

Medal

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Johnson and others with the country's highest honor; The Croix de Guerre with star and palm.

In 2010 The Skanner News helped launch a campaign to ensure this war hero received recognition. Our first article

This award at long last pays proper tribute to a true American hero who served our country so bravely despite the prejudice he and countless others endured at the time in the military as well as at home

was *Courage Comes in Every Color* grabbed the attention of Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish.

Fish's grandfather commanded the Harlem Hellfighters, Johnson's regiment. Since then, the campaign has gained momentum thanks to the efforts of Commissioner Fish, Oregon Sen Ron Wyden, former New York State Rep. Joe DiGuardi, New York Sen. Charles Schumer and veterans groups.

Here's Sen. Ron Wyden's Statement on Sgt. Henry Johnson's Medal of Honor:

Washington, D.C. – Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., today issued the following statement after the announcement that Sgt. Henry Johnson would posthumously receive the Medal of Honor:

"I am thrilled that Sergeant Johnson has finally received his long overdue Medal of Honor for his heroism in World

National Guard Re-Deployed



Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, and Maj. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, Adjutant General, Oregon, thank the airmen of the 142nd Security Forces Squadron following the unit's mobilization ceremony held at the Portland Air National Guard Base on May 15.

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. EMILY THOMPSON, 142ND FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS/RELEASED

War I. This award at long last pays proper tribute to a true American hero who served our country so bravely despite the prejudice he and countless others endured at the time in the military as well as at home.

He's truly distinguished himself and this honor could not be any more well-deserved."

The administration announced that President Obama will award the Medal of Honor posthumously to Sergeant (then Private) Henry Johnson and present the honor to a representative from the New York National Guard on June 2.

Election

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Portland State University professor Julie Esparza Brown – the first Latina ever to serve on the PPS board — won the Zone 1 director slot on the board of Portland Public Schools, taking 77.49 percent of the vote against Andrew E. Davidson.

Paul D. Anthony got 53.97 percent of votes for zone 2 director of Portland Public Schools, sealing his victory in a race with three opponents. Jose Gonzalez finished with 28.43 percent of votes. Emma Russac Williams received 11.45 percent of votes and John Sweeney got 5.72 percent of votes. Anthony is the CFO for Shannon

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director of PHAME Academy, which pro-

vides arts education for people with disabilities, will step into the position 6 director seat for the Multnomah Education Service District. He received 54.65 percent of votes. He defeated Doug Montgomery (34.72 percent of votes) and Colby Ross Clipston (9.58 percent).

Siobhan Burke, a special education services provider and former union organizer defeated Kay L. Bridges handily in the race for Position 7, Zone 3 director of the MESD. The lion's share of voters – 74.49 percent, or 11,526 – cast their ballots for Burke.

Box

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according to a 2010 study published in the academic journal, *Justice Quarterly*.

Ban the box policies may also foster economic growth: another 2010 study estimated a loss of \$57 to \$65 million dollars to the U.S. economy due to unemployment and underemployment of ex-offenders.

The group of Senators sent President Obama a letter asking him to issue an executive order that would bar federal contractors from asking about criminal histories until later in the hiring process.

The letter stated, "Our nation's legal and moral underpinnings provide that anyone who makes a mistake and learns from it deserves a second chance. Those who have accepted the consequences of their actions and who have paid the price for their past transgressions should have the opportunity to re-enter the workplace."

Fair chance hiring policies don't compel employers to hire ex-convicts. Hiring directors maintain the right to employ the most qualified candidate – and employers are still able to use background checks to vet poten-

tial employees.

Most jurisdictions with extant Ban the Box laws require employers to wait until after an interview, or until they've extended a conditional offer, to investigate a job candidate's background. These laws also exempt positions where criminal history is considered relevant to the position.

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The proposed executive action would align federal hiring policies with local and state rules. Over 100 cities and counties and 16 states have passed these restrictions, including Multnomah County, the City of Portland and the City of Seattle.

The Oregon legislature is considering a

house bill that would make the policy apply statewide. The bill, HB 3025, passed the house by a 33-27 vote and has moved on to the State Senate.

In addition to these city and state laws, private sector businesses have banned the box as well. Large retail employers Walmart, Target, Bed, Bath & Beyond and

Home Depot have all stopped asking about criminal records on their job applications.

According to U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley, banning the box would fix flawed hiring practices.

"For the over 70 million Americans who have criminal histories, the current hiring

process in America is broken. If these Americans have accepted their past actions and paid the price for those transgressions, they shouldn't face unreasonable barriers to reentering the workplace," Merkley said. "That's why I'm calling on the President to take action and require all federal contractors and agencies to "Ban the Box" and refrain from asking job applicants about their criminal history until later in the hiring process."

In addition to Merkley, Murray, Wyden, and Presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders, the other signing Senators are: Cory Booker (NJ), Sherrod Brown (OH), Sheldon Whitehouse (RI), Chris Murphy (CT), Chris Coons (DE), Dick Durbin (IL), Al Franken (MN), Ed Markey (MA), Tim Kaine (VA), Patrick Leahy (VT), Mazie Hirono (HI), Tammy Baldwin (WI), Mark Warner (VA), Kirsten Gillibrand (NY), Richard Blumenthal (CT), Elizabeth Warren (MA), Tom Udall (NM), Tom Carper (DE), Ben Cardin (MD), Jack Reed (RI), Joe Manchin (WV), Amy Klobuchar (MN) and Brian Schatz (HI).