

OPINION

Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to news@portlandobserver.com.

Reproductive Rights and Economic Survival

Now we're fighting on two fronts

BY MARTHA BURK

We heard a lot about the "war on women" during the 2012 election cycle — mostly over Republican attacks on abortion rights and birth control.

While the phrase has faded in this election year go-round, the war on women has not. The only change is that now we're fighting on two fronts — reproductive rights and economic survival.

To a man, the three Republicans still in the nomination race oppose abortion rights.

No surprise there. But Ted Cruz has upped the ante and come out against exceptions for rape and incest. John Kasich would allow the exceptions, but says there's no point in talking to him about choice.

The formerly pro-choice Trump is now not only against abortion, but blurted out recently what others undoubtedly believe but are

too dishonest to say out loud — that the government should punish the women who have abortions. And probably the girls, too.

While reproductive rights are fundamental to women's well-being and autonomy, the right to fair pay and benefits is no less so.

After all, adult women are by far the majority of those working for the federal minimum wage. It's parked at \$7.25 per hour because the feds

1991.

Women make up 70 percent of tipped servers, and most of them don't work in those high-dollar, white-tablecloth restaurants. They're working in low-level hash houses and places like Denny's and Red Lobster.

A Census report last year showed that the poverty risk for women spikes once they enter the workforce. For women with kids, the poverty rate is almost double that of men in the 25-34 age range

among single mothers. Could be — but I'm betting a bigger factor is the poverty-level minimum wage, which disproportionately affects women of color.

Every presidential candidate has weighed in on the minimum wage. While Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders argue over how much is enough — \$12 for her, \$15 for him — Cruz says \$0 is the right number. He'd do away with the federal minimum altogether, having deemed it a "bad

while declaring a preference for leaving the minimum at \$7.25. Not to be outdone on the contradiction front, Kasich says it's "very important that we don't raise the minimum wage willy nilly," but then adds that Uncle Sam ought to let the 50 states set 50 different minimums if that's what they want.

All this adds up to a multi-pronged attack on low-wage working women, who are the least able to fight back. They're trapped by the ironclad partisanship on Capitol Hill, where Republicans have promised not to raise wages as long as they control Congress. And pushing back on those abortion restrictions states have been rolling out? Forget it.

Between Congress and the nutcase wing of the GOP calling the shots in the presidential race, the war on women promises to be a long one indeed.

Martha Burk is the director of the Corporate Accountability Project for the National Council of Women's Organizations and the author of the book *Your Voice, Your Vote: The Savvy Woman's Guide to Power, Politics, and the Change We Need*.

A Census report last year showed that the poverty risk for women spikes once they enter the workforce. For women with kids, the poverty rate is almost double that of men in the 25-34 age range — prime working years.

haven't raised it since 2009.

The legal base pay for tipped workers lags even further behind — it's been a measly \$2.13 since

— prime working years.

Some experts say the growing gap may be partly due to continuing high unemployment rates

policy."

In typical Trump fashion, the GOP front-runner has said America needs "good paying jobs,"

My Non-Traditional Face Closes Doors in Election

Why I am running for mayor

BY DEBORAH HARRIS

I'm writing to respond to those Portlanders and

entities that continue to question why I am running for the office of



Mayor with my background as African American and female who has never held a major public office. There's been a lack of equity and inclusion for me as a participant in many of the candidate forums and interviews that only white candidates have been invited to.

The question has been posed to me both at forums that graciously have invited and embraced me as a mayoral candidate, and by forum sponsors that chose not to welcome my participation. Media also ask why I chose to run for the office of Mayor instead of another position such as county commissioner or state representative.

My response is that the need to take action on social justice, affordable housing, houselessness, economic development, quality of education are issues facing the next mayor of Portland. These issues have not been sufficiently addressed and cannot simply be placed on lay-away.

In order to address the multi-tier issues that face our city, we must begin by building a healthy city, neighborhood by neighborhood, through strengthening citizen involvement through the creation of single-member geographical districts.

Very recently I attended a candidate's fair sponsored by the Rose City Park Neighborhood Association, although I was not invited as one of the "signature" participants, my attendance and observations validated our city's

historical and continued problem with a lack of equity and inclusion. Portland's political arena has a traditional process of force feeding their favorite candidates to the citizens.

Considering my parents and grandparents who worked very hard and sacrificed much for my ability to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree, Master's Degree, and my success as a manager for a multi-million dollar industry, not to mention designing and managing mentoring programs for youth, faith-based participation in food, clothing and mission work within and outside of the community, and engaging with Oregon correctional facilities to encourage and inspire incarcerated men and women to "Move Beyond Their Walls," I define these attributes and credentials as "signature."

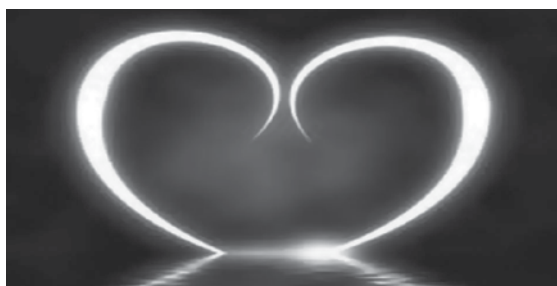
Portland is in a time and season that demands bold and courageous leadership with a compassion for the needs of all of the people, not just a chosen few.

It is time-out for a traditional mayor whose desire is to make the city livable for the haves while leaving the have-nots more broken promises and dreams deferred. I

am on this journey to transform the traditional mindset of leadership within our city where decisions that significantly impact the livelihood of all citizens cannot be made solely behind the walls of city government. I am in this race to paint and exemplify leadership that will move into the communities, listening with a passionate ear to the concerns for the people who have walked in those shoes and lived the experience. Nontraditional choices can open a floodgate to resolutions on issues that are community specific and cultivate higher values and principles.

The lyrics to one of my favorites songs resonate, "Nobody told me the road was going to be easy." Historically as I roll back the camera, I have encountered many rough roads, yet through determination and being confident, whatever the outcome, I win. Being a new and non-traditional face in this mayoral race does cause some doors to close, yet those closed doors can be permanently re-opened with a vote for me at the Primary Election on May 17.

Deborah Harris is candidate for the office of Mayor of Portland.



KIC Ministries

presents

Sunday, 11am - 12:30pm

Living Heart Faith Community

Location: 8219 NE Glisan St

Pastor Antonio L. Thomas