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Diversity Awards for the Police? No!

On Wednesday afternoon, the Council will be presenting the "Spirit of Diversity Awards" to the Portland Police Bureau and to the Independent Police Review Division's Outreach Coordinator Irene Konev. We publish a newsletter, the People's Police Report, which revels in political satire, so we can appreciate a joke. Unfortunately, we don't think you are joking.

But let's look at what the Portland Police Bureau has done in the year 2010 for diversity. Of the 6 people shot by police last year, two were African American, and all were in some kind of mental health crisis. And with the shooting of Jack Collins, they shot at least one homeless person.

I guess there's diversity in that not all of them were people of color?

Aaron Campbell was shot in the back and killed because the officer thought he was going for a gun, a suspicion often projected onto people of color but rarely on white suspects. Keaton Otis was pulled over because he "looked like a gang member," and ended up dead at the hands of the Gang Enforcement Team. Is it any wonder that people of color don't come forward to report to police about shootings within their communities?

The new Chief had the opportunity, when he reached outside the Bureau in July to appoint a civilian to an Assistant Chief position, to diversify his command staff, since there are no Commanders of color to promote.

PORTLAND COPWATCH

Dan Handleman

Instead he chose his white friend with whom he plays in a rock band, and who had led the Portland Business Alliance, prompting the AMA Coalition for Justice and Police Reform, headed by African American community leaders, to call the appointment a "slap in the face."

6 people shot by police last year, two were African American, and all were in some kind of mental health crisis ...

Statistics for racial profiling in 2010 have not yet been released but the 2009 numbers show that the percentage of African Americans who were searched and found without contraband went up from 32 percent to 41 percent, and this while the Bureau was studying ways to improve its so-called "hit rate."

And while the hiring that just occurred may have improved the pool of officers of color, the Bureau still has less than 4 percent African American officers in a city that is 6 percent Black.

The committees and organizations that the Bureau lists as its proof of diversity, including its own internal advisory boards, have been around and communicating with the police for years.

So surely, this must be a joke.

Meanwhile, the Outreach Coordinator from IPR started 2010 by expressing concern that people coming to the Citizen Review Committee's first public outreach meeting in many years would "get out of hand." This was in early January before the Campbell shooting, when the forum was intended to focus mainly on the beating death of James Chasse. After the Campbell shooting she continued to insist that the CRC ensure there was adequate

security at the meeting. When CRC continued to plan the event, the Outreach Coordinator joined the Auditor and the IPR staff in refusing to show up to the forum, at which dozens of people from the African American and mental health consumer communities came to testify about their concerns around police misconduct issues, and there was no outbreak requiring security.

The Outreach Coordinator's efforts to network with other groups is not a bad thing. However, as there is no report back as to what is being learned by contacting these groups, it is not making the issue of police accountability more transparent, nor is it encouraging communities who share concerns the ability to speak with one another.

The best way to know whether the Outreach Coordinator's work has resulted in championing diversity is to see how many more people of color come forward to file complaints, and whether their satisfaction with the process improves both via IPR's own surveys and word on the street. The IPR's 2010 report, which was published on May 24, shows no significant change in complaints from communities of color, but a relatively consistent percentage of White complainants (67-68 percent in 2006-2009, 66 percent in 2010). The award might be appropriate next year if the numbers change based on the Coordinator's reported efforts in various communities and languages and placing complaint forms in more convenient locations.

Portland Copwatch gives awards from time to time in our newsletter to officers who "Do the Right Thing"-- refuse bad orders, resolve incidents without violence or blow the whistle on misconduct. But we tend to focus on a single action rather than saying that everything the officer does is something we support. The nature of these "Spirit of Diversity Awards" is to make it seem as if the City is commending everything the recipients have done with regard to diversity.

Please stop this public relations back-patting and gather input from the communities who are affected before giving out these awards.

Dan Handleman is the director of Portland Copwatch, a project of Peace and Justice Works.

Planning – An Essential Part of Family Life

If you're an average woman, you want two children, according to various surveys. That means you'll spend about five years of your life trying to become pregnant, being pregnant or recovering from pregnancy, and 30 years trying to avoid it.

You can do that thanks to the June 1965 landmark Supreme Court decision *Griswold v. Connecticut*, which affirmed the right of married couples to use contraceptives -- and more importantly, recognized an individual's right to privacy in family planning matters. Universal usage and acceptance of contraceptives followed, transforming the lives of millions of Americans.

The *Griswold* case was a catalyst for our national family planning program -- Title X of the Public Health Service Act -- the only dedicated source of federal funding for family planning services. Created in 1970, Title X provides access to family planning for all, without regard to economic circumstances.

Today, contraceptives are an important part of family life in America -- so much so that 98 percent of us have used birth control at some point in our lives, and we mostly take it for granted.

We shouldn't. During the recent battle in Congress over funding the government, the House of Representatives voted to eliminate Title X. Opponents of family plan-

NFP & RHA ASSOC

Clare Coleman

ning used a mixture of misinformation and innuendo to entangle family planning in their anti-abortion war, ignoring the fact that Title X saves the government some \$3.4 billion every year by preventing unintended pregnancies, nearly half of which would likely have ended in abortion. The

tests; pregnancy testing; screening for high blood pressure, anemia, diabetes and cervical and breast cancer, and for sexually transmitted infections including HIV; basic infertility services; health education; and referrals for other health and social services -- as well as contraceptives and counseling about them.

These are the facts of life: According to new Guttmacher Institute research, unintended pregnancy costs U.S. taxpayers

is funded to cover just over five million of those in need. There are always more patients than subsidies. Seventy percent of the individuals seen at Title X-funded health centers have incomes at or below the federal poverty level -- meaning they earn less than \$10,830 per year. Many of them are working young adults, living paycheck to paycheck. They count down the days until they get paid and are just one unexpected problem from disaster -- if the car engine light comes on; the child-care center raises its fees; or their hours are cut.

Six in ten women who get care from Title X consider it their usual source of health care, and for many it is their only source. Patients under the federal poverty level receive services at no cost to them; those who make over \$10,830 a year are provided services on a sliding fee scale according to income.

Although no patient is turned away because of an inability to pay, Title X actually saves money for the government. Every dollar invested in publicly funded family planning averts nearly \$4 in Medicaid costs. Given its proven effectiveness, it only makes sense that the Obama administration should include contraceptives in the women's health preventive

Six in 10 women who get care from Title X consider it their usual source of health care, and for many it is their only source

Senate saved the program, but another attempt to kill Title X is certain this year. When it comes, Americans must recognize that access to basic primary and preventive care is being threatened.

Title X funds 4,500 nonprofit and government-run sites nationwide: most are county and local health departments. The rest are hospitals, family planning councils and other private nonprofit agencies. These agencies are required to provide preventive and primary health care services including pelvic exams and Pap

approximately \$11 billion a year. Without publicly funded family planning services, these costs would be 60 percent higher. In 2008, services at Title X centers helped prevent 973,000 unintended pregnancies that would likely have resulted in 432,600 births and 406,200 abortions. The centers also performed 2.2 million Pap tests, 5.9 million STI tests and a million confidential HIV tests in 2009 alone.

Seventeen million people need some assistance in order to get this important care, but today, Title X

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