

## Parkland cont'd from pg 1

talk about it, you're not part of the political conversation."

Democrats are increasingly emboldened to embrace gun control as the anniversary of America's deadliest mass shooting at a high school approaches on Thursday. The shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Flor-

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ida, killed 17 students and staff members and roused a group of young activists who sought to make gun violence a generational issue for younger voters.

Since then, Democrats say they're buoyed by their success in last year's midterms. The party won back the House of Representatives, fueled by victories in several competitive, suburban swing districts where candidates highlighted gun control.

Lucy McBath, who became a gun control activist after her 17-year-old son was shot to death at a gas station in 2012, won a suburban Atlanta congressional district that had long been held by the GOP. Jason Crow, a former Army Ranger, ousted the Republican congressman and gun rights supporter who represented the district where the Aurora theater shooting happened outside Denver in 2012. Even in Republican-dominated Texas, backing gun control didn't stop Democrats from flipping a suburban Houston seat to their column.

AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of the Amer-

ican electorate, found 8 percent of midterm voters across the country called gun policy the top issue facing the nation. They broke for Democrats over Republicans by more than 4 to 1.

"The primary thing that's shifted in the politics of this issue is voter intensity was on their side. It's now on ours," said Peter Ambler, executive director of the gun control group founded by former Rep. Gabby Giffords after she was injured in a 2011 mass shooting.

Giffords' husband, Mark Kelly, said Tuesday that he would run as a Democrat for Arizona's Senate seat next year, suggesting that gun control won't soon fade from the campaign trail.

Democratic bullishness on guns is reflected by the unanimity in its sprawling presidential field on the issue. Presidential aspirants who once took a more moderate stance and opposed elements of gun control, such as Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, have now embraced the cause. And the most prominent potential moderates in the Democratic field, former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Vice President Joe Biden, are longtime gun control advocates.

But there's no guarantee the Democrats' leftward turn on guns will help them recreate their 2018 victory during the 2020 presidential election, which will take place on different terrain than the diverse, educated suburbs where Democrats performed best in November. Democrats will have to win more rural, whiter states to defeat Republican Donald Trump in the Electoral College in 2020. Florida will again play a crucial role, and Democrats lost major races there last year despite being the location of the Parkland shooting.

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

## OSU cont'd from pg 1

from students in the communities represented. "We still have so many problems it's unbelievable, but it helps if students know there's a place for them that's special," Ray told *The Skanner*.

- All cultural centers include a large gathering room for events. The Lonnie B. Harris Cultural Center hosts a monthly Soul Food Sunday, Alexander said, and she typically cooks.

- Between 2014 and 2018, the number of African American faculty and staff has increased by 15 percent, Alexander

said.

- More than 25 percent of students at OSU are students of color, Ray said in his address.

The six-year graduation rate for all students is 68 percent. For students from underrepresented groups, that number is 58 percent. The university has set a goal of closing that gap, and has set a target of 70 percent six-year graduation rate and a 90 percent one-year retention rate for all students. "The work around retention is both ac-

ademic and social," said OSU president Steve Clark.

"Together we are working really hard to have an impact and change - to change the narrative about OSU, what OSU offers and the kind of community that we're trying to build at OSU for our students. We're spending a lot more time in our schools. We're having students coming to our campus to kind of learn about the OSU experience and I'm really excited about where we're heading."



## Trail Blazers Honor Trail Blazers

On Feb. 5, in honor of Black History Month, the Portland Trail Blazers recognized six leaders representing a new era of ground-breaking firsts for the city of Portland and state of Oregon. Each honoree was the first African American to hold the leadership position for the institution they now represent. Pictured here with a special game day poster are Dr. Miles Davis, the first African American President of Linfield College (left), Michelle J. DePass, first African American President and CEO of Meyer Memorial Trust; Jo Ann Hardesty, first African American woman elected to the Portland City Council; Dr. Danny Jacobs, first African American president of Oregon Health & Sciences University; Justice Adrienne Nelson, first African American Supreme Court Justice; Chief Danielle Outlaw, Portland's First African American woman chief of police.

## City Club cont'd from pg 1

one selected by the mayor and approved by the city council - with relevant training and experience;

- Stop electing city council members in at-large elections and switch to district-based elections, ideally with multiple commissioners per district;
- Increase the size of the city council to at least eight commissioners, plus the mayor;
- Explore alternative systems of voting.

"I sometimes hear people say that Portland is weird, so it's government should be weird," said Amanda Manjarrez, vice-chair of the research committee, in a City Club press release. "But it's not 'weird.' It's deeply inequitable."

The report argues that Portland's current form of government is outdated for two reasons. First, the city was much smaller when it adopted the commission form of government in 1913 - 200,000 versus 639,000 - meaning the five commissioners each serve a larger number of constituents. It notes that with fewer exceptions, cities with similar populations have larger councils than Portland.

The other reason Portland's city commission system is out of date, the report argues, is that it's rooted in racism.

"While not generally discussed in public, there was another motivation for some cities preferring the commission system with its

at-large voting system. As federal courts later found, in some jurisdictions racism was a motivating factor: electing commissioners citywide prevented individual wards or districts with majority African American populations

**“The report argues that Portland’s current form of government is outdated**

from electing their own favored candidate and greatly decreased the likelihood that minority candidates could be successful in any campaign," the report notes. In one landmark case, the Supreme Court found that at-large voting systems "tend to minimize the voting strength of minority groups by permitting the political majority to elect all representatives of the district."

Researchers also found that the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 led to a "precipitous decline" in the number of cities using the commission system, as federal courts ruled that at-large voting meant ethnic minorities were systematically underrepresented on commissions.

The report begins by noting the uniqueness of Portland's commission system among American cities of comparable or larger size. Citing the National League of Cities, it says a large majority

of cities in the United States, are governed either by a strong mayor/city council form of government, or a city council/city manager form. "Among cities with a population over 100,000, roughly 55 percent have selected the city council/manager system, and roughly 34 percent use a strong mayor/city council system. The National League of Cities also notes that strong mayor/city council form is 'found mostly, but not exclusively, in older, larger cities or in very small cities.'"

"Most cities that once had the commission form of government differed from Portland's system in that commissioners ran for office and were elected to oversee specific parts or bureaus of the city government. Someone would run, for example, to become Commissioner of Public Works, and then serve in that position, running the water and sewer agencies while in office," the report reads. Portland's system is different because the mayor assigns bureaus to commissioners - and often, cities with a commission form of government don't have an elected mayor. Instead, one commissioner is appointed chairman or mayor, with the principal role of chairing meetings. Portland is among a small number of commission-government cities to have an elected mayor with the authority to assign or withdraw executive responsibilities from other commissioners.



OSU president Ed Ray, vice president of diversity and inclusion Charlene Alexander and spokesperson Steve Clark visited The Skanner News last week following Ray's State of the University address.