

Guns

continued from page 1

guns – felons, dishonorably discharged military and those with misdemeanor domestic violence convictions – but only if the prohibited class of person possesses a firearm that has been used in interstate commerce. In other words, if a felon obtained an illegal firearm in Oregon, but the firearm was manufactured in another state or country, then the federal statute applies.

The federal statute also applies if a person “uses” a firearm while committing a drug trafficking offense. Other enhanced penalties apply for “Armed Career Criminals” – those with three violent or serious drug offenses. Depending on the charge, a defendant faces up to life in prison without the possibility of parole for certain gun law violations.

Criminal Justice experts have conflicting findings on the effectiveness of prison to deter or prevent future crime. Many proponents of the country’s incarceration binge since the 1970s point to the decrease in violent crime that has occurred since the 1990s, but The Sentencing Project in its “Incarceration and Crime” report notes that some states saw differences in crime and incarceration.

“An overview of changes in incarceration and crime in all 50 states reveals no consistent relationship between the rate at which incarceration increased and the rate at which crime decreased,” according to the report. “Between 1991 and 1998, those states that increased incarceration at rates that were less than the national average experienced a larger decline in crime rates

than those states that increased incarceration at rates higher than the national average.”

Adams acknowledges the need for reforms in state and federal corrections systems to better improve the reformation process of offenders. He says that enforcement alone will not do the job and looks to Harvard University’s David Kennedy as a source to craft better policies for preventing young people from entering a “life of violence.”

“My push in this area doesn’t start or end with enforcement,” Adams says. “There’s a lot of improvement with the corrections system that needs to occur, in terms of how we in local government partner or don’t partner with the corrections system.”

It’s not clear how many gun cases that U.S. Attorney Dwight Holton believes he will be able to federalize. His office did not return information requests by press time.

As more offenders from Portland get imprisoned in the federal corrections system, Adams says there is a need to make sure they will return to the city reformed.

“We need to keep track of the folks that get put in the federal system, perhaps far away, and make sure our efforts to reach out to them whether they’re in Florida, Ohio or New York State, likely return to Portland, that our thinking assumes that,” he said.

A study released recently by Iowa State University makes an attempt to put a price tag on violent crimes. Researchers say that the societal cost for one murder is a whop-

State Your Peace



Youth from several Seattle Community Centers played the Police in the 1st Annual Bacon Bowl Friday Oct. 2 at Garfield Play field. The flag football game between youth and members of the police department, Seattle Police Explorers, Seattle Parks Department staff and former Seahawks was the culminating event of the Week Without Violence. The week long event was sponsored by Seattle Parks and Recreation and included several opportunities for young people to state their peace by making a declaration of how they will work to end violence.

ping \$17 million, with rape coming in at \$448,532, armed robbery at \$335,733 and aggravated assault at \$145,379. The researchers say this is why effective prevention programs are so important.

This cost – including the human cost – is not lost on those at city hall looking for

Read the rest of this story online at www.theskanner.com



Obama

continued from page 1

styled as a victory rally. However, recent polls have shown Kitzhaber and Dudley are neck and neck. Candidate Kitzhaber spoke briefly –his campaign video had been showing during lulls in the action.

Talking about his priorities as jobs, education, healthcare, clean air and water, supporting small businesses, he contrasted his experience in government with his opponent’s lack of it. He would put families before special interests, Kitzhaber said.

“It’s clear our only pathway to a prosperous and sustainable future requires a willingness to challenge the ways we’ve done business in the past.”

Then he introduced the president, detailing the work he has done to preserve jobs through the stimulus, to regulate Wall Street, and start bringing troops back from Iraq.

“Two years ago Oregon said ‘Yes We can,’ he said. “President Obama rolled up his sleeves and ... we made more progress on healthcare than any time since 1965.”

When President Obama finally emerged the crowd went wild.

“I love you back,” he said – a trademark Obama response that elicited more cheering.

