Police

continued from page 1

searched. However, 4.8 percent of Black drivers who were searched were found with guns to 3.7 percent of Whites.

Pedestrian Stops

Several factors mean these figures cannot be taken at face value, including the fact that stops can represent the same person being stopped more than once.

"Many individuals are known to the police and are repeatedly stopped (this is particularly true of a small number of very active gang members and individuals who are prohibited from being in drug impact areas).

"The Bureau's emphasis on reducing gang violence results in increased contact between police and these individuals. It also increases the police presence in areas which these individuals frequent.

Approximately 48 percent of identified gang members are African American/Black, 32 percent are Hispanic, 14 percent are White, 4 percent are Asian, and 1 percent are Native American.

The percentage of identified gang members in Portland who are Black and Hispanic are concerning considering their proportions to the population in Portland. This disparity is believed to be related to an influx of California-style gangs from the mid 1980's and early 1990's and is disproportionately impacting youth that are vulnerable in social structures such as education, poverty, and intergenerational gang influences."

The numbers do not include stops categorized as "mere conversation," where the person is technically free to leave. Portland Police say they do not employ a "stop and frisk" strategy. However, "mere conversation," can include an officer "patting down" and searching the person stopped. Advocates have expressed concern that these stops disproportionately impact Black youth, who may not know they can refuse the contact. Police say it's logistically impossible to track every "mere conversation" contact.

The report's authors argue that the raw numbers are not the right way to assess racial profiling. They argue that people in some neighborhoods are exposed to higher levels of violence. And they say police concentrate their efforts in those areas. Yet that doesn't account for the disproportion, the report acknowledges.

"While pedestrian stops are disproportionate to Census estimates, it is likely that patrol units are responding to increased victimization in parts of the city which are disproportionately inhabited by residents of color. However, even after accounting for disparate victimization, certain parts of the city have disproportionate numbers of people of color stopped."

Stop data alone can't say whether racial profiling is occurring, the report says. Tactics such as Hot-Spot policing, where police concentrate their efforts in high-crime neighborhoods, can result in higher stops for African Americans. However it can help to identify disparities.

Currently Portland Police Bureau is working with Community and Police Relations Committee members to develop an equity plan and training for all PPB staff.

'Sweet Taste of the Arts'

PHOTO BY TONY SIBLEY

PassinArt: A Theatre Company presented "Sweet Taste of the Arts," a celebration and artist awards ceremony this past Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Oregon Historical Society. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of awards to African American artists and theater companies for their contributions through Theater, Dance, Music, Visual Arts and Playwriting. Pictured left to right: Nywesui Askari, founder of Sojourner Truth Theater (1981); Wanda Walden-Miller, customer/actor/writer, PassinArt: A Theatre Company; Wrick Jones, actor/director, Black Repertory Theater (1977); Constance G. Carley, co-founder, PassinArt: A Theatre Company (1982); Bobby Fouther, choreography and dance; Arietta Ward accepted award on behalf of Janice Scroggins, composer/ pianist, and Richard Brown who received an award for photography in visual arts.

Gentrification

continued from page 1

between economic success and inequality," said Alan Berube, a senior fellow at Brookings. "These cities are home to some of the highest paying industries and jobs in the country."

At the same time, Berube noted, many of these cities may inadvertently widen the gap between rich and poor because they have public housing and basic services that make them attractive to low-wage workers.

The findings come at a delicate moment for the country, still slogging through a weak recovery from the Great Recession. Much of the nation's job growth has been concentrated in lower-wage careers. Few Americans have enjoyed pay raises. President Barack Obama is pushing for a higher minimum wage. Protesters in San Francisco have tried to block a private bus that shuttles Google employees from gentrifying neighborhoods to their offices in Silicon Valley.

> Many wealthy Americans argue that the nation has tipped toward class warfare

Many wealthy Americans, from venture capitalist Tom Perkins to real estate billionaire Sam Zell, argue that the nation has tipped toward class warfare.

Major chasms also appeared in the tech hub of San Francisco, the financial center of New York, the seat of the federal government in Washington and the home of the entertainment industry in Los Angeles.

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee said in an editorial published Thursday that "working families cannot support themselves on the (city's) current minimum wage of $10.74 per hour" — already $3.49 above the federal minimum and 64 cents more than Obama's proposed increase. Lee has also announced plans to build and restore 10,000 homes for low and moderate-income families by 2020.

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

Booze

continued from page 1

from liquor stores on the Oregon border. While prices have decreased, off the shelf liquor prices in 2013 were still significantly higher than pre-privatization prices. For example, average price per liter of liquor in October of 2011, a month before the ballot vote, was $21.61. Two years later that average price was $24.12 – an 11 percent increase, according to date from the Department of Revenue.

This most recent possible price hike stems from the Liquor Control Board deciding in November that discounted volume sales of booze from distributors to bars and restaurants wasn't OK under the new law. The issue was brought to the board by former state contract stores, which weren't getting the discount prices restaurants were enjoying. The board, however, left a window for a legislative fix, recognizing that the so-called channel pricing works for distributors and restaurants.

"We weren't interested in another lawsuit over the issue," said Rick Garza, the state's Liquor Control Board director.

But so far this legislative session no action has been taken despite opposition to the proposed rule by bars and restaurants. If nothing happens, the board will move forward with its rulemaking, and drinks in bars and restaurants could see a price hike come April – as much as 15 percent, according to distributors. For their part, the Liquor Control Board doesn't expect a price hike.

The lack of bills, though, is not because of a lack of action from lawmakers. Instead, the lobbying group for bars and restaurants has decided not to seek a bill this session. They argue that the Liquor Control Board overstepped its authority with the ruling and plan to fight it – most likely in court and not fast enough to prevent a possible price hike if restaurants can't get volume discounts.

"We're heading into a collision," said Bruce Beckett, director of government affairs for the Washington Restaurant Association, which boasts thousands of members.

Distributors have also said they don't want to ask for a bill because it's a fight between two of their customers.

In Washington, more than 90 percent of distribution is controlled by two national giants, Young's Market Company and Southern Wine & Spirits. The distributors, which opposed the privatization initiative, are also playing defense on another bill, one being lobbied hard by restaurants and Costco.

The measure, Senate Bill 6220, would strip a 17 percent fee on liquor sales from grocers to restaurants and bars, which distributors see as a move by Costco into the distributing business, without the fees that came with it. Distributors, which have already paid $150 million in one-time fees to the state, say if the measure is approved, it would nullify millions of dollars in infrastructure investment and hundreds of jobs could be lost.

But grocers say the measure is about leveling the field.

The 17 percent fee on sales was stripped for former contract liquor stores by lawmakers last year. The Costco coalition says that's not fair for large retailers and bars. Restaurant representatives also said sometimes it's more convenient to buy from a retailer than wait for a delivery from a distributor, especially in rural areas.

"We would have the option to do delivery. But understand that we are grocery stores. We don't want to be distributors," said Holly Chisa, a lobbyist for the Northwest Grocery Association during a Senate panel testimony earlier this month.

They also argue that the language in the initiative didn't mean the 17 percent fee applied to sales from grocers to restaurant and bars. The Liquor Control Board thought otherwise and applied the 17 percent fee for these re-sales.

Phone and email messages to Costco and the Northwest Grocery Association were not returned.

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