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BUMBERSHOOT

Seattle native Evan Flory-Barnes played with his band Skerik's Bandalabra, at the 41st Annual Bumbershoot Festival over the Labor Day weekend. The popular festival, known for its music, also features comedy, theatre, visual arts and the literary arts. This year's big musical attractions included Tony Bennett, Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings and Gotye.



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Charter School Profits

Charter initiative would open doors to school privatization

By Donna Gordon Blankenship
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Some of the most successful charter school organizations in the nation say they would like to open schools in Washington state if voters approve the charter initiative on the November ballot.

Rocketship Education, which runs some of the top performing elementary schools in California's low-income areas, would love to expand to Washington state, said Kristoffer Haines, vice president of national development for the seven-school organization started in San Jose, Calif., in 2006.

"We're certainly interested and excited," Haines said.

He added, however, that the process to start a new school takes time. So even if Washington voters decide to allow up to 40 public charter schools to open during the next five years, the first Rocketship schools probably couldn't open in the state until 2016 or 2017, after a thorough process, including approval by Washington authorities.

Haines, who lives in Corvallis, Ore., and was asked to look over Washington's initiative before it was proposed for the ballot, said he has had his eye on the Seattle-Tacoma area for a long time.

Initiative 1240 would allow the independent public schools to be established in Washington state for the first time. Voters have rejected the idea three other times, in 1996, 2000 and 2004.

Under the terms of the initiative, any non-profit organization could start a charter school in Washington if their plan is approved by either a new statewide commission or a local school board that has been authorized by the state school board to approve charter schools.

The schools would need to be free and open to all students just like traditional public schools. They would receive public fund-

New Effort for Immigrants' Tuition

Observers say cutbacks mean the effort faces an uphill battle

By Manuel Valdes
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — With the federal government giving young illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children a chance to stay in the country, advocates in Washington state are relaunching efforts to open state financial aid to college students who don't have documents.

"Now these kids can live and work here without fear of deportation," said Ricardo Sanchez,

chairman of the Latino/a Educational Achievement Project, the main group behind the effort. "The financial aid makes more sense."

But Sanchez faces an uphill battle in Olympia.

The state's financial aid pot — the needs grant program — is already strained after years of economic woes and rising tuition costs. Despite lawmakers providing additional money, more students who qualify aren't getting aid because demand keeps growing.

More so, state financial aid is often tied with federal aid, something that students who qualify under the program can't apply for.

Add the reluctance by lawmakers, including conservatives ones, and opposition from some constituents to give financial aid to students who entered the country without proper documentation.

"The state is in the hole by significant amounts of money. We're gonna give significant resources to people who I think

were given illegally a legal status," said Bob West, chairman of Grassroots of Yakima Valley, a tea party group that started as an organization to lobby for strict immigration enforcement in Olympia.

West, who three years ago testified against a similar bill, said that expanding the eligibility would act as further encouragement for immigrants to come to the country away from official channels.

"I realize that families come

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US Attorney Offers Internet Safety Tips

Cell phone sex tape spurs teaching moment for parents, kids

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — It was a parent's — or a principal's — nightmare: Two underage students in Des Moines agreed to have sex at a party while others recorded it with their cell phones.

The video spread quickly among the kids at Mount Rainier High School last year, and

in addition to the potential harm to the couple involved, the episode became a distraction in the classroom — and prompted considerations about whether those who took and shared the video might face child pornography charges.

The incident is the type Seattle's top federal prosecutor, U.S. Attorney Jenny Durkan, is hoping to prevent with a new back-to-school Internet safety campaign.

Durkan has asked public and private elementary and middle schools throughout Western Washington to send home a letter from her with each student, accompanied by tips for parents and children about how to keep them out of trouble, whether the danger is online predators, bullying or unwisely shared cell phone pictures.

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