Despite a head cold, the president gave a strong speech that clearly reached its target. He laid out the difficulties he has faced, crediting the Bush administration for: the worst economy since the Great Depression; the loss of 8 million jobs, most of them before his policies had been put into place; and two wars. Republicans and special

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interests in Washington have fought the administration’s policies every step of the way, he said. They relied upon a politics of “amnesia” that counted on Americans forgetting that it was Republican policies that had wrecked the economy and reduced the income of millions of middle class families.

“I said change would be hard and some of you didn’t believe me,” he said, “but change is hard; it’s hard and we are grinding it out

day by day.”

The president touched on the successes of his administration: healthcare, some regulation of Wall Street, saving jobs and bringing a halt to the recession through the stimulus. His biggest cheer of the night — after his entrance and exit — was when he talked about bringing home the troops in Iraq.

But the main purpose of the night was to secure a victory for John Kitzhaber in the governor’s race. And Obama did the job he had come to do. He praised the former governor’s experience saying, “This is not a difficult choice.” And he recounted Kitzhaber’s success in attracting jobs to the state and passing health care coverage for thousands of Oregon children. All despite a Republican-dominated legislature in Salem.

“Who hasn’t voted yet?” he asked. “Show of hands, c’mon Fess up.” And he exhorted those who raised their hands to vote and to persuade others to vote too.

For the Democratic crowd who came to the Convention Center for just this sort of rhetoric and reassurance, the speech was a resounding success. The question now is whether the enthusiasm will spill out to voters across the state.

Audience members who spoke to the Skanner News said they definitely planned to vote and would talk to their friends and family about voting. Tiajuana Howard was overjoyed that the president had shaken her hand. “I’ll never wash it again,” she joked.

Her uncle, Kevin Howard, said he is skeptical about all politicians, and believes, “You usually end up voting for whoever tells you the best stories.”

Like many other people, Howard said, he is feeling the economic pressures of the collapsing job market. He has a small plumbing business, he said, but can’t afford to buy healthcare in the current economic climate. People are disheartened, he said, but after listening to the president’s speech, he realized that change is not going to be easy or fast.

“I think people will vote,” he said, “but I also believe people are disgusted with the whole representation thing in politics – because whether it is the Democrats or the Republicans who win it’s the big corporations and lobbyists who have the say so. But Howard left the event feeling that President

Read the rest of this story online at www.theskanner.com



Tea Party

continued from page 1

included a tea party leader in Texas who had once been listed as a supporter of a Ku Klux Klan group and a tea party radio show host who had allegedly invited anti-Semitic guests on his program. Leaders of the tea party movement have rejected charges that the movement promotes racism.

NAACP president Benjamin Todd Jealous wrote in the report that most tea party supporters are “people of good will.”

“Our request to the majority in the tea party is to stand up and speak out and be

clear that there is no room in the tea party for people who would espouse racism, xenophobia or advocate violence toward any group,” Jealous said in a phone interview.

Some tea party leaders charged that the report was designed to undercut the tea party’s political influence as the Nov. 2 election approaches. Some tea party groups are supporting Republican candidates.

“I think this is a political attempt to tie crazy people together with a movement that

is not about what these people are about,” said Max Pappas, vice president of public policy for FreedomWorks, an organization that works with tea party supporters.

The report was produced by the Kansas City-based Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, which is headed by a lifetime NAACP member. The NAACP said it did not fund the research, and the institute said the findings were based on an examination of government documents and tea party members’ writings

and on observations at rallies.

The report alleges that Dale Robertson, who founded the 1776 Tea Party group in Houston, has promoted anti-Semitic speakers on his “Tea Party Hour” radio program. Robertson has denied in interviews that he is a racist. He could not be reached for comment Wednesday. The report also accused the leader of another Texas group of subscribing to the “White Patriot” newsletter and of being a listed supporter of an Arkansas Klan group in the 1990s.