

THE PEOPLE SPEAK

Should Students Be Allowed To Carry Pepper Mace To School?

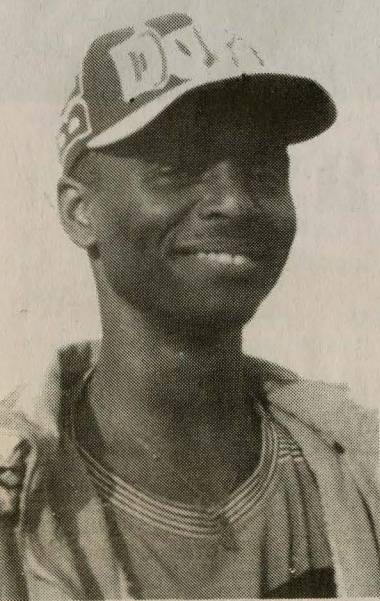
By Karla Clark
The Seattle Medium

Each day millions of children and teens are sent to school with the intention of getting what their parents want—an education. Somehow the burden of learning their lessons seems quite small compared to the hopes they make it home safely.

The death of a young Federal Way girl, who was killed behind her high school, has parents outraged and wondering what is to be done about the safety of their children. The issue now is whether or not students should be allowed to protect themselves by carrying Pepper Mace to school.

Parents and students say they would feel much safer. School officials, however, feel it will cause more endangerment for the students in the event they may use it on each other.

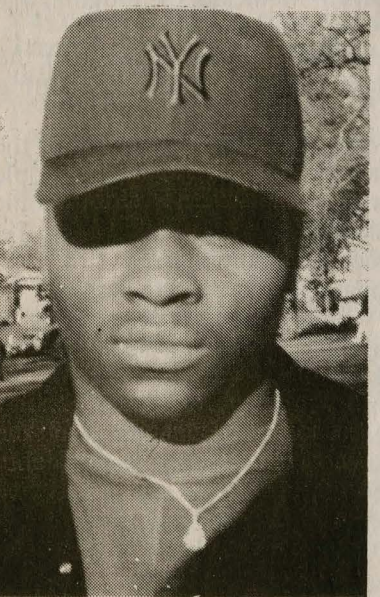
In a recent poll, 77% of students said they never felt safe in the schools and 23% said they did. We wanted to know what some students thought about students carrying Pepper Mace for their protection to school with them. Although having the Mace seems to make some people feel better and safer, they must realize it is illegal to carry. According to the law, police, meter-readers and mail-carriers are the only ones who can carry the Mace. Even then, it can only be used in self-defense. Here is what some students told The People Speak:



CHRISTOPHER PEGRAM
"I know a friend who was suspended because they were carrying the Pepper Mace. It made them feel safer. I think it would be okay to have as long as people use it in the right way."



TAMIKA SAULS
"I know students who take it as a joke and carry it for fun already. I don't like it because it makes you cough. I don't think it would be very much safer if the students were to be allowed to bring it to school."



DERRICK SMITH
"I personally don't think the students should be allowed to bring it to school. I think some may use it in the wrong way, like on each other. I think things should be left the way they are."



NAKACHIA DORROUGH
"I think it would be okay to carry the Mace to school. It is for our protection. I know people who had it but got it taken away. I don't think it's fair."

POLITICAL POTPOURRI

New County Executive & Corporations

Question: Did corporations buy influence with the new King County executive? Some folk are wondering because new exec Gary Locke persuaded 30 local corporations to sponsor his coming-out party. These corporations donated \$1,000 each to Locke's "office fund." This money will be used to finance the inaugural bash for party loyalists. Locke defends his action by saying that there is no difference between asking for campaign contributions and office contributions. Not so say some concerned citizens. They are concerned about the appearance of influence-buying that is presented. The appropriateness of the solicitation of funds from the corporate community is what's at issue. Locke, like other politicians, needs to be mindful of the messages they are sending by their course of conduct.

Clean Hands

One Disgruntled Voter is concerned about the recent actions of Governor Lowry. This voter is concerned because the governor is offering a \$19.7 million tax-break over the next 18 months for companies that invest in advanced computing and electronics. The concern here is whether this action on the governor's part constitutes a payback to those companies who made donations to the campaign against Initiatives 601 and 602. Some companies in the computing and electronics industry contributed funds to the fight against 601 and 602. So Disgruntled Voter questions the tax-break for companies that invest in advanced computing and electronics. Maybe Disgruntled Voter has got it all wrong. Maybe his distrust is misplaced. After all, the fastest growing industry in the country is that of computing and electronics. Disgruntled Voter needs to take a second look at the governor's action in light of future economic needs of the state.

Service & Community

During the course of this year's activities, we need to take a look at advocate groups and determine if they are advancing the interests of the community as a whole or if they are advancing their own selfish interests. Those who would aspire to speak and act for the community need to be aware of the impact that their actions have on the social, political and economic interests of the

community. Things being done in the name of and for the benefit of the community should be for that purpose and that purpose only. The community's interest is advanced when all of us put aside our self-interests as groups and individuals in the interests of the collective good of the community. Community survival is dependent upon our coming together and working for the greater good of the community in the broadest sense.

Crunch Time

Once again we are faced with a significant lack of African American hiring in positions of influence in a Locke administration. Newly elected County Executive Gary Locke has made a number of appointments to head county agencies. Those agency head appointments based upon our observance have been primarily White males. One African American woman has been appointed, while one African American male has been bumped from his position as head of county personnel. Well, Locke is holding true to form. Longtime Locke observers have reaffirmed once again Locke's unwillingness to reach out in a meaningful way to the African American community when it comes to hiring people in his administration.

Patty's First Year

Senator Patty Murray's first year in that post has earned mixed reviews. The "Mom in Tennis Shoes" finds the difference between reality and political rhetoric quite striking. Patty is luckier than most freshman Senators because she has more positive than negative reviews. Some congressional watchers are of the opinion that Patty may in the future become a first-rate Senator. Others believe that Patty's emotional style may be a stumbling block to future achievement. Patty has been true to her campaign vow to champion the cause of the middle-class family. Patty has been outspoken on those issues of benefit to them. One area of concern for us is Patty's staff hirings. Patty, like her political soul mate, Gary Locke, has done little to recruit and hire African Americans on her personal staff. There is also a lack of Black faces among those nominated by Patty for federal appointments. We expected better of Patty. Although we don't know why.

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