

Guns

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a background check for purchases at gun shows. Like federal law, Washington law requires checks for sales or transfers by licensed dealers but not for purchases from private sellers, like those who sell at gun shows or to friends. So far, the National Rifle Association has kept a low profile. According to state records, the group has spent less

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than \$200,000 against the expansion initiative, a fraction of what has been spent by its proponents. The NRA hasn’t endorsed the opposing initiative. NRA spokesman Andrew Arulanandam wouldn’t address the lack of support for the anti-expansion measure, but said the group felt it was “more prudent” to put its resources toward defeating the background check expansion effort. Arulanandam said that the NRA has two people in Washington and is spending closer to double than what’s been reflected on grass-roots efforts in the state. “Our focus is to defeat an initiative that is extremely detrimental to the Second Amendment and extremely misleading to the people of Washington state,” he said.

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“Ms. Rosalind Brazel was recruited to the press secretary role as a former journalist. And while she brought years of experience to the role, the job of press secretary is unique among communications jobs – as any former press secretary can attest. It requires a rare combination of skills that, in many ways, can only be tested through the process of performing the role itself. There are countless examples of great reporters who have both succeeded and struggled when asked to serve as a press secretary. “Ms. Brazel is a talented communications professional and a hard worker who, at this point in her career, was not well-matched to the demands of the press secretary role, particularly for a brand new administration working to find its feet. This is neither a criticism of Ms. Brazel as a professional nor a commentary on her skills as a communi-

Better

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ity to deliver services depends on our funding,” she said. “So we are caught in this horrible dilemma of knowing we provide a very valuable service but we’re not able to pay staff. When people have economic difficulties, so do nonprofits.” Better People opened in 1998 to help former inmates overcome barriers to becoming productive stable members of society. People with a criminal history face barriers to finding work and housing when they are released. And people who have a felony in their background are banned from numerous work and housing opportunities. Better People’s program combines Moral Reconation Therapy—which seeks to help former inmates change negative thinking patterns and behavior – with employment assistance and support. The nonprofit helped persuade employers to give their clients a chance, and held events that raised community awareness about those barriers to success for former inmates. Program graduates say they gained new understanding and confidence.

‘Buddy Walk’



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Noah Richardson, 5, performed with the Ligwilda'xw Cultural Group from Campbell River BC before the start of the 20th Annual Down Syndrome Community Puget Sound Buddy Walk on Sunday, Oct. 5 at Seattle Center. Hundreds came out for the fundraiser, which benefits the Downs Syndrome Community of Puget Sound. Find out more about their work at www.downsyndromecommunity.org.

A poll conducted by independent pollster Stuart Elway this summer indicated strong support, 70 percent, among voters for expansion of background checks. When asked separately about the anti-expansion initiative, less than 50

percent indicated support. But 32 percent of respondents said they were inclined to vote for both.

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—Mayor Ed Murray

cator.” Brazel’s replacement, Jason Kelly, spent seven years as a spokesman for the Washington State Department of Agriculture; several short stints as a communications official or assistant spokesperson at the Washington State School Director’s Association, Port of Seattle, four months as Acting Deputy Communications Director for for-

mer Gov. Chris Gregoire; and has served on numerous boards and commissions, including two years on the Washington Beer Commission. Kelly started his career in Minnesota as deputy press secretary for US Sen. Paul Wellstone in the mid-1990s, and as press secretary for Rep. David Minge. Observers cite two alleged errors on

Brazel’s part as paving the way for her reassignment from the mayor’s office, including a draft press release praising passage of the Dream Act, sent out prematurely to the media and an incorrect press release announcing the death of a community leader who in fact was not deceased – rather a man with a similar name died. At the time, Brazel’s boss, Communications Director Jeff Reading, told the Seattle Times, “Dumb mistake on our part.” According to The Times, tort the claim says it was Reading who got the deceased man’s name wrong and that both he and Murray signed off on the press release before it went out.

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“This program gave me more than just a shot at some dead-end job. It gave me freedom from the shame I was carrying.”
Better People graduate Jason W.

“This program gave me more than just a shot at some dead-end job,” said program graduate Jason W. “It gave me freedom from the shame I was carrying. It gave me the chance to set down the burden of what other people thought of me. It gave me the opportunity to see myself in a new light. It also gave me the chance to look at how I was treating the people around me on an everyday basis.” According to the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Administration, Moral Reconation Therapy is based on solid research and has been successfully used as a 3-6 month program inside prison systems across the country. However, SAMHSA also found the program has struggled to find

a niche within the criminal justice system. In recent years Better People has been competing with some larger nonprofits that include prisoner re-entry programs among their services. Volunteers of America, for example, serves thousands of people every year, offering everything from housing and addictions treatment to domestic violence support services. Working with prisoners before, during and after their release from jail or prison, VOA claims a 70 percent success rate for its Inact reentry program which served 109 adults in 2013. And its CPR program has had similar success with young men incarcerated as teens. Mercy Corps has re-entry contracts with the

state’s Department of Corrections and helps about 135 people a year find work. Pathfinders of Oregon offers a behavior change program similar to Better People’s Moral Reconation Therapy. The agency also offers parenting classes, substance abuse treatment and youth and family counseling programs. But Pathfinders works with inmates before they are released from prison, which may make it easier for people to complete the program. Board members and former executive director Clariner Boston say they will be talking to other nonprofits and experts to get a clearer view of the big picture, as well as an idea of where to steer the program so it can be successful. And Belk says the board has not ruled out merging or partnering with other programs. Mercy Corps has donated office space so Boston can work with the agency’s remaining clients on a volunteer basis.

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