

DOJ

continued from page 1

deaths of James Chasse, Aaron Campbell and Keaton Otis. In September 2012, after a 15-month investigation, it released a report.

The report found that Portland Police Bureau had a "pattern or practice" of violating the rights of people who have mental illnesses, or who were thought to have a mental illness. It found officers used excessive force against those people.

The DOJ did not investigate racial bias or profiling, but noted concerns raised by communities of color. Thomas Perez, then the DOJ's chief investigator, and now Secretary of Labor, told The Skanner News that the reforms should protect people of color as well as people with mental illness.

Proposed Settlement Drew Criticism

Behind closed doors, the city and the DOJ hammered out a proposed settlement that was unveiled in October 2012. Former Mayor Sam Adams and Police Chief Mike Reese agreed to make changes to improve the bureau, but denied the DOJ findings were correct.

The settlement agreement proposed creating a Behavioral Health Unit and expanding the bureau's crisis response teams. It made changes to its use of force policy, added yearly performance reviews for officers, and created the positions of compliance officer/ community liaison and compliance coordinator. A 15-member committee would be appointed to oversee the changes. When council approved the agreement the resolution added 32 staff positions to the bureau, a mix of officers and civilians.

"What we were expecting was something that clearly said, you can't use more than the least force necessary to accomplish the task," says Dan Handelman of Portland Copwatch, who has been an observer and police accountability activist for 20 years.

"What they said was you have to use less force over the course of your career. But if people right out of the police academy are using more force than necessary, then the training is wrong."

Independent Police Review is 'Not Independent'

Critics say the agreement also fails to reform an accountability structure the DOJ called "byzantine" and "self-defeating."

Some voiced dismay that one of Reese's first hires to the behavioral health unit was Officer Bret Burton, one of three law enforcement personnel involved in the arrest that led up to James Chasse's death in custody.

And they say Mayor Hales dropped the ball by pushing ahead with a new police contract that does nothing to improve accountability.

Proposals that would allow the Independent Police Review to compel officers to testify, for example, were withdrawn during a Dec. 18 city council meeting after Police Chief Reese opposed them and the mayor said he wanted more time.

"When people are mistreated by a police officer they don't want a police officer to investigate it, because they don't trust it will be investigated objectively," Handelman says.

Heart Saver



Oregon Army National Guard 1st Sgt. Jeremy McCloud shares a laugh with Hillsboro Armory Maintenance Manager Paul Perone (right), and his fiancée Lorna Wolfington, outside the Hillsboro Auditorium, following a ceremony, held Jan. 7, honoring McCloud and fellow Oregon Soldiers, Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Carver and Spc. Michael Cutone, with the Hillsboro Fire Department's Life-Saver Award. The three Oregon Soldiers sprang into action Dec. 18, after Perone collapsed outside the Hillsboro Armory. The soldiers administered CPR until emergency medical personnel arrived. Doctors and EMS personnel credit the Soldiers with saving Perone's life.

"The DOJ called for the Independent Police Review to do a meaningful independent investigation. The way it is now, the IPR is not independent. It's dependent on a police commander to order the officer to answer."

Portland City Commissioners approved those changes to the Independent Police Review Jan. 8.

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



Wage

continued from page 1

port, because it is owned by the Port of Seattle.

However, newly elected Seattle Mayor Ed Murray has convened a task force to study raising the city's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. And one of his first acts as mayor was to sign an executive order that sets \$15 as the minimum wage for city employees.

Jason Gettel, policy analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy, said this year's increase means a full-time minimum wage worker in Oregon will take home an extra \$312 in 2014.

Yet the center's figures show the hike is not even enough to lift many working families above the federal poverty level. A minimum wage of \$9.55 to lift a family of three with one parent working full-time out of poverty in 2014, the center estimates.

"While the uptick in Oregon's minimum wage is welcome, it still leaves too many working families unable to meet basic needs," Gettel said. "An even higher wage

floor would be good for workers and our state."

Gettel cautions that the federal poverty level is an outdated standard, based on food prices, that doesn't mean families have enough to pay for rent, childcare, transportation and bills, never mind save for college or retirement.

"The official definition of poverty really measures serious economic privation, not

'...There are airport workers, and fast-food workers, and nurse assistants, and retail salespeople who work their tails off and are still living at or barely above poverty'

basic needs," he says.

And he says, without action from voters or the Legislature, Oregon's minimum wage could be stuck below \$10 an hour until 2018.

"Unless inflation rises more rapidly than

expected, it will be about five years before we hit \$10 per hour," Gettel says.

Other places with minimum wage hikes in the works include:

New Jersey, \$8.25,

California, \$9 from July 1,

Washington, D.C., \$9.50 from July 1 with the goal of \$11.50 by 2016.

Opponents say that raising the minimum wage costs jobs.

Economist and former labor Secretary Robert Reich calls that idea "baloney." States with higher minimums don't have higher unemployment, he says in a YouTube video on the subject. He says the kinds of jobs we're talking about tend to be personal service jobs that can't be outsourced.

So what are the strongest arguments against raising minimum wages. Some opponents argue that the Earned Income Tax credit is a far better bulwark against child poverty because it is targeted to the families who most need help.

Others argue that the number of mini-

um wage workers is too small for a raise to help the economy.

A documentary featuring Reich, now an economics professor at Berkley, was released last year. Inequality For All detailed how wealth has become increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few, gutting the middle class, and hurting the economy overall. It was just one of many efforts by progressives to put economic justice at the center of American politics.

President Obama announced he plans to focus on economic fairness for the remainder of his presidency. Boosting the minimum wage is good for families, increases social mobility and helps power up the economy, he said in a speech Dec. 4.

"We know that there are airport workers, and fast-food workers, and nurse assistants, and retail salespeople who work their tails off and are still living at or barely above poverty," he said. "And that's why it's well past the time to raise a minimum wage that in real terms right now is below where it was when Harry Truman was in office."

Tickets

continued from page 1

says. "Make sure the ink doesn't smear.

"If it's flimsy, if it looks any bit suspicious, don't spend any money on that and just walk away."

Tickets sold out within minutes for this weekend's playoff game – and that was before fans knew they would face the New Orleans Saints; the last time the two teams squared off the crowd caused earthquakes.

"Fans are going to want a ticket to that game and they are going to be trying to find any deal possible. So it never fails, year in,

year out, it doesn't matter what city you're in, if your team is playing, those resellers are going to be out there," Quinlan said. "Some sell legitimate tickets; others will be trying to sell bogus tickets, Xerox copies even."

Game tickets lack any special watermark or hologram, making them easier to counterfeit.

And if you do buy bad tickets there isn't much you can do about it, Quinlan says.

"If you buy from a scalper and it turns out

to be a bogus ticket, by the time you reach the gate that guy's gone."

The Better Business Bureau has a short list of guidelines for football fans heading to a Seahawks game:

— Spot the fakes. Learn how real tickets look and feel; watch for flimsy paper, smeared ink and uneven margins. When in doubt, walk away.

— Go with star players. Use reliable and verifiable ticket sellers and resellers that hold vendors responsible for ticket authen-

ticity.

— Avoid the sack. Never wire funds to make purchases. Use credit cards online and dispute the charges if tickets don't arrive or turn out to be fakes.

— Call a timeout. Avoid sellers that fail to provide contact information or prefer to conduct transactions privately. When buying tickets from local sellers, meet them in well-lit public places and bring a friend.

For more go to www.bbb.org.