



OREGON COMMISSION ON BLACK AFFAIRS

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

**SERVING THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN OREGON
SINCE 1983**

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Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

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February 15, 2013

To the Governor, Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly:

On behalf of the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs, I am proud to submit this report. The report will serve as both a summary of the work accomplished by the Commission during the last biennium as well as an introduction to our goals for the 2013-2015 one.

The past biennium had challenges for the OCBA but throughout the Commission remained focused on issues of equitable treatment for African Americans statewide in our strategic priority areas of education, economics, health care and justice.

The Commission also worked more closely with its sister Advocacy Commissions on joint advocacy, internship and community outreach which included a joint presentation to the City Club of Portland outlining our work together. Nowhere was this partnership more evident than in our work with Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA) on a law internship researching hate crime protections in the state, how they are prosecuted for both criminal and civil remedies and free speech protections. We expect that research will impact one or more bills on hate crimes during the 2013 legislative session.

The Commissioners also extended their outreach to the community. The Commission has ongoing meetings with OCBA Community Partners such as the Urban League of Portland, and also members of the African-American Ecumenical community, and Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF.) Commissioners serve on a wide array of other Boards and Commissions where they help the OCBA broaden the input we receive on key issues.

The goals of the OCBA during the next biennium remain consistent. Those goals are to be a well-reasoned voice for the state's African-American community, to bring the community and lawmakers together on issues of concern to our community, grow leadership within government, research and recommend public policy with joint internships and to facilitate dialog and action among people looking to solve issues that face our community.

OR Commission on Black Affairs

Chair:

Isaac E. Dixon, PhD

Vice Chair:

James Morris

Commissioners:

Karol Collymore
James I. Manning, Jr.
Lorraine Wilson

Legislative Liaisons:

Sen. Rod Monroe
Rep. Lew Frederick

Staff:

Lucy Baker, Administrator
Nancy Kramer, Executive
Asst.

The 2013 legislative session will be one full of difficult choices and opportunities for legislators working to make a difference for communities of color and women within Oregon, and the OCBA will be there as a resource. The Commission is dedicated to facilitating partnerships that can yield progress for all African-American citizens in Oregon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isaac Dixon', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Isaac Dixon
Chair

A Brief Overview of the Commission

Oregon's Commission on Black Affairs was created to be a link between Oregon's African Americans, Blacks, and Oregon government. In 1980, Former Governor Vic Atiyeh created the commission. Three years later, the Oregon Legislative Assembly's vote made it a statutory commission. The goal was to improve communication between the state legislature, The Governor, and Oregon's African Americans and Blacks, to involve more African American and Blacks in policy making and program planning.

Mission & Duties

Mission

The Commission on Black Affairs was established in 1983 to work for the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal and political equality for blacks in Oregon, make recommendations to the Governor, report biennially to the Legislature, monitor programs and legislation, research problem areas, maintain a liaison between the black community and government, and grow leadership on state boards and commissions.

Duties

The Commission's responsibilities are many. It is authorized by law to:

- Monitor existing programs and legislation designed to meet the needs of African Americans and Blacks;
- Identify and research concerns and issues affecting the African American and Black community, and to recommend actions to the governor and to the Legislative Assembly, including recommendations on legislative programs;
- Act as a liaison between the African American, Black community and Oregon's government;
- Encourage African American and Black representation on state Boards and Commissions;
- Employ an Executive Director and other staff as necessary to carry out its responsibilities;
- Establish special committees as needed.

The Status of Oregon's African American Community

In 2012, the status of Oregon's African American community is a story of great progress as well as obstacles yet to be overcome. There was progress in the election of an African American woman to the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners. African American legislators were re-elected to the state Senate and House of Representatives.

Yet, obstacles remain in our state. Gentrification has greatly impacted the Portland metropolitan area diffusing the state's largest African American population. As a result, many potential black voters now live in East Multnomah County or Washington County. This population shift will have future ramifications for the cultivation of African American political candidates and for the voting power of African Americans in Oregon.

In the area of economics, the state of African American unemployment in Oregon mirrors national statistics. The annual statewide unemployment rate for White Oregonians was 9.1% in January 2013, while unemployment among African Americans was 21.3%. Economic numbers such as these will be a main focus of the commission during the 2013-15 biennium. Growing diversity in recruitment and retention efforts within business and government, in concert with our colleagues on the state's other Advocacy Commissions and community partners, will focus on creating family wage work for people of color all across Oregon.

