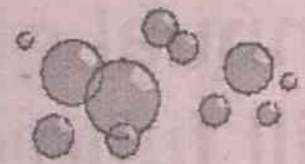


Breaking through the bubble



Justice Department reports more than 2 million inmates, prisoners in U.S.

The United States Justice Department released a report Sunday that says more than 2 million people are imprisoned in U.S. prisons and jails. This is the highest number ever reported, according to the report.

Prison and jail populations in the U.S. have almost doubled since 1990. At the end of June 2002, 2,019,234 people were imprisoned. The report also revealed that one in every 142 U.S. residents is held in prison or jail.

The Justice Department's report stated 7,248 jailed inmates and 3,055 state prisoners are under 18. The federal government's prison system has the most inmates, followed by California and Texas. Females make up 6.7 percent of all inmates.

Va. Tech Visitor's Board reinstates affirmative action in admissions policy

According to a report featured in Virginia Tech's *The Collegiate Times*, the Virginia Tech Visitor's Board, the college's highest governing body, voted to rescind an earlier decision that eliminated race and gender as factors in admissions.

Race and gender were eliminated as factors in admissions March 10 when the board was advised that individual board members could be "legally liable if the university was sued for excluding students because of affirmative action," according to *The Collegiate Times'* report.

University President Charles Steger told the board that removing affirmative action from the admission process would have a severe impact on the diversity of the school.

"These actions cast a shadow over Virginia Tech in the eyes of other universities across the country," he said.

Much media attention has been focused on affirmative action's role in the higher-education admission's process following the Supreme Court case involving the University of Michigan. The Court is expected to rule this summer regarding the constitutionality of Michigan's use of affirmative action in its admissions process.

Court upholds cross-burning ban

The Supreme Court upheld a state ruling Monday banning cross burning, according to an Associated Press report. The ruling explained cross burning was a historic symbol of racial intimidation, and thus outweighs the free speech of Ku Klux Klansmen or others who may yield it.

The ruling to uphold reinforces a 50-year-old Virginia law that cites burning a cross as an act of intimidation. A lower court later ruled the law was in violation of a person's freedom of speech, sending the case to the Supreme Court.

The case was decided on a 5-4 majority, with Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and justices Sandra Day O'Connor, John Paul Stevens, Antonin Scalia and Stephen Breyer in favor of upholding the law.

O'Connor explained her decision in the court's ruling.

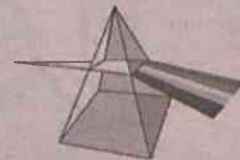
"A burning cross is an instrument of terror, and government should have the power to stamp out or punish its use," O'Connor wrote.

Justice Clarence Thomas, the court's only black member, dissented from the majority ruling. Thomas made clear, however, that he was not in support of the Klan or other hate groups.

Anti-cross-burning laws are also instituted in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Montana, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington state and the District of Columbia.

Compiled by Lindsay Porter

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