

The Portland Observer

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Racial Equity Progress

Report finds success but more work ahead

Racial equality legislation moved at a record pace in Oregon last year, but more engagement will be needed to advance civil rights bills in the future, according to a new annual report by a coalition of racial and social justice organizations.

"Facing Race: the 2015 Oregon Legislative Racial Equality Report," was issued last week by a group that included the Urban League of Portland, Coalition of Communities of Color, Basic Rights Oregon, Center for Intercultural Organizing and others.

According to Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons, executive director of the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, and one of the other groups that participated in the study, lawmakers were involved with community members early and more often in 2015 than in past sessions.

Some of the accomplishments included



Nkenge Harmon Johnson

the passage of laws to end racial profiling, giving workers paid sick leave, and banning questions about prior criminal records on job applications until after an applicant is considered a job finalist.

Nkenge Harmon Johnson, president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Portland, cautioned that there was still more work to do to fully advance racial equity in the state.

"We need folks to champion racial equity legislation," she said, before presenting the report's recommendations to lawmakers and the public. The document included calls for increased representation of people of color among elected representatives, greater engagement from legislative leadership, and good implementation and funding for the civil rights bills that passed in 2015.

Andrea Miller, executive director of Causa, another group involved in the study, stressed that helping communities of color and other disadvantaged groups was ulti-

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Police Relations Suffering

A new study commissioned by the mayor to improve police training shows that over half of the Native Americans polled in Portland distrust police. The study found that most whites found the police "trustworthy" while slightly less than half of African Americans agreed. Only about a third Native Americans said the same.

Suspect Caught in Hit-and-Run

The driver in a hit-and-run that critically injured a pedestrian on Friday night surrendered to authorities Monday. The victim, who was struck at the intersection of Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Jarrett Street, is expected to survive.

Planned Parenthood Files Lawsuit

On Thursday one of the biggest nonprofits in the United States filed a federal lawsuit alleging extensive criminal misconduct by anti-abortion activists who produced a

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misguiding video targeting the handling of fetal tissue at some Planned Parenthood clinics. The organization says they have had to up their security since the footage with false allegations came out, and that the groups targeting them committed fraud.

Wage Increase Proposed

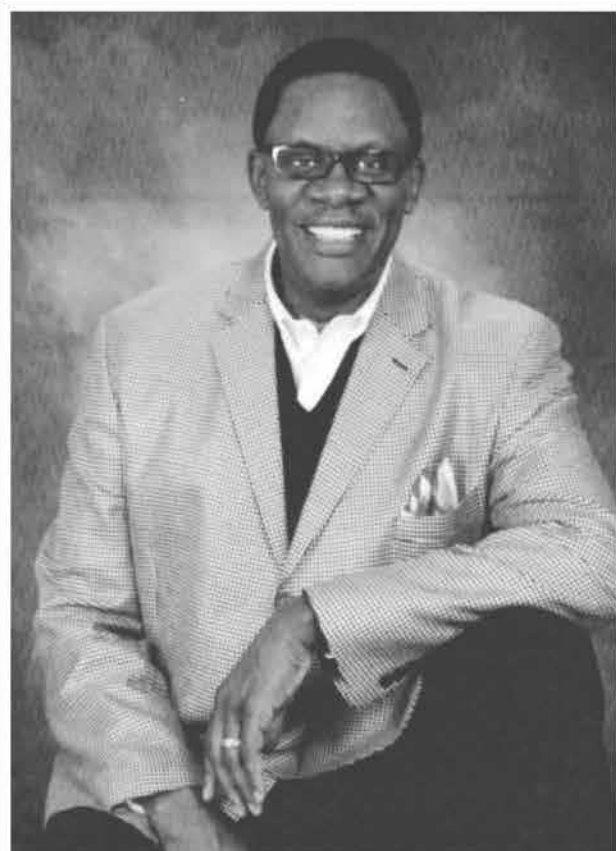
Gov. Kate Brown announced a proposal Thursday to increase the minimum wage throughout Oregon. The plan calls for a two-tiered minimum wage increase gradually over the next six years. Wages would be higher in Portland than in other areas, with the metro area having a minimum wage of \$15.52 hourly by 2022.

Solidarity Against Hate

A solidarity rally was held Saturday at Portland City Hall to support members of the community who have been the victims of hate speech and violence. #StandForLove and #InterruptHate was organized by groups with a range of religious, ethnic, and community viewpoints. Speakers included civil rights leaders, like Jo Ann Hardesty, president of Portland's NAACP chapter, and others.

Sentenced for Killing Girlfriend

A Portland-area man was sentenced Friday to 20 years in prison in the 2015 death of his girlfriend, whose body was found in the Willamette River off Kelly Point Park. Nicholas Estrada, 23, pleaded guilty to manslaughter and unlawful use of a weapon as part of a plea bargain while Monica Taylor, the mother of the victim Elyesicia C. Payton, addressed the court and looked on.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers

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