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COOK-OFF



Carrie Stone 5, and her dad Shomari a reporter for KOMO prepare to compete in the United Negro College Fund BBQ Cook-off for Education, Saturday, Aug. 6. The event was held in conjunction with Umoja Fest and benefited the UNCF Pacific Northwest Scholarship Fund.

No Child Left Behind?

Feds create waivers for low-performing school districts

By Dorie Turner
The Associated Press

The Obama administration effectively gutted the Bush-era No Child Left Behind law Monday, giving states a way out of a decade-long policy that focused on holding schools accountable but labeled many of them failures even if they made progress.

To get a waiver from the program, however, states must agree to host of education reforms the White House favors - from tougher evaluation systems for teachers and principals to programs tackling the achievement gap for minority students.

The federal law, which requires every student to be proficient in science and math by 2014, is four years past due for reauthorization. But it's become mired in the increasingly bipartisan mood on Capitol Hill despite repeated calls from President Barack Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan for changes to be made before the school year starts. Obama sent an overhaul proposal to Congress 16 months ago.

Duncan has warned that 82 percent of U.S. schools could be labeled failures next year if the law is not changed. Education experts have questioned that estimate, but state officials report a growing number of schools facing sanctions under the law - from having to offer free tutoring to being forced to shut down entirely.

Tired of waiting for Congress to act, Obama has told Duncan to move forward with waivers, said Melody Barnes, director of the Domestic Policy Council for the White House.

"We have a federal law that's an impediment, that's getting in the way as a disincentive for the great work states are doing," Duncan said in a call with reporters Monday afternoon. "That just doesn't make sense at a time when we have to get better faster than ever before."

Republicans bristled at the move.

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Bank Sold After Scandal: Cleared

Federal probe into Washington Mutual ends with no charges

NEW YORK (AP) — The Justice Department says it has closed its investigation into the collapse of Washington Mutual without any criminal charges filed.

In September 2008, the federal government seized Washington Mutual's flagship bank, based in Seattle, and sold its assets to JPMorgan Chase & Co. for \$1.9 billion. It was the biggest bank failure in U.S. history.

The Justice Department, the FBI and the Securities and

Exchange Commission opened investigations into Washington Mutual's collapse shortly after, in October 2008.

The U.S. attorney's office for the western district of Washington, which includes Seattle, on Friday evening issued a statement saying that after an "extensive investigation that included hundreds of interviews and the review of millions of documents," there were not grounds for criminal charges.

In July, WaMu and other defendants, including invest-

ment bank Goldman Sachs & Co. and accounting firm Deloitte & Touche LLP, agreed to pay \$208.5 million to investors to settle a class-action lawsuit stemming from the lender's collapse.

In that settlement, plaintiffs ranging from huge pension funds to small individual investors accused the company and its banking executives of securities fraud, claiming the bank's lending standards and practices were misrepresented, questionable business practices

were not disclosed and federal financial reports were misleading.

Under the terms of the settlement deal, Washington Mutual and the other defendants did not admit any wrongdoing.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. also filed a civil lawsuit in March against former WaMu CEO Kerry Killinger, ex-Chief Operating Officer Stephen Rotella and David Schneider, who headed the bank's home loans division.

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Whistle-blower in Probe Pleads Guilty

Soldier who complained about 'death squad' gets 3 years in prison

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. (AP) — A soldier who tried to blow the whistle on a plot to murder Afghan civilians pleaded guilty at his court-martial Friday to a charge of involuntary manslaughter in one man's death.

Spc. Adam Winfield of Cape Coral, Fla., is the second soldier to admit to participating in what the Army has characterized as an Afghan "kill team."

Winfield, 23, pleaded guilty in a plea agreement to involuntary manslaughter and to smoking hashish. The News Tribune of Tacoma reports that military judge Col. David Conn sentenced him to three years in prison, demotion to private and a bad-conduct discharge. He has already spent a year in custody. He had earlier been charged with premeditated murder and could have faced life in prison.

Winfield was one of five 5th Stryker Brigade soldiers accused in the three civilian deaths during patrols last year in Kandahar Province in Afghanistan. The soldiers are accused of faking combat scenarios to cover the killings.

The newspaper reported that on May 2, 2010, Winfield and another soldier, Pvt.

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