The Portland Observer

PINION

Progress against Hunger and Obesity

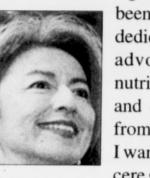
Better access to healthy meals

in schools

BY SUSAN CASTILLO A good month for advocates of children's health and nutrition. In early December, Congress

Free Kids Act – an improved child nutrition bill which represents the most significant investment in the National School health of our students. Lunch program in more than 30 years.

the nation, we have been faced with the duel epidemics of child hunger and child obesity. This important legislation will work to tackle both of these critical issues by increasing access to healthy, nutritious meals in school



advocates, educators, available at home. nutritionists, legislators, from around the country. I want to express my sin-

behind the scenes - to get this a local food service location. bill passed. It will make a signifi- This can be a particular chal- food programs. cant difference in the lives and lenge in rural areas.

lation will help ensure our stu- Human Services, will provide school. dents are growing up healthy low-income families in Linn and hunger-free.

cafeterias and increasing the an issue during the school year. summer. In these two counties,

and community leaders worst times for families suffersummer food programs are of-

However, hunger is not only additional money for food this lic Instruction.

number of students eligible to Oregon has the second highest participating families with enroll in school meal programs. child hunger rate in the nation, school-age children will receive This legislation would not have and many families rely heavily a SNAP benefit card, similar to been possible without the on the meals students receive at a debit card, which they can use dedication and vision of school to supplement what is in stores to buy food. The food benefit will be \$60 per child per Summer can be one of the month during the summer. This project is designed to help fight ing from food insecurity. While student hunger over the summer months by supplementing the cere gratitude to all those fered throughout the state, some family food budget. Participatpassed the Healthy, Hunger- who helped - both directly and families find it hard to make it to ing students will still be eligible to take part in site-based summer

Both this grant and the nutri-In an effort to fight student tion legislation passed by con-We all know how important hunger over the summer gress will make a real and meagood nutrition is to healthy bod- months, the USDA has issued surable difference for some of Here in Oregon, and around ies and healthy minds. Students demonstration grants to five our most vulnerable kids and can't focus on learning if they states including Oregon. help ensure that they receive are hungry or not receiving Oregon's grant, administered access to the nutritious meals proper nutrition. This new legis- by the Oregon Department of they need - both in and out of

> Susan Castillo is the Orand Jefferson counties with egon Superintendent of Pub-

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Health Care Law Breaks Racial Barriers

Aim is access to medical help when you need it

It's never been a secret that race and income play a part in the quality of medical care an individual receives. But these numbers are shocking.

In a country as rich as America, the

if one does find themselves struggling with one of these illnesses, they should be able to access quality medical care early and often and not have to worry about costs.

If the diseases go untreated, the longterm effects go far beyond the individual: society ultimately pays. \$7 billion to be exact. That's how much is spent a year treating preventable diseases in this country. And African Americans have twice the rate of preventable hospitalizations than whites. Before Republicans continue with their plan of repealing the healthcare law, with no workable proposal for a replacement, they should first think about what price the country will have to pay if they are successful. The Republican Party should not only leave the current healthcare law intact, they should sit down with Democrats and strategize to improve it. One of those improvements should be funding more community clinics in urban areas - clinics that educate and counsel residents on disease prevention. The Republican Party needs to realize that honoring campaign promises is important but only if that promise is in the best interest of the entire nation.

BY JUDGE MATHIS

Republicans, trying to make good on campaign promises, are working hard to repeal the 2010 healthcare law that, once fully implemented, will provide health insurance in some form for all Americans.

Those who supported the law realize that it's imperfect but recognize that the law's passage was an important first step. Over time, the law will save billions of dollars and ensure that Americans, regardless of income, can access medical help when they need it.

A new study shows us that money will be saved in other ways, too. A report released by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reveals shocking racial health disparities. Billions of dollars are spent each year treating illnesses in advanced stages. With healthcare more readily available, it is safe to assume that chronic conditions can be treated regularly and early, avoiding costly hospital stays and saving the larger public money in the long run.



expectation should be that all children live through infancy and grow into healthy adults. However, children born to African-American women are three times more likely to die before they make it to their first year than those born to women of other races.

With healthcare more readily available, it is safe to assume that chronic conditions can be treated regularly and early, avoiding costly hospital stays and saving the larger public money in the long run.

> If the child does make it to adulthood, they will be twice as likely to suffer from high blood pressure and much more likely to suffer from heart disease or have a stroke than their white counterparts. And, unfortunately, their chances of contracting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is shockingly higher than that of whites.

> Granted, each of these illnesses are preventable. Personal responsibility - eating right, exercising, practicing safe sex - goes a long way in making sure an individual is not afflicted with these diseases. However,

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

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