The Commission will also be mindful that opportunities for economic advancement begin with a good education. In 2012, the Governor announced an ambitious plan to revamp how education works in Oregon. The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs took part in policy discussions with education leaders in communities throughout Oregon. One issue that surfaced which the commission will be looking into further during 2013-15 is the disparity in student discipline in schools. Data suggests that African American students are disciplined more often and more severely than their counterparts. There is also evidence that discipline can lead to children dropping out of school at higher rates than children who are not disciplined. There is also ample data which suggests that children who drop out of school are more likely to have encounters with the criminal justice system. This is a future that African American parents, educators and activists will not stand idly by and watch happen. Working with educators and legislators the Commission will seek to reverse this trend.

In 2011-12 the Commission worked with legislators to introduce a Hate Crimes Bill. After watching how the bill is being interpreted and administered by jurisdictions around the state, the commission will be working with legislative partners to re-introduce the bill and improve it. The commission also worked much more closely with its sister commissions during the last biennium. This closer collaboration has permitted the commission to expand its reach even with decreasing resources.

COMMISSIONERS



Chair Isaac Dixon, PhD, Portland

Isaac E. Dixon, PhD., SPHR, currently serves as the Associate Vice President and Director of Human Resources at Lewis and Clark College located in Portland. He has enjoyed a long career in HR having worked with Providence Health and Services, Unitus Community Credit Union, Nike and many government agencies and has been awarded the Northwest Human Resources Management Association's Distinguished Member Award on two different occasions. Dr. Dixon is most proud of his history of community service on the Board of Directors of the Oregon State Bar Association, the Urban League of Portland, and on the boards of a wide variety of other community based agencies.

Isaac is an adjunct faculty member at the University of Phoenix, Portland State University and Portland Community College. He resides in Portland with his wife Lauri.



Vice Chair James Morris, Portland

James is a South Carolina native though, after living in Portland for 15 years he considers himself an Oregonian, born into a family of life-long educators. His parents have engrained the importance of achieving an education in him since early childhood. He is an Air Force veteran and attended a small liberal arts college in SC by the name of Lander University.

James believes in the importance of everyone having the opportunity to have a voice in the political process. He also believes that the best way to make that happen is for people of conscience, from varied cultural backgrounds, to come together, break down barriers and work collaboratively towards common goals.



Karol Collymore, Portland

Karol Collymore has spent her career in public service. She started in politics at 21 in New Mexico, working first for Gore/Lieberman 2000 and hasn't looked back. She is a community activist, volunteering with many non-profit around Portland and conducted a year-long experiment hosting progressive dinner parties for small non-profits like Schoolhouse Supplies and P:ear. For fun she enters cooking contests and writes bad dating tales to share with strangers and friends alike.



James I. Manning, Jr., Eugene

Commissioner Manning is a native of St Louis, Missouri. In 2007 he honorably retired after twenty-four years active duty service from the United States Army. Upon his retirement from the Army he and wife Lawanda relocated to Eugene where he gives to that community serving on an array of appointed and volunteer positions. A few of James' noteworthy community services is his appointment to the Eugene City Police Commission and the City's task-force on homelessness. He continues as a Board of Director for Pearl Buck Center and volunteers for Lane County Circuit Court Small Claims Department as a Mediator. On May 15, 2012 James campaigned for and was elected to the Eugene Water and Electric Board as a Commissioner. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from

Columbia College of Missouri and a Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Leadership from Chapman University, Orange California.



Lorraine Wilson, Eugene-Hermiston

Lorraine Wilson came to Oregon in 2000 from the twin island state of Trinidad and Tobago. She is an immigrant and citizen of the United States of America and is raising a responsible black male. She currently holds a BS in Business Management and is a lifelong learner. She has spent most of her life working with upper management in the private sector and higher education. Lorraine comes from a family of educators. Her father Lloyd Gervais is a retired school principal and deceased sister was a dedicated teacher. Her passion is about changing the future for black Americans by impacting the educational system. African American children are being given the message around third grade that they are not good enough. The achievement gap for black students continues to grow. Coming from a majority black country Lorraine is aware that there are brilliant children as well as those who need more creative ways to succeed, but race should not be a factor. Therefore, she is committed to ensuring that Black students are once again empowered to be successful.

OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES



Senator Rod Monroe, D- Clackamas and Multnomah County, District 24

Rod Monroe has been a life-long educator. He taught high school and college and has served on the David Douglas School Board and currently is on the Mt Hood Community College Board. Rod has been elected to public office 14 times. He has served in the Oregon Legislature for 15 years and previously served on the Metro Council for 12 years. Rod is an active runner and outdoorsman. He currently serves as State Senator from District 24 (East Portland and Happy Valley).



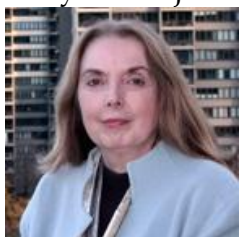
Representative Lew Frederick, D- Portland, District 43

Oregon State Representative Lew Frederick took office on October 30, 2009 during a swearing-in ceremony in the House Chambers of the Oregon Capitol Building. Professionally he is a Strategic Communications Consultant, focusing on Strategic Planning, Community Relations, Science/Technical issues and Media Crisis Communications. With an academic background in biology, theater, and political science, his professional life includes seventeen years as a television reporter at KGW-Channel 8 in Portland, thirteen years as the Director of Public Information for the Portland Public Schools, teacher, actor and ranch-hand. [[see full bio](#)]

STAFF

Lucy Baker, Administrator

Lucy Baker joined the OACO as its Administrator in 2010. She has served as the Executive Director of the Oregon Business Leadership Network, a Portland based non-profit and named partner in the Oregon Business Plan in 2007 focused on growing cultures of inclusion within business. Lucy also has served as the Interim Director of the Planning and Special Projects Unit and Sr. Policy Analyst for Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services. Her career and passion has focused on building networks and partnerships that grow equity for underrepresented populations.



Nancy Kramer, Executive Assistant

Nancy Kramer,, has a history of working in the nonprofit field, in Portland and also in her hometown of New York City. She loves supporting all four Oregon Advocacy Commissions in the important work they do for their communities. Prior to working for the Commissions she has been a Stage Manager, Production Manager, Operations Manager and Event Coordinator.



COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Public Policy Internship on Hate Crime Protection

In 2012, the OCBA with the OCHA hosted their first Public Policy Internship for a law student on researching hate crime statutes, reporting and training in Oregon. The internship was co-sponsored with the DOJ Office of Civil Rights and the Governors Offices of Diversity and Inclusion and Safety.

The report of the internship, *Oregon Hate Crime Laws, Internship Findings and Final Report*, is included as an appendix to this report and provides a review and analysis of the statutory language to identify and proposed areas for improvement. The research conducted a review of civil and criminal remedies, the relationship between hate speech and hate crime, and description of loopholes in existing statutes that have resulted from court decisions. Statistical analysis of reports under the Hate Crime Statistics Act was undertaken and the reporting process and police training was researched and problems identified.

Senator Shields and Rep. Frederick who serve on the OCHA and OCBA served as advisors for the intern to consider the policy implications of the data and research for legislative or administrative responses.

"I strongly support partnering with the Oregon Advocacy Commissions as well as other government, educational and civic organizations in support of public policy internships. These partnerships leverage collective knowledge and expertise in civil rights and serve to help ensure equality for all Oregonians." Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum

"As a law student, the internship on hate crimes was important to me because it helps my goal of creating positive change in society with visible results." – Wesley Garcia, Willamette University College of Law student, Intern for OCHA and OCBA

OCBA Annual Joint Legislative Days with Urban League of Portland

Each year the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs partners with Urban League of Portland and other community groups state wide to host a day at the Capitol during session. For the 2012 and 2013 sessions, over 500 individuals attended the Our Voices United days at the Capitol. It is a time to meet with legislators on priority issues, and rally at the Capitol to hear presentations on topics including access to health care, culturally competent care, tuition equity, hate crime protections, and other issues.

In 2013 the Commission has been active in assuring that hate crime legislation addressing both criminal and civil remedies receive hearings. It has testified in the 2013 session on culturally competent care:

Joint Advocacy Commission Testimony in support of HB 2611

Friday, February 15, 2013

House Committee on Health Care

Chair Greenlick, Vice Chairs Keny-Guyer and Thompson, and Representatives Clem, Conger, Harker, Kennemer, Lively, and Weidner:

The Chairs of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions are submitting testimony in support of HB 2611 on culturally competent care on behalf of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions including:

- The Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs, Stephen Ying, Chair*
- The Commission on Black Affairs, Isaac Dixon, Chair*
- The Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Andrea Cano, Chair*
- The Commission for Women, Stephanie Vardavas, Chair*

Addressing disparities in access to effective health care for communities of color and women is a strategic priority of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions. This includes the overrepresentation of communities of color and women in health issues including diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure, and the underrepresentation of these communities in health screening, pre-natal care and other areas.

