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## Conference Seeks Solutions To Violence

WASHINGTON (AP) An anti-violence conference convened by Jesse Jackson explored possible solutions Friday to what participants called an alarming rise in murder, assault and gun use among black Americans.

The ideas included turning old military bases into training centers and getting black colleges to offer inmates a chance to earn college degrees.

"Black colleges can stand up by taking the lead," Jackson said. "Act so that the young in jail leave with different skills and hopes than they came in with."

Comedian Bill Cosby, a critic of violent or stereotypical images of blacks in the media, said there must be more domestic spending.

"It's where you put the money," he said. "Our people have been sending messages to those in the power structure in America, and they've been ignoring it. We have got to clean up our act in the United States of America."

Coleman Lawton, who works with gangs in Chicago, said prominent activists must lead the drive to get money and resources for grassroots groups, then step aside and let those on the front lines do the work.

Too often, Lawton said, longtime activists try to control how a problem is addressed, rather than asking those closest to the problem what needs to be done. That, in turn, breeds mistrust between the people who need help and those trying to help them, he said.

"You got too many cooks in the kitchen. You don't need to be cooking if you don't know the recipe," Lawton said. "We need to work as a unit, together. If they keep up with this separate agenda, the violence, it's not going to stop."

Military bases as training institutes or recreation centers was proposed by C. Delores Tucker, chair of the National Political Congress of Black Women.

She also suggested that schools extend classes into the evening or have year-round sessions to keep young people occupied. "We must be serious about this situation," Tucker said. "No one has the right ... to poison our children's minds."

Jackson, meanwhile, sought to turn up the heat on two incendiary issues in the black community: welfare reform and President Clinton's crime package.

In a luncheon speech, Jackson called on black people to oppose welfare reform and the crime bill pending in the Senate. He urged them to press for more jobs and training programs and a reduced emphasis on building prisons to fight crime.

Clinton wants to make welfare recipients more self-sufficient by limiting benefits and expanding opportunities to work. His plans for fighting crime include increasing the number of available prison cells and police officers for community patrols.

"They are reactions, not remedies," Jackson said. "We need relief and remedies born of hope, not reactions born of fear and expediency."

But Jackson also urged blacks to change a culture of victimization.

"To survive, we cannot mirror nor imitate the worst of society," Jackson said. "If change is to come, the victims of violence, the black community, must stand up."

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## FORUM

OPINION &amp; COMMENTARY

## Marking progress Oregon-style

Oregon Benchmarks  
is being eyed nationally  
as process that works

By NEAL R. PEIRCE

Oregon, a perennial innovator among the states, has come up with an inventive way to measure how well it's doing.

The approach, borrowed from the corporate world, is called Oregon Benchmarks. And in contrast to many ballyhooed government reforms and management fads (Remember "sunset laws" and "zero-based budgeting"?), it may be here to stay.

Why?

First, it's a way to track, over periods of years, just where a state or city stands — and where it would like to be headed — on critical indicators about health, crime, education, the economy.

Second, it breaks with familiar government practice by measuring outcomes, not inputs.

The question, for example, is not whether environmental regulations are in place, but whether the air and water are getting cleaner. Not how many dollars are spent on teachers and schools, but whether kids are learning and to what standards.

Third, it's a system of goals developed through broad popular participation and then ratified and given the force of law by action of the Legislature and governor.

Finally, it's designed to last through successions of political leaders.

Oregon Benchmarks began in 1988 with "Oregon Shines," a strategic planning exer-

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cise started by then-Gov. Nell Goldschmidt. Hundreds of Oregonians — from business, labor, education, environmental groups, state and local government, the health care system and grass-roots organizations — developed the official set of benchmarks for the state.

Then, 18 state legislative committees reviewed and approved the proposed benchmarks. In 1991, the Legislature enacted Oregon Benchmarks into law. The lawmakers also created an Oregon Progress Board to make sure the process stays alive and on target. Every two years, the board has to report publicly on progress toward each benchmark goal. It's headed by the governor and designed to be bipartisan.

Goldschmidt and his successor, Barbara Roberts, are Democrats, but Roberts actually appointed David Frohnmayer — the Republican she'd defeated for governor in 1990 — to sit on the Progress Board. "I needed him there to show the board is really bipartisan. And he has a good head," Roberts told me.

Benchmarks are necessary, Roberts argues, because "a lot of government programs, written with the best intentions, don't reach the goals they were written for in the first place. You have to be willing to measure yourself. This focuses you on results."

Altogether, Oregon has 272 benchmarks. For practicality they've been divided into two classes — priority standards related to acute questions (health care access, drugs, reducing teen-age pregnancy, for example) and "core" benchmarks (for more long-term, fundamental issues such as the base of the state's economy and basic literacy of the population).

All are, however, based on measurable outcomes. Teen pregnancy goals are quantified in the pregnancy rate per 1,000 females aged 10-17 for each of the target years — 1995, 2000 and 2010. Social harmony is measured by hate crimes per 100,000 Oregonians per year. Urban mobility is measured by the percentage of Oregonians who commute to and from work by some means other than a single occupancy vehicle.

Oregon Benchmarks got everyone's attention in 1993 when Roberts, faced with a seemingly cataclysmic 17 percent budget shortfall because of a voter initiative, actually cut all state agencies' budgets even deeper — 20 percent. Then she offered a 3 percent rebate to agencies able to shape their programs to achieve benchmark goals. The Legislature ratified almost all of Roberts' benchmark-targeted budget measures.

Over time, as actual performance of the state is compared to the benchmarks, problem areas will stand out and one can expect lawmakers and the governor to come under heavy pressure to recast programs to meet the goals that they — and the citizenry — have so clearly and publicly ratified.

Oregon Benchmarks is being emulated. Minnesota has a similar Milestones program, for example, and there are other versions developing in Maine, Hawaii, Florida, Texas and Ohio.

And now the approach is going local, too. Oregon has pioneering versions in rural Baker and Deschutes counties. Multnomah County Executive Beverly Stein and Portland Mayor Vern Katz have inaugurated a joint Multnomah-Portland benchmarking process that incorporates the most relevant state benchmarks and then adds ones that local citizens want.

Local benchmarks may be critical to long-term success, says Duncan Wyse, director of the Oregon Progress Board. Why? Because "more and more we're seeing the action — how to improve education, reduce drug use or teen-age pregnancy, for example — is in communities, not in federal or state programs."

The tough question, of course, is whether benchmarks will end up making a real difference in the conditions of life in a state. Do they have a chance against the negative tides of family dissolution, lawlessness, flawed public education?

Just as goals, clearly not. But to the degree they oblige states and localities to measure what they do by hard numbers, by standards everyone's agreed on, they could provide welcome realism and perhaps even a prospect for more effective government.

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