

# Startup Focuses on Politics Website engages people in their government

BY DONOVAN M. SMITH  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Politics is a difficult road for many people to navigate. A young Portland man has started Politicrowd.com as a way to bridge that gap.

Paul Locker, 22, says he got the idea for such a platform after realizing that many of his friends and peers were not engaged in politics and had no desire to do so for an array of reasons, one of them being a perceived inability to interact with elected officials.

Politicians and activists from across the state will join Locker in

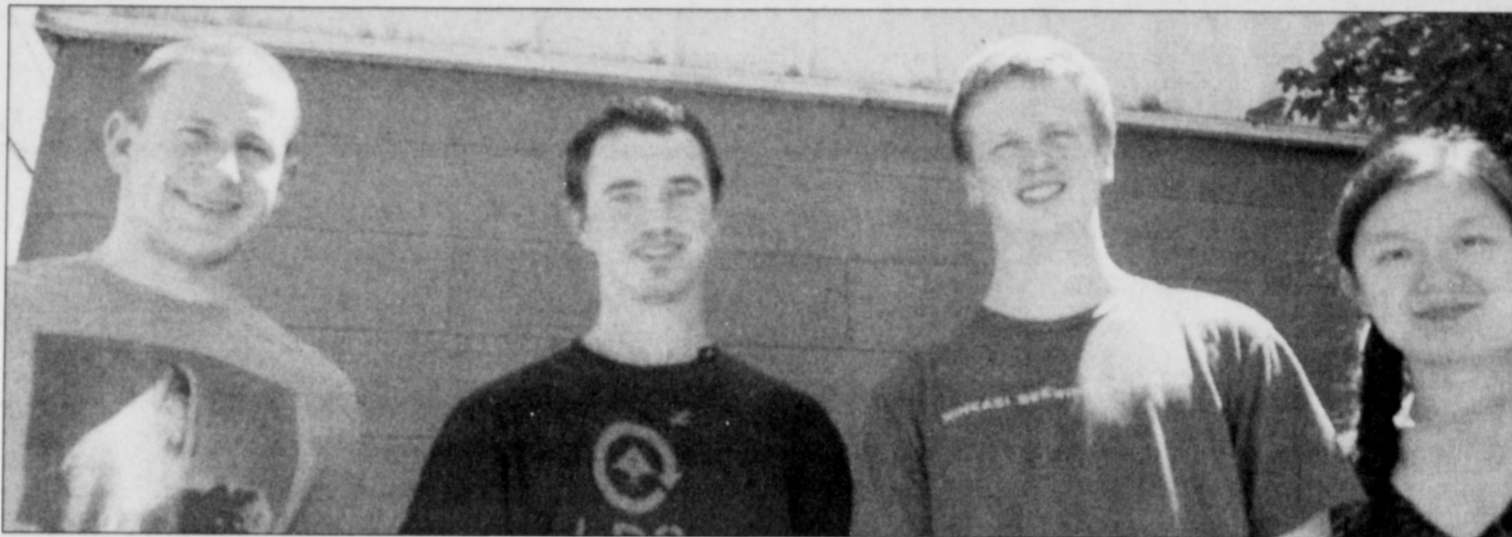


PHOTO BY DONOVAN M. SMITH/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER  
Paul Locker (second from the right) joins some of his volunteer staff for the launching of Politicrowd.com. The non-profit website is targeted to building dialogue with elected officials and getting the influence of money out of politics.

"The goal here is we want people to basically empower themselves to get in contact with their politicians in a way that's power through numbers rather than power through money or connections," says Locker.

The recent University of San Diego graduate says his passion for politics and non-partisan beliefs were instilled during his formative years.

He and his small staff are putting in long hours without pay making phone calls to the state capital and shaking the hands of taxpaying citizens they hope will become active users of the website.

Eric Wilson, who is a volunteer staffer, says he thought the Internet was an "awesome" way to get disenfranchised people back in to politics.

Pioneer Square on Sunday, Aug. 4, to celebrate the recent launch of the website.

Politicrowd.com will allow essentially every government representative in state to connect with con-

stituents who voice concerns in the districts they live. Other users will be able to review the letters and "upvotes," furthering the pressure to address local and national issues.

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## Group Plans Portland Rally

### Commemorating 1963 March on Washington

The Albina Ministerial Alliance, along with community partners such as the Urban League of Portland, the NAACP of Portland, the ACLU of Portland, and others are planning a march and rally to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Timed to coincide with the national event in Washington, D.C., activists from around the Portland region will gather in solidarity and support of the ongoing civil rights movement.

The event will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 24 at Terry Schunk Plaza and activists will march to South Waterfront Park, where the



rally, speakers, and music will begin at 1 p.m.

While the anniversary is historic in itself, the rally will also focus on the recent setbacks in terms of civil rights, including the U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, a cornerstone of modern civil rights law.

Attorney General Eric Holder, speaking recently at the National Urban League Conference, found the ruling "disappointing and

deeply flawed" but stressed that the decision is not a defeat, but "a historic opportunity" to strengthen civil rights law.

Demonstrators will seize this opportunity to organize in support of stronger protections under the law. Other events, including the recent verdict in the trial of George Zimmerman, highlight a failure on the part of our legal system to address systematic injustices and unequal protections under the law.

In Portland, where unemployment for African Americans is often double the rate of the majority population, and where a 2012 federal inquiry found that Police Bureau engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive force, the issues that compelled the 1963 March of Washington for Jobs and Freedom, including lack economic opportunity and police brutality, are still the pressing issues of today.

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