We believe that requiring documentation of education in providing culturally competent care for physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals is essential in assuring that in the moment that care is being provided, that it is delivered in effective and engaging ways for all Oregonians. Requiring training on delivery of culturally competent care for the providers is a key strategy in supporting professional excellence while improving outcomes for cultural and ethnic communities and women who face significant challenges to health care access and effectiveness. The OHA's work and expertise with these communities and health care professionals assures that as cultural competency is defined and training is identified, it will be reflective of the best thinking and practice statewide and nationally for delivery of such care.

The Oregon Advocacy Commissions urge the Committee members to positively consider this groundbreaking legislation and support it with your vote.

In 2013 the Oregon Advocacy Commissions are partnering with APANO (Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon), the Urban League of Portland, Oregon Latino Health Coalition, and AAUW to send a clear message to policy makers and mobilize communities of color and women on these issues. We believe that without culturally

appropriate care in all aspects of health care provision, the disparate health statistics that you are reviewing today as part of the testimony of our partners will continue.

Black and Latino Oregonians' health is 30 – 50% more likely to be negatively affected by diabetes, arthritis, asthma, heart attack, stroke and high blood pressure, and Asian Pacific Islanders are over-affected by high blood pressure. For all the affected communities, assuring that women have access to culturally competent care is critical. They serve their families in many roles including as the gateway for their families into health care and as long-term caregivers for multiple generations. Because of this women engage with the health care system in ways that are often different from the ways men do.

Pregnancy and childbirth are areas where cultural competency and sensitivity on the part of the medical professionals can affect the outcomes of care for a lifetime. As long as women live on average longer than men, there will also be a disproportionate number of elderly women needing medical care from a variety of cultural and ethnic communities.

The role of education for health care providers in improving their outcomes for communities of color must be part of the equation for success in Oregon, both in good health and economically as the toll of these conditions challenge families, state services and business.

Please join us in supporting HB 2611 as a step in the right direction for delivery of culturally competent care.

Signed:

Stephen Ying, Chair, Oregon Commission on Asian Affairs and Pacific Islander Affairs



Isaac Dixon, Chair, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs



Andrea Cano, Chair, Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs



Stephanie Vardavas, Chair, Oregon Commission for Women



Community Outreach & Partnerships

In 2011-2012 the Commissioners increased the number of collaborative discussions with community groups, legislators and departmental leaders regarding the OCBA's strategic priorities and opportunities for partnership. Out of these meetings, the Commissions have deepened their working relationship with the Governor's Office on Diversity and Inclusion, Portland African American Leadership Forum, Urban League, and with Dr. Crew, Oregon's Chief Education Officer around education gaps. They have also worked to deepen their understanding of best practices in minority contracting and fair housing.

Commissioners have met with community groups and individuals and attended events including:

- City of Portland's Office of Equity & Inclusion, Director Dante James
- African American Chamber of Commerce Meetings/Met with Chamber President Roy Jay
- Oregon Legislator Representative Lew Frederick
- Governor's Office of Diversity & Inclusion, Director Frank Garcia
- Center for Intercultural Organizing Annual Banquet
- Self Enhancement Inc. Event/Met with SEI Executive Director Tony Hopson
- Oregon Consular Corps
- McKenzie River Gathering (MRG) Foundation Event/ Met with MRG's Executive Director Sharon Gary Smith
- Johnell Bell, Director of Equity and Diversity at TriMet
- Say Hey Event presented by Partners in Diversity
- Oregon Legislator Senator Jackie Winters
- Oregon Advocacy Commissions Fundraising training
- Breakfast for Champions - Partners in Diversity/Portland Business Alliance event
- Michael Alexander, Executive Director of the Urban League Portland chapter
- Governor's Diversity & Inclusion Kitchen Cabinet Meeting
- Portland Workforce
- Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum
- Governor's Networking Session
- The Oregon Commission for Women's Women of Achievement Awards 2012 at the Capitol
- The City of Portland's Right to Work session
- Blacks In Government (BIG) event held in Eugene.
- The City of Portland's Fair Housing Advocacy Committee

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Community Safety, including hate crime protections.
- Health outcomes and access to healthcare.
- Education and education disparities.
- Jobs and economic development.
- Stable families and fair housing.

