

OPINION

Letter to the Editor

Shooting About Race

Don't call 911 when there is someone who is emotionally upset. You are not going to get help from the police, not in this town. You are putting an upset person in an evermore dangerous situation. And especially, if you are dealing with a black male, please don't call 911. We all know what happens then.

I had a situation at my house a few years ago where I put myself at some risk- but I always knew I would never call the police. The reason? I knew I would have a dead friend in the front yard (a black male).

I've heard too many stories of black men with numerous police aiming weapons at them, meanwhile yelling multiple and confusing orders-all the while just itching to pull the trigger. Any excuse. The adrenaline is running high. In their collective white brainwashed minds, "It's a black man!" "He's got a weapon!" "He's a threat".

I hope the collective "we" can sustain the push this city needs to deal with this issue. And yes, contrary to what someone said on TV, this is about race.

Linda Kanzinger
Northeast Portland



Banks Bail on Students

Scare tactics used to block change

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Last fall, the Obama administration, with support of House Democrats, revealed a plan that would overhaul the way student loans were disbursed to college students. Instead of receiving loans from banks and other lenders students would, under the proposed plan, receive funds directly from the federal government.

The plan would save the nation \$80 billion in fees, charged by the

lenders that service student loans, over 10 years. The savings would then be used to increase Pell Grants to students, help forgive loans for students going into public service, assist community colleges and provide early childhood learning programs and modernize public school facilities.

Facing the possibility of losing a significant source of revenue, banks are pulling out all the stops to make sure the bill never becomes law.

Lenders have spent millions of dollars in recent months holding public town-hall meetings and private meetings with legislators to make their case. Using scare tactics, they are telling lawmakers that students may

default on their student loans more frequently because the counseling lenders provide would no longer be a part of the loan process. The banks say that, in the long run students and the government would be hurt if the bill was passed.

It's interesting how these major banks - bailed out to the tune of over \$700 billion in 2009 - are now, in effect bailing out on the nation's students. Cutting out these middle men, which the banks are, does not hurt students at all. In fact, getting the money directly will reduce the amount of interest students pay over the life of the loan.

Students, and the nation, will benefit as educational programs are expanded, using the savings such a

change will bring. This is about money, plain and simple: lenders want to make sure this revenue stream stays alive.

Banks are in business to preserve their bottom line; not necessarily to care about the education of our student's. As a nation, we must work to make sure their big budget lobbying efforts do not pay off.

Call your federal lawmakers and let them know that federal student loans must go directly students. Ask that they cut out the middle man. The banks may have money to spend on lobbying, but we can use our voices to make a difference.

Greg Mathis is a retired Michigan District Court Judge and syndicated television show judge.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER: Charles H. Washington

EDITOR: Michael Leighton

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PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

news@portlandobserver.com

ads@portlandobserver.com

subscription@portlandobserver.com

CALL 503-288-0033 FAX 503-288-0015

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