

Bar

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we will have a reason why, and it’s because there were so many barriers in our way.”

According to the OSB’s monthly statistics for October, most lawyers in the state remain White and male with over 7,600 identifying in those categories. Asians fol-

inspired her to press on.

Fabien’s story is honored in the new exhibit; she says she hopes her chronicle will serve as inspiration to others like her to consider law as a profession.

“[I’m happy] to be honored on the wall,

The problem lies not only in getting more Black students into law school, but keeping them here in the state to practice once they graduate

lowed a distant second with 374 practicing members, then Hispanics at 217, and Blacks at 103. It should be noted of the 15,192 surveyed for the month’s data, over 6,500 did not identify their race.

Marva Fabien recalls when the number of Black lawyers in the state of Oregon totaled only three, just decades ago. After receiving her doctorate from Lewis and Clark College law school in the early 1980’s, she became one of the first to take advantage of the OSB’s Affirmative Action Program which began in 1974. Though she says she experienced racism through her matriculation of the law system, a toughness instilled by her native Trinidad a passion for justice is what

which I hope survives at least my lifetime so that other people can see that, [they] can do it,” Fabien said.

OSB president, Tom Kranovich is hoping so too. Though he says the art piece he says represents progress the bar has made in the way of the legal system, he’s optimistic it will become a trend.

Though the number of minority lawyers in Oregon had been on a steady incline for since the 1970’s, recent data from the bar’s diversity and inclusion department shows that growth hitting a plateau since the early 2000’s.

Among ethnic groups in the state bar and others nationally, the low representation of



Nkenge and Erious Johnson at the Oregon State Bar’s unveiling of a new exhibit detailing the history of the state’s progress towards inclusion and equity in the field of law.

Black lawyers remains the most problematic, especially considering their overrepresentation in the prison system says Kranovich.

“It’s no secret that the incarceration rate in this country is seemingly disproportionate. I understand that the percentage of students getting kicked out of high school classes and stuff like that is significantly higher. I don’t know that having more Black lawyers would help—it wouldn’t hurt—because

maybe then people would be more inclined to go and hire a lawyer, and I think that’s the key thing about having diversity in the law.”

For Oregon, he says the problem lies not only in getting more Black students into law school, but keeping them here in the state to practice once they graduate.

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Safe-Haven

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who has their life together, telling them about the law,” Cowles said.

Reaching this younger audience involves youth-centered education which would use Twitter and Facebook social media platforms.

Both Dunn and Cowles spoke about the importance of a multi-cultural and multi-lingual outreach effort.

“All of our King County Elections, licens-

designated drop-off location such as an emergency department, a fire station, or a federally designated rural health facility. The newborn must be received by a qualified person like an employee, volunteer, or medical staff.

If the infant is unharmed from abuse or neglect, the parents are guaranteed anonymity and can’t be prosecuted for child abandonment.

‘What we are trying to do is find a way to save that child; try to find a safe place for it to be, to live and grow’

ing and license divisions are currently outreaching in different languages, the most frequently spoken; Russian, Chinese, for example,” Dunn said. “We would like to get these materials out in that way as well.”

The Safety of Newborn Children Law allows parents to relinquish newborns at a

The task force considered expanding options for relinquishing, but the current laws create a contradiction of confidentiality.

“It would be great to dial 9-1-1 and have someone pick up a child,” Cowles said.

Under the current law, the relinquished

newborn in designated drop-offs will be treated without the parent giving any identifying information, but calling 9-1-1 does not protect the confidentiality of parents. Legislative changes would need to be made to the Good Samaritan Law and 9-1-1 confidentiality statutes to expand drop-off location options.

The task force recommendations will be brought to council’s Law Justice, Health and Human Services Committee on Dec. 9 to be discussed and put to a vote.

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Law

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minor infractions. And research has found that being suspended even once in 9th grade doubles the chance a student will drop out.

Experts say that having more adults of color in schools is one way to help increase the graduation rate for students of color. But most Oregon schools don’t have a

not on the list.

Portland Public Schools security manager, John Payne worked as a police officer for 19 years and in the District Attorney’s office for 7 years. Payne says he uses discretion with crimes such as domestic abuse or drug convictions. If a conviction is old and the

While schools are crying out for adult volunteers and mentors of color, the Forever Crimes law is keeping Black workers and family members out of schools

diverse teaching staff, even as students of color are becoming the majority in many districts.

But while schools are crying out for adult volunteers and mentors of color, the Forever Crimes law is keeping Black workers and family members out of schools. Some parents won’t even attempt to volunteer because they are afraid of failing the background check – even if their old offenses are

person comes with good reports from the school principal, it won’t be a problem, he says.

With Forever Crimes, Payne has no discretion however. And he believes that inability to look at people on a case by case basis, is unfair.

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