Primary Areas of Focus

In 2010, the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs worked in concert with a number of organizations, including state agencies, social service organizations, community-based groups, and academic institutions to promote and expand its goals of improving the economic, health, and social wellbeing of the African-American community in Oregon. The Commission's primary areas of focus in 2010 were: 1) human relations-reducing racial profiling and hate crimes throughout Oregon, 2) child welfare, 3) health care, 4) environmental justice, and 5) education achievement. This annual report highlights the Commission's 2011-2012 activities and charts the planned course for the coming biennium.

HUMAN RELATIONS

Statistical data has shown a high level of racial profiling in Oregon for people of color, particularly Blacks and African Americans. The Commission has met with Mayor Adams and has requested him to come and speak to the Commission about the police racial profiling issues.

Maria Lisa Johnson, Director of the Office of Human Relations (Portland), provided the following introduction to their mission and activities:

- Eliminate discrimination and bigotry,
- Strengthen inter-group relationships, and
- Foster greater understanding, inclusion, and justice in Portland.

Portland's Office of Human Relations works to build peace and end discrimination. Their work is guided by the principles embodied in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Office of Human Relations has two programs: the Peace Building and New Portlander programs. The Peace Building programs promote awareness of local and global human rights issues through film and dialogue using multiple approaches. The New Portlanders program integrates newcomer communities into the social, political, and economic life of our city.

Community Issues

- Racial profiling by Portland Police
- Eliminating hate crimes throughout the state of Oregon.

Policy Recommendations

- Systematically work with other city and state agencies on strategies to address the needs of minority, poor, and rural communities throughout Oregon.
- Develop techniques to effectively turn community complaints about police misconduct into action and policy.

HUMAN SERVICES AND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

According to the Urban League's State of Black Oregon Report (2009), about 7 percent of the children in a foster care setting in 2008, were African American. This number is three times the representation of African Americans in the state's population.

In 2012, the Commission participated in a series of community feedback sessions hosted by the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Health Authority, which includes the Office of Equity and Inclusion. These sessions, held at the Maranatha Church in NE Portland, brought community groups and members together to review outcomes in child welfare, health access and health

outcomes, mental health access and other key issues for the Black community.

The issues discussed included OCBA's priority issues on the impact of poverty, family stability, economic equity, mental health access, and healthcare outcomes. Out of these discussions and others hosted by the Commissions, the OCBA will be partnering with DHS and OHA to the extent possible, with joint internships and their work in the 10 Year Plan for Oregon. The OCBA is also supporting legislation in the 2013 legislative session that increases access for all including legislation on profiling, hate crimes, TANF support, education disparities, culturally competent care, Section 8 housing discrimination and other key issues.

Access to quality care is vital to overall health and wellness, and health insurance plays a key role. Both in Oregon and nationwide, African Americans experience serious disparities in rates of insurance and access to health care.

In 2012 - 2013 the Oregon Advocacy Commissions, including the OCBA, began participation in a series of community meetings and Delphi surveys on community needs and best practices regarding healthcare in communities of color and for women. This has included the growing role of healthcare workers in improving healthcare outcomes in immigrant and other communities. The need for health insurance for all Oregonians and the importance of school health clinics in maintaining and improving the health of youth of color. The OCBA supports family-oriented healthcare delivery systems and supports legislation that assures granular collection of data on ethnic backgrounds as well as the importance of public policy inclusive of culturally competent care.

At the Advocacy Commissions' legislative priority meeting with departmental leaders and community partners in December of 2012,

the importance of community involvement and outreach in healthcare was of particular interest. This included pre-natal care for all women in Oregon and other issues. The OCBA looks forward to working with OHA and its Office of Equity and Inclusion in growing community-based and family-oriented healthcare in Oregon..

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The OCBA has a longstanding interest in issues of environmental justice and equity. This has included air quality in North and NE Portland, clean up of environmental sites in North and NE Portland, and development of brownfields statewide.

To this end, the Commission supports legislation aimed at improving environmental factors that challenge communities of color and women in Oregon. This includes proposals regarding brownfield development and other issues.

The OCBA has been an active partner with the Oregon Environmental Justice Task Force.

The Oregon Environmental Justice Task Force has received a **National Achievements in Environmental Justice Award** from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for effectively implementing Oregon's environmental justice legislation and incorporating environmental justice considerations into state agency programs. The EJTF was one of five environmental partnerships' to receive recognition.

