

# THE Skanner

Challenging People to Shape  
a Better Future Now

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# Opinion

FROM THE PUBLISHER:

## Who's Responsible for County Commissioners?

In light of Multnomah County's investigation into Loretta Smith, I'd like to point to the county's charter (BELOW) which states that the Chair (Kafoury) of the Board: "Shall have sole authority to appoint, order, direct and discharge administrative officers and employees of the county, except for the personal staff, employees or agents of elective county offices."

Ms. Smith is an elected county official that represents District 2. She cannot be dis-

Bernie Foster  
Publisher

charged by the Chair, only by recall petition. **So we'd like to hear what our readers think.**

Comment on the story at [www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/25330-commissioner-smith-files-claim-against-multnomah-county](http://www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/25330-commissioner-smith-files-claim-against-multnomah-county). Comment on Facebook or Twitter @theskanner.com.

### CHAPTER VI. ADMINISTRATION

- 6.10. Chair Of The Board.
- 6.20. Administrative Departments And Functions.
- 6.50. Sheriff.

#### 6.10. Chair Of The Board.

The chair of the board of county commissioners:

- (1) Shall be the chief executive officer and personnel officer of the county;
- (2) Shall preside over meetings of the board and have a vote on each matter before the board;
- (3) Shall have sole authority to appoint, order, direct and discharge administrative officers and employees of the county, except for the personal staff, employees or agents of elective county offices. Appointment of department heads shall be subject to consent of a majority of the board of commissioners;

Page 13 of the Multnomah County Home Rule Charter



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#SkNews

## Famine in Africa: Will Trump Act?

As you read this, our world stands at a crossroads. As you read this, 20 million people stand at risk of starvation at the hands of what has the potential to become the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II; famine in South Sudan and impending famine in Northeast Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen. Our country has a moral responsibility to address this issue head on.

For famine to be declared, two children younger than five years old in every 10,000 people have to die due to malnutrition and one in five families have to have insufficient food to sustain themselves. Waiting for famine to be declared to act means you're already too late.

Famine has already been declared in South Sudan, where hunger is expected to spread to 40 percent of the country's population in the absence of humanitarian aid. The country's man-made famine is a result of violent conflict in vast swaths of the country. Despite promises of access for relief efforts to these areas by



Karen Bass  
State Rep.  
D-Calif

the South Sudanese government, humanitarian organizations remain unable to gain access to provide urgent vital assistance in the form of food, water and shelter in many locations.

Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen are all on the brink of

**“In Northeast Nigeria, terrorism by Boko Haram has resulted in widespread displacement and a growing humanitarian crisis**

having famine declared. More than half of Somalia's total population of 12.3 million are experiencing acute food insecurity and are on the brink of death from starvation as a result of drought. Due to conflict with Al-Shabaab terrorists, humanitarian access remains an obstacle in providing the

country's 6.2 million people experiencing acute food insecurity with the aid that they desperately need.

In Northeast Nigeria, terrorism by Boko Haram has resulted in widespread displacement and a growing humanitarian crisis. Over 50,000 people in the region are at risk of famine. In addition, counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram by the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno states have led to population displacement, limited access

for relief efforts and have prevented farmers from accessing their fields, leading to significantly below-average harvests.

In Yemen, agriculture production has drastically declined due to conflict, insecurity, high costs, and sporadic availability of agricultural in-

puts. Two years of escalating conflict have left 18.8 million Yemenis in need of some kind of humanitarian or protection support. Seven million women, children, and men could risk famine in 2017.

In each country, whether it's existing famine in South Sudan or the brink of famine in Somalia, Nigeria, or Yemen, the particularly disastrous characteristic is that these situations are either caused or exacerbated by man-made crisis.

You wouldn't know that this was occurring though – other than a largely lackluster statement about South Sudan on "Face the Nation" in early April by Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, the Administration has been quiet about the impending disaster in Africa and Yemen. When asked about the implications of the Administration's budget proposal, Ambassador Haley called for "smarter spending" when it comes to foreign and humanitarian aid.

Read the rest of this commentary at [TheSkanner.com](http://TheSkanner.com)

## Flat Funding for HBCUs Is a Win

My job is to promote the interests of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities. So naturally I was concerned when I heard earlier this year that the new Trump administration was planning to propose increasing defense spending by \$54 billion and slashing nonmilitary spending by an equal amount.

That's when the HBCU presidents, chancellors, and I decided to roll up our sleeves and get to work engaging the Trump Administration and the Republican-controlled 115th Congress to fight and protect our interests. It paid off: In late February, after weeks of meetings and phone calls with administration officials, more than 70 HBCU leaders and I attended a listening session with top Ad-



Johnny C. Taylor  
NNPA Guest  
Columnist

ministration officials, and a dozen returned the next day for a signing ceremony event at the White House, where President Trump signed an executive order recognizing

**“We must seek an open dialogue that transcends partisan lines to ensure access to quality higher education**

the importance of our institutions. A few weeks later, the administration released its budget blueprint, which called for maintaining federal HBCU spending at current

levels. Let me be clear: flat spending for HBCUs in a president's budget that calls for a 13 percent funding decrease to the Department of Education is a win!

It's clear that this Administration understands the value of HBCUs, which educate nearly 300,000 students a year, award three-quarters of all doctorates earned by African Americans and provided the undergraduate degrees of 80 percent of black federal

judges. Not everyone is happy though—some are critical of President Trump because they believe he should have significantly increased the

budget for HBCUs. Such notions are naïve in the current political environment in Washington, now run by Republicans who've vowed to reduce the size of government.

There are some other important things to remember: First, the President makes a "budget request" while the Congress has to ultimately authorize and appropriate the funding for the actual budget. The HBCU community is working to ensure the Pres-

ident's final budget request scheduled to be released in May protects HBCU funding.

Read the rest of this commentary at [TheSkanner.com](http://TheSkanner.com)