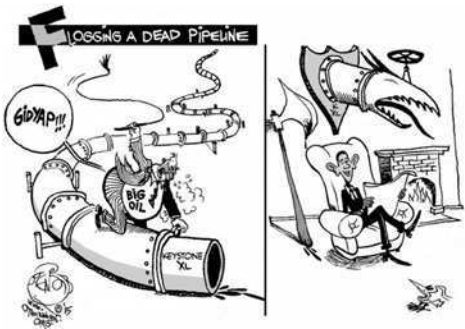


The INSIDE

The Week in Review page 2



pages 6-7

OPINION



pages 8-13

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



page 9

METRO

CLASSIFIEDS

page 14

CALENDAR

page 15

FOOD



page 16

This page
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LOCAL NEWS



PHOTO FROM BLACK LIVES MATTER PORTLAND

A Black Lives Matter banner hangs over a highway overpass in Portland. The Oregon Department of Justice is under fire for surveillance of activists using the online Black Lives Matter hashtag.

Activists Profiled Attorney General orders investigation

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Racial justice activists in Portland and across the state are left wondering if they too have been illegally profiled by the Oregon Department of Justice after it came to light that at least one department official was investigated for using the Black Lives Matter hashtag.

The matter came to light last week when Nkenge Harmon Johnson, head of the Urban League of Portland, along with seven other civil rights leaders and labor rights activists, sent a letter to Oregon Attorney General Ellen

Rosenblum, demanding an investigation.

Nkenge's husband, Erious Johnson, the director of Civil Rights for the Oregon Department of Justice, was one of the Oregonians profiled as part of a threat-assessment program.

Johnson was called to a meeting earlier this month where he learned that an investigator in his department used software to follow the Twitter feeds he and other Oregonians made referencing the Black Lives Matter hashtag.

"We do not know how many Oregonians were investigated by the Department of Justice," Har-

mon Johnson's letter said. "We do know, however, that Director Johnson was one of them. Because he had posted tweets using that hashtag, he was identified under the Oregon Department of Justice's threat assessment process."

Under those same guidelines, the Portland Observer and several of its current and former news contributors would have also been identified for investigation as users of the social media hashtag.

Rosenblum's office and the Urban League of Portland did not

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Clamp Down on Tobacco Adopted

The Multnomah County Commission has adopted an ordinance designed to reduce minors' access to tobacco products.

The law requires retailers to obtain a license before selling tobacco and will ensure better enforcement of minimum age requirements, officials said.

Multnomah County has the highest rate of illegal tobacco sales in Oregon where an estimated one in three retailers have been found to have sold cigarettes to minors in 2014, according to a state report released this year.



Loretta Smith

"We know that the vast majority of adult smokers start using tobacco before they can legal-

ly purchase it," Commissioner Loretta Smith said. "Without a system to enforce minimum age laws, we're turning our backs on our children whose bodies are especially vulnerable to a lifetime of addiction."

Tobacco is the leading cause of tobacco-related illness in Oregon, and with the rising popularity of e-cigarettes, nicotine intake has skyrocketed among youth.

The ordinance, adopted last week, provides training for merchants and clerks prior to implementing compliance checks.