



MAY DAY



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Hundreds of people marched in the annual May Day March on May 1 in Seattle. Marchers walked from Judkins Park to The Federal Courthouse to show their solidarity with immigrants and workers around the world.

ACLU report finds ‘Roadblocks to Reform’ Report notes district attorney races in Oregon are rarely contested

By Arashi Young
Of The Skanner News

The ACLU of Oregon recently released a report, “Roadblocks to Reform,” which details the extensive influence of district attorneys, the highest ranking prosecutors.

In each county, the district attorney manages the staff of prosecutors who have the power to file criminal charges, bring evidence to grand juries and determine when an alleged crime falls under mandatory minimum sentencing.

David Rogers, the executive director of the ACLU of Oregon said Oregonians don’t see district attorneys as accountable publicly elected officers — and believes that needs to change.

“We need to... create mechanisms for the public to engage the district attorneys as the elected officials that they are,” Rogers said.

The report studied district attorney elections in Oregon from 2004 to 2014, covering six election cycles. During this period of time there were 111 DA races, but only 24 of these elections were contested.

Nearly eight out of every 10 district attorneys faced no opposition on the ballot.

New district attorneys are also appointed by the governor when the previous DA retires. Seventeen of the 36 acting DAs were initially appointed by a governor. Most of these appointments are assistant district attorneys who have been working with previous DA. The report questions whether this promoting from within keeps the office from embracing criminal justice reforms.

Rogers told *The Skanner*

News that district attorneys have the power to influence racial disparities in the criminal justice system through their use of mandatory minimum sentencing and the prosecution of low-level crimes.

With the increased use of mandatory minimum sentences, there has been a corresponding rise in the amount of plea bargains used by defendants to avoid the worst case scenario of the mandatory minimum. According to Rogers, nearly 90 percent

See ACLU on page 3

Crime, Bullying Decreased in Nation’s Schools in 2014

Government snapshot says crime in K-12 schools and on college campuses is down, security up

By Carole Feldman and
Jennifer C. Kerr
Associated Press

WASHINGTON— The latest government snapshot of school crime paints a picture of safer schools with declines in violent crime, bullying and harassment because of sexual orientation.

Still, about 3 percent of students ages 12 to 18 said they were victims

of crimes at school in 2014. About 1.3 million students were suspended for at least one full school day for alcohol violations, violence or weapons possession.

Middle school students were more likely to be bullied than high school or elementary school students, said the report, released Wednesday by the National Center for Education Statistics and the Justice Department.

See SCHOOLS on page 3



AP PHOTO/RICK BOWMER FILE

In this Aug. 29, 2010, file photo, a security camera hangs on the side of the Skyline School in Portland. The latest government snapshot of school crime shows declines in violent crime, bullying and harassment. About 75 percent of schools used security cameras during the 2013-2014 school year and more than 9 in 10 controlled access to their buildings.



PHOTO BY ALACHUA COUNTY (CC BY 2.0) VIA FLICKR

The unemployment gap between Black and White Oregonians appears to have shrunk since the worst part of the recession — but the extent to which Black residents are benefitting from the current economic boom is not clear.

Racial Employment Gap Shrinks

Data paint a mixed picture of how Black Oregonians are faring in current economic boom

By Christen McCurdy
Of The Skanner News

Statewide unemployment is down — and the gap in rates of employment between White and Black workers in Oregon appears to be shrinking. But advocates say there’s still work to do.

According to Gail Krumenauer, senior economic analyst for the Oregon Employment Department’s research division, unemployment among Black Oregonians in 2015 was 7.4 percent, versus 5.7 percent among Whites and 6.5 percent among Latinos. But both un-

See EMPLOYMENT on page 3



AP PHOTO/KHALIL HAMRA

Poor sewage has damaged Gaza’s limited fresh water supplies, affecting Israel as well, where a nearby desalination plant was forced to shut down, apparently due to pollution.

Mideast Gaza Sewage Crisis

page 9

**Kam Williams
Reviews ‘Keanu’**

page 7