

Blumenauer

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for reforms to both drug policy and criminal justice system, particularly in communities of color.

Since last year's protests in Ferguson,

services.

Right now banks won't do business with marijuana-related businesses since the drug is still federally illegal, though the Obama

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Mo., following the killing of an unarmed Black teenager by police, Blumenauer said more policymakers and members of the public are aware of "grotesque disparities in criminal justice." He feels conversations around criminal justice and race are changing.

Nationwide, he noted, African American youth are still four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana, though surveys on youth drug use show they are no more likely to use it. Arrest numbers are still twice as high, he said, "even in enlightened Oregon."

He hopes to see more minority participation in the legal cannabis industry, and has begun work introducing legislation to make it easier to expunge marijuana offenses.

"There are people who are now in jail for things that are going to be legal," he said.

He's also pushing to make sure the industry is fairly taxed and has access to banking

administration has said it will not interfere in jurisdictions where voters have made it legal for recreational use.

Blumenauer has also been a supporter of implementing Ban the Box laws at a federal level, which prohibits employers from requiring that job applicants disclose their criminal history upfront.

Asked why the Koch Brothers are pushing for some criminal justice reforms, he said, "I know a lot of genuinely conservative people who think sentences are too long." Not only does it tie up inmates' lives but the taxpayer foots the bill for extended sentences – including health care for aging inmates.

"I'm more encouraged than I've been in 20 years," he said.

Blumenauer is concerned that funding for the Veterans Administration hasn't scaled up in proportion to the number of troops sent to Iraq and Afghanistan in the last decade and



Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Portland) visited *The Skanner News* last week to discuss the upcoming presidential race, as well as his work on infrastructure, job creation and criminal justice.

a half, resulting in an epidemic of suicides among veterans, necessitating an increase in mental health funding for vets, as well as a need for housing.

"We make it harder than it should be [to return from combat]," he said. "We need to help veterans reintegrate into the community."

Drilling

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in Washington, D.C.

Over the summer, Greenpeace protested drilling by boarding a Shell vessel as it crossed the Pacific. The group helped organize on-the-water demonstrations in Seattle by "kayaktivists" in kayaks. Protesters with climbing gear hung suspended from a bridge in Portland, Oregon, to briefly delay a Shell support vessel from departing for the Chukchi Sea.

"I think the activism played a huge role and probably a bigger one than Shell is going to admit," Sharp said.

Greenpeace remains opposed to Arctic offshore oil development and will turn its attention to other Alaska leases and potential drilling in other countries, she said.

"We don't want to get too confident and assume no company is going to move forward," she said.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that American Arctic waters hold 26 billion barrels of conventionally recoverable oil.

That's considerably more than the 17 billion barrels of crude that moved through the trans-Alaska pipeline from 1977 through 2014.

Miyoko Sakashita, oceans director

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for the Center for Biological Diversity, said Shell's experience and public pressure may serve as a warning message to other companies. However, Arctic offshore drilling is by no means over.

The Department of Interior continues to evaluate Arctic-specific exploratory drilling regulations. The leases that allow oil companies to explore for crude run through 2017 in the Beaufort Sea and through 2020 in the Chukchi Sea, and corporations have sought extensions.

Arctic waters continue to be part of President Barack Obama's "all-of-the-above" energy strategy, which embraces a wide range of sources, from oil and natural gas to renewables such as wind and solar power.

Depending on interest by petroleum companies, the Interior Department could hold lease sales in Arctic waters in 2016 and 2017.

Both the Chukchi and the Beaufort seas could be included in the federal government's next five-year plan for offshore leases, which covers leasing through 2022.

Environmental groups are also lining up to oppose a proposed Beaufort Sea project 19 miles east of Prudhoe Bay. HilCorp Alaska LLC has applied to build a 9-acre arti-

cial island in 20 feet of water about 6 miles off shore to tap into 150 million barrels of crude oil.

Shell's decision ended hope that within a decade or so Arctic offshore oil could help replenish the trans-Alaska pipeline. Alaska Gov. Bill Walker, a Republican-turned-independent, said the state must find ways to address Alaska's multi-billion dollar budget gap between income and spending.

"If it's not going to come offshore, let's safely develop it from onshore," he said.

He will lobby Obama to not only extend offshore leases but to open reserves on land now closed, such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, he said. Congress in the 1990s voted to open part of the refuge. President Bill Clinton vetoed the measure.

"So I'm going to start with the person with the veto authority and start with that," Walker said. "I'm going to work from the top down."

MacLaren

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sic carpentry equipment. The new program includes a virtual welding education tool, a machine shop and an automotive repair program.

Over the past six months there has been an investment of \$750,000 to purchase the new machinery and tools. Superintendent Dan Berger said shifting demographics from underage young inmates to older high school graduates, prompted this change.

"It's more than just coming here and learning how to weld. These kids can walk out of here with community college certificates in welding, automotive and as a machinist," Berger said. "They'll walk out of here with credentials to enter the job market for family-wage jobs."

Enrollment in the vocational school has quadrupled. There used to be room for about 20 students. Now they have 80 slots, and they are all full.

The school is part of a four-fold plan to

reduce recidivism among youth offenders. Key investments include therapy and life skills training, education, vocational training and the fostering of social bonds.

OYA officials estimate that every dollar

'They'll walk out of here with credentials to enter the job market for family-wage jobs'

invested pays \$25 back to society as the youth works, pays taxes and contributes to the economy.

The welding education tool allows teachers to train youth in a virtual environment without wasting resources on trial and error. The tool also trains for multiple types of welding including MIG, TIG and stick welding, allowing youth to gain multiple certifications in a short period of time.

Principal Michael Conn said MacLaren

pays for its students' certification exams even if the students don't pass the exam. He said these tests can cost \$300-\$400 each outside the institution.

When the OYA began planning for the

new facilities, they asked the youth what kind of skills they would like to learn. Conn said an overwhelming majority of students wanted to learn auto repair.

OYA partnered with the Snap-on Tool Company to create an auto repair program that covers small engine repairs, basic auto engine repairs, brake system service, electrical systems and steering and suspension. Youth who complete these courses will earn an Automotive Services Excellence certifi-

cation.

During an open house tour of Moody, The Skanner News saw a demonstration of the new machine shop. Blueprints were fed into a Computerized Numeric Control Router and the new tool sawed large planks of plywood into perfectly cut dog house walls.

The youth supply these insulated doghouses for their partner organization, Fences for Fido. The non-profit builds fences for dogs that live outside, are confined to small pens or are chained up.

Previously, it would take over 100 minutes to cut the plywood into dog house walls; the new machine gets the job done in less than 10 minutes.

The computer-aided design classroom works together with the machine shop to teach youth 3-D design.

From these designs, they can run instruments like the CNC router as well as electronic mills and lathes.