renovating its buildings as soon as it scrounges up enough money. Once it

does, it will need some place to put students while upgrades take place.

But neighbors are beginning to complain that the building is becoming ugly, attracts unsavory activity, and will ultimately bring down their property values.

Nastiness

continued from Front

sphere produced a staggering break with decorum last month when a member of the House of Representatives shouted out "You lie!" as Obama spoke to a joint session of Congress, extolling his efforts to overhaul the American health care system.

Rep. Joe Wilson's outburst drew the South Carolina Republican a rebuke from the House, but, tellingly, supporters quickly began donating heavily to his political war chest.

Not long afterward Rep. Alan Grayson, D-Fla., took the House floor to attack minority Republicans on health care, declaring, "The Republicans want you to die quickly if you get sick." A Republican con-

gressman quickly drafted a call for Grayson's reprimand, but the matter was later dropped.

Partisan political pundits took both events and ran with them, conservative Republicans praising Wilson's courage as liberals voiced shock over his lack of respect. Grayson took praise and heat from opposite ends of the political spectrum.

"Political animosity has become professionalized," said Frazier, specifically mentioning talk radio's ultraconservative Rush Limbaugh, who openly calls for the failure of the Obama presidency. Fox News' Glenn Beck says Obama is a racist.

The revival of bitter partisanship has built quickly and steadily since the nation united behind Bush in the aftermath

of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. It was quickly discovered that his rationale for going to war in Iraq — claims that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction — was untrue and the temporary unity dissolved.

"It's a hard thing to stop and it is escalating" each time Republicans or Democrats cede power in the capital, said Jack Holmes, political science professor at Hope College in Holland, Mich.

Is there away out? "At a certain point the public well demand an end, say 'we want this to stop,'" said Holmes. "The public has to demand it and will start judging political leaders accordingly."

A signal moment arose when Obama came under attack from opponents when he planned an Internet address at the start of the school year to encourage

students to work hard and stay in school. He was accused, before the very moderate and apolitical address, of wanting to indoctrinate pupils and students with his alleged "socialist" ideals. He left the doomsayers with red faces.

Frazier said a return to unity or at least a willingness to compromise can only happen around the president, the country's most visible and powerful symbol. Given that, he said at first, that he believed a modicum of bipartisanship would only take hold if the United States again faced an extraordinary external threat, such as Sept. 11.

On reflection, he was more optimistic, but not much: "I don't think that we are hopelessly stuck in this nasty place. I don't really think there is anything we can do, but I do think it's possible that the nastiness will run its course."

Health Care Plan Closer to Law

(AP) -- With support from a lone Republican, a key Senate committee Tuesday approved a middle-of-the-road health care plan that moves President Barack Obama's goal of wider and affordable coverage a giant step closer to becoming law.

Maine Republican Olympia Snowe said she was laying aside misgivings for now and voting to advance the bill, a sweeping \$829-billion, 10-year health care remake that would help most Americans get coverage without creating a new government insurance plan. "When history calls, history calls," said Snowe.

Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., called his bill "a commonsense, balanced solution." A distance runner, Baucus has endured months of marathon meetings. Health care legislation is expected to be on the Senate floor the week after next, said a spokesman for Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada. But it won't be the Baucus bill. Reid will combine the Finance version with a more liberal proposal from the health committee — with unpredictable results.

The vote in the Finance Committee was 14-9, with Snowe joining all 13 Democrats in support. In a sign of long political battles ahead, every other Republican voted against it.



Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine, the only Republican to approve a health care plan by a key Senate committee Tuesday.

The ultimate fate of the legislation hinges on how lawmakers decide dozens of unresolved issues, from letting government sell insurance to abortion coverage. Even some senators who voted for the Baucus bill said they have concerns it will deliver on providing access to affordable coverage for all.

The Baucus plan would, for the first time, require most Americans to purchase insurance and it also aims to hold down spiraling medical costs over the long term. Questions persist about whether it would truly provide access to affordable coverage, particularly for self employed people with solid middle class incomes.



King Children Settle Lawsuit

The children of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Dexter Scott King (from left), Rev. Bernice King, Yolanda King and Martin Luther King III gather in Atlanta in 2006. Yolanda died last year. The heirs of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. reached a settlement Monday that will keep the family from a public jury trial. Martin Luther King III, Bernice King and Dexter King had aired their grievances in open court for more than a year. (AP Photo)

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