What does environmental justice mean?

- Environmental justice is equal protection from environmental and health hazards, and meaningful public participation in decisions that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn, practice spirituality and play. "Environmental justice communities" include minority and low-

income communities, tribal communities, and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes.

EDUCATION

African American students can perform well academically when they have school environments similar to those of traditionally high-achieving students. A recent longitudinal study examined academic outcomes in mathematics for low-income, middle school African American, Latino and White students. Regardless of race, these students did well due to greater engagement in academic activities; an internal locus of control; positive school attitude; and positive self-esteem (Borman & Overman, 2004).

As early as third grade, a sizable performance gap is evident between Black and White students on Oregon state examinations. The Commission on Black Affairs has researched ways to address this education achievement gap. This report offers highlights and recommended courses of action for local educators, universities, state policymakers, and other local political and community leaders.

For Local Educators

- Develop and implement different strategies and approaches for working effectively with the families of color.
- Organize and sponsor workshops for training school board members on issues related to the academic achievement of African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities.
- Strongly consider establishing focused support programs during the freshman year that enhance a personalized, caring school culture to respond to the high dropout rate for African-American males between eighth and ninth grades and during the freshman year.

- Give priority status to professional development and in-service opportunities that provide current Oregon teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help eliminate school violence, ameliorate the effects of poverty on learning, and enhance cultural responsiveness.
- Target resources to determine effective strategies for parental empowerment, enrichment and development as one method of identifying why students are not achieving at acceptable levels and what can be done to help them.
- Work with community leaders, establish mechanisms to empower parents and community members in the decision making process used to place students in certain tracks or in special education programs.
- Implement a multifaceted approach to reverse the trends of increased dropout rates of African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities, including early identification of students and active outreach to parents and caregivers of students at risk of dropping out.
- Assist students to reach performance expectations by providing educational opportunities before and after school and in the summers.

For Universities

- Ensure that teachers are prepared to effectively serve a multicultural, multiracial student population by deepening teacher knowledge in the areas of literacy, culturally responsive teaching, relationship building, differentiated instruction, and best-teaching practices.
- Strengthen teacher preparation programs by including a requirement for a minimum of 20 weeks of student teaching and coursework on critical

issues in education, such as the achievement gap and its causes.

- Present teaching as a viable occupation for undergraduate and graduate students of color.
- Provide minority students with the information and support they need to qualify for, enroll, and remain in postsecondary education until they complete a certificate or degree program so the achievement gap does not continue in their lives as an economic gap.
- Examine overcrowding in public schools as an influence on student performance and make recommendations about desirable class sizes to policymakers.
- Organize and conduct community forums that will review and discuss the academic performances of students in the community.
- Hold school administrators and policymakers accountable for the academic performance of students.
- Prepare and circulate community achievement report cards that document goals for and progress on closing the achievement gap.
- Push local political leaders to be actively involved in local community efforts to address the achievement gap.
- Eliminate disparities in student discipline.

Eliminating the debilitating disparities in academic performance will command extraordinary leadership and involvement in the governor's office, in the Legislative Assembly, in city halls, in teacher preparation programs, in corporate suites, in churches, synagogues, and mosques, in civic and community groups, in families and, of course, in schools throughout Oregon. There is no single answer, no single point of responsibility.

The education disparity between African-American and White students is at epidemic proportions and if not immediately addressed will subject a generation of students to a life of poverty, unemployment, and substandard living. All of us have a stake in the outcome and a role in reform – as parents, as citizens, as taxpayers, as educators, as people determined to move Oregon forward.

Bridging the existing divides will challenge us, but it is not a mission impossible unless we lack the will to engage it.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Work with public agencies to replicate minority contracting processes statewide.
- Facilitate discussions with colleges and universities on building majors around entrepreneurship.
- Assist people of color in accessing job training/re-training resources.
- Open discussions with lenders on the availability of loans for African American small businesses.

References

Oregon African American Family Commission

Oregon Child Welfare Task Force

Oregon Department of Human Services

Oregon Environmental Justice Task Force

Oregon Health Plan

Oregon Office of Equity and Inclusion

The Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
2012 Annual Report
is also available online at:

http://www.oregon.gov/OCBA/PDFs/OCBA_2010_Annual_Report.pdf



Oregon Commission on Black Affairs
“Advocating Equality and Diversity”

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