

# THE Skanner®

Challenging People to Shape  
a Better Future Now

Bernie Foster  
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Bobbie Dore Foster  
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Christen McCurdy  
News Editor

Patricia Irvin  
Graphic Designer

Monica J. Foster  
Seattle Office Coordinator

Susan Fried  
Photographer



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415 N. Killingsworth St.  
P.O. Box 5455  
Portland, OR 97228

Telephone (503) 285-5555  
Fax: (503) 285-2900

info@theskanner.com

www.TheSkanner.com

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# Opinion

## Consider Applying for the PCCEP – Portland Needs You

Portlanders have strong feelings about the Portland Police Bureau (PPB). We know this from the emotionally-charged demonstrations that overwhelmed downtown Portland in the last two years. We know this because of the quick dismissal of platitudes and empty reassurances from the PPB about the progress it is making.

There are many people who haven't been happy for a long time, if ever, with how the police function here. Black and brown communities have especially been negatively impacted by police policies and behaviors. PPB has a dismal record in terms of fatal shootings by officers, racial profiling and police stops of citizens of color, particularly African Americans. Police response varies depending on the color of your skin, where you live, and whether you are perceived to have a mental illness.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) findings don't appear to have had any impact on community outcomes thus far. The term "community policing" is used often – and with the hiring of Chief Danielle Outlaw, I recognize that PPB has a renewed focus on what this means for the organization and Portlanders – but I'm not yet convinced that there is any policy or philoso-



Dr. Cynthia Fowler

PCCEP  
Selection  
Advisory  
Committee

phy that could fundamentally address the schism between law enforcement and marginalized communities in our city.

I imagine that there could be many ways to change PPB's behavior, but I'm convinced that community members need to have a lot more input

“Impacted communities deserve the space to speak their own truths

into how policing happens in this city for things to improve.

The PCCEP (Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing) creates an independent citizen board that would exist beyond the life of the Settlement Agreement. Notably, the PCCEP has been given the authority to demand review of critical PPB policies, in addition to contributing to the development of the community engage-

ment plan.

### Why should you apply for PCCEP?

We know that someone will sit on this committee—why not you? The very communities that are most impacted by bad policing are usually not in the room when policies are developed. This is your chance to not just be in the room—but to get a seat at the table. The PCCEP needs those who are typically left out of discussions and not heard—the poor, people of color, the mentally ill, and youth—to apply for and sit on this committee. Impacted communities deserve the space to speak their own truths because they are the most qualified to do so. Whatever impact the PCCEP can have on policy development will be felt most strongly in these same communities. Think about how your work could even save the life of someone you care about.

This is a chance for your ideas about what community policing should look like to be reflected in actual policies. We want to attract passionate people who care about what is happening in our city. People with lived experience through their interactions with PPB and those who are unhappy with policing in Portland are encouraged to apply. This committee needs to function as a real voice that

will speak the truth about policing and how issues of bias, racism, power, the systematic devaluation of non-white lives, and a lack of empathy affect how police interact with communities. Now, I'm aware enough to know that the problems with law enforcement are a reflection of the larger systemic issues within American institutions – policing is an extension of what has insidiously woven itself into the fabric of this country over generations. We have to attack systemic injustice at as many points as possible and in as many ways as we can. The PCCEP is one of the ways that an informed, motivated, and diverse group of Portlanders can try to set PPB on a better path.

PCCEP members must be at least 16 years old and live, work, worship, and/or go to school in Portland. The time commitment is a minimum of 8 hours per month. Meetings will be in the evening and will be catered. Members will receive a stipend for their participation. PCCEP applications are due Monday, July 2. You can fill out an online version of the application, print an application from the Mayor's website, pick up a hard copy at the Mayor's Office, or call Mandi Hood at 503-319-7736 to request a paper copy by mail.

## NAACP on the Front Lines: Trump's War Against Civil Rights

BALTIMORE – Recently, the NAACP, alongside members of the Congressional Black Caucus, gathered on the steps of Capitol Hill to demand a halt of the Trump administration's continued attempts to force Thomas Farr—a known racist with ties to the late segregationist Senator Jesse Helms—into the federal judgeship of North Carolina.

Located in eastern North Carolina, this federal district under this judgeship has one of the highest densities of African American voters than any other part of the state, making Farr one of the worst possible candidates that could be considered. Sadly, instead of representing an anomaly, Farr instead represents the archetype for federal judge nominees put forth by the Trump Administration. Whether it's nominees that refuse to publicly support the *Brown v. Board* decision that desegregated our public schools or individuals with ties to known racist organizations, what we are seeing are people whose attitudes reflect norms more associated with the era of Jim Crow than our time.

It cannot be ignored that Trump's White House is engaged in none other than a war against civil rights. Though this is a battle we had



Derrick Johnson

NNPA  
President &  
CEO

hoped to have ended by now, it is not a fight we are afraid of nor is it one we will lose. We have waged war against the foes of civil rights for over 109 years. We fought hard against the nomination of Senator Jeff Sessions to the office of Attorney General and we will continue to fight against Trump's nearly all-white and mostly male federal judge nominees. Mr. Sessions' redirection of the Department of Justice (DOJ) away from its civil rights commitment under the Obama Administration to an agency that condones police brutality and other racially based injustices is hardly surprising. We knew he would push the DOJ to withdraw its support for our legal cases against voter suppression and he did. The simple point is that these moves against civil rights cannot be divorced from his boss—President Trump.

Over the past few months, the NAACP has sued the Trump administration on its failure to properly prepare

for Census2020. This failure to prepare for the Census means that communities of color, including wealthy communities like Prince Georges County, Maryland, our partner in the lawsuit, will likely be once again undercounted. When this happens, our communities lose out on political representation, federal dol-

“It is not a fight we are afraid of nor is it one we will lose

lars, and resources that are rightfully ours. We've also taken the fight to this administration on the decision by Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos and the Department of Education to basically throw civil rights under the bus and arbitrarily determine that the department no longer has to investigate complaints of discrimination in our schools. We are also committed to ensuring that DeVos plans for privatization, plans that would destroy our public-school system, never come to completion.

There is a direct correlation between the racism emanating from the White House and the expansion of attacks

on the humanity of persons of color. This is clear not only from Trump's poisonous rhetoric that disparages people, cultures, and nations, but also in the policies that emanate from his office.

The infection of blatant racist speech and behavior began the day after Trump was elected and it has continued to spread, giving inspiration to closet bigots and encouraging implicit and explicit racial biases that pervade from the golf course to the coffee shop and every space in between.

During our 109th Annual Convention July 14-18 in San Antonio, Texas, the NAACP will bring together some of our nation's most brilliant minds, activists, and legislators, as well as powerful voices from the hip-hop community to map out the agenda for moving forward. Our goal is to unite our voices into a powerful symphony that resonates with communities of color and inspires them to join us in standing against government-sponsored hate. This year's theme is simply "Defeat Hate – Vote."

Trump's refusal to address the nation's premier civil rights organization and its hundreds of thousands of advocates is, by default, a refusal to speak to the entirety of the Black Community.