

# The Carolina Times

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## Civil Rights Leaders Question Bush's Commitment To Fighting Discrimination

WASHINGTON (AP) - Civil rights advocates are questioning President Bush's commitment to fighting discrimination despite the administration's aggressive prosecution of some ground-breaking voting rights and housing bias cases.

They cite Bush's veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1990, which would have made it easier for victims of discrimination to sue their employers. "That fallout is going to take some time to clear," said Dr. W. Days, who ran the civil rights division under President Carter.

Ralph Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, had a harsher assessment. "Once again, we have an administration defying the bipartisan consensus that exists on civil rights," he said.

Still, civil rights leaders acknowledge there are bright spots in the Bush administration's record.

Bush actively courted black voters during the 1988 campaign, invited Coretta Scott King to the Republican National Convention, and spoke about healing racial divisions. He is credited with appointing more blacks to political jobs than his predecessor, Ronald Reagan.

Attorney General Dick Thornburgh tried to re-establish ties with civil rights leaders that were left badly frayed by conservative William Bradford Reynolds, who ran the Justice Department's civil rights division under President Reagan.

He also played a major role in ensuring passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which bars discrimination against people with mental and physical handicaps.

The Justice Department also has made enforcement a priority, adding lawyers to bring cases under a new statute that expands the government's authority to counter housing discrimination.

It has forced municipalities to drop restrictions against group homes for mentally retarded people. The agency recently won a jury verdict against a landlord for refusing to rent apartments to a drug program to house recovering addicts.

The Justice Department filed suit to force the all-male Virginia Military Institute to admit women cadets. It moved to overturn Georgia's election system, which it says discriminates against black office seekers.

"When I came here it was with the understanding with the attorney general that I would be responsible for the vigorous and the complete enforcement of the civil rights laws," said John Dunne, who was named assistant attorney general for civil rights after the Senate Judiciary Committee blocked Bush's first nominee, William Lucas.

"No matter what the subject area, we have been extremely aggressive," Dunne said.

Civil rights advocates want more.

"They are going to have to make a record across the board, it's not going to be sufficient to carve out enclaves where they are vigorous and leaving others untouched and uncared for," Days said.

Neas says he finds "very few substantive differences" in Justice Department policy from the Reagan administration when it was headed by Attorney General Edwin Meese III.

And on many major issues of dispute involving the 1990 civil rights bill, "the Thornburgh Justice Department was much worse than the Meese Justice Department," Neas said.

"Thornburgh strikes you as being the planet Jupiter, a failed star. You would have anticipated much more from him," said Barbara Armwine, an attorney for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

The bill Bush vetoed would have restored an evolving legal standard dating back 18 years for discrimination cases involving employer policies that have a "disparate impact" on women and minorities.

Bush said it would spawn hiring quotas by encouraging businesses to employ and promote minorities simply to avoid costly court suits.

Civil rights lawyers accuse the president of using divisive rhetoric to mischaracterize the bill, which contained language stating that no provision was designed to promote quotas.

"It's dividing people when this was the president who was going to try to heal those divisions," said William Taylor, a Washington civil rights lawyer.

Both Taylor and Armwine charge that the Bush administration wants to eliminate "disparate impact" cases to protect business from the costs of discrimination suits.

"They believe that if somebody didn't intend to discriminate, they shouldn't be held accountable," Armwine said.

## Note At UNC-Chapel Hill : 'We Will Not Have Another Nigger Queen'

CHAPEL HILL (AP) - An increasing minority presence at the state's flagship university hasn't made assimilation easy, say some students and administrators at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"There are some students, like some people, who choose to not acknowledge it," said Donald Boulton, vice chancellor and dean of student affairs. "But if you talk to a black student they will say: 'I don't feel a part of the place. I'd like to feel I have a piece of the rock.'" Statistically, blacks at UNC-Chapel Hill have more of the

rock than ever. This year, 15 percent of the student body is made up of minorities, up from 13.4 percent last year. And in the freshman class, 19 percent are minorities, up from 17 percent.

But students and campus officials told The News and Observer of Raleigh in interviews published Sunday that a series of recent events has made race relations tense.

A black student from Washington running for the homecoming crown found a note on her car reading, "We will not have another nigger queen." Laura Anderson, a senior,

was elected anyway. But she said the incident changed her attitude about discrimination at the state's flagship university.

"I've learned to let a lot of things go in one ear and out the other," she said. "But these overt, blatant acts let you know that deeply entrenched in some people's minds are stereotypes and biases that will definitely work against people of color." A sculpture designed to depict typical student life has created heated debate because it includes the figure of a black with a book in one hand and twirling a basketball in the other. The



DHAKA — Bangladeshi policemen carry an injured colleague during a street battle with students and other anti-government protesters in Dhaka on Nov. 27. (UPI Photo)

Dunne rejected this view, providing figures showing that the since Bush took office the civil rights division has brought nine disparate-impact suits against state and local governments.

But civil rights activists contend that the department wastes valuable time and resources pursuing reverse discrimination cases, such as a recent lawsuit accusing the Maryland Lottery Commission of discriminating against white males by setting aside 12 positions for women and minorities.

"We don't apologize for bringing reverse discrimination cases," said Roger Clegg, one of Dunne's deputies who also served in the Reagan administration. "The law requires us to enforce the law in an even-handed fashion." The bitterness that lingers following Bush's veto is fueled by charges that the administration failed to bargain in good faith with the bill's supporters.

"The sense of many in the civil rights community is that the administration strung people along, giving them the sense there really was room for negotiations and compromise when there really wasn't," Days said.

"The administration is going to have to work very hard to re-establish its good faith," he said.

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sculpture also includes the figure of a black female balancing a book on her head.

Many students claim the statue represents racial stereotypes and have protested vigorously to have it moved from its home outside Davis Library. Others, including Student Body President William Hildebolt, have petitioned Chancellor Paul Hardin to order the statue's removal.

The chancellor, who has said the statue has spurred healthy dialogue, turned the issue over to the school's building and grounds committee to study. That angered some black students who say he's taken a "delay-and-conquer" attitude toward the problem.

State NAACP officials have petitioned university officials to establish a panel to investigate racial and sexual discrimination among UNC-Chapel Hill employees. They say the university discriminates in its hiring and promotion.

Kelly Alexander Jr., president of the state chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, met with Hardin last week after receiving complaints from university employees. Alexander says he will campaign to strip the school of federal funding if the problems aren't solved.

Also, more racist graffiti has appeared on campus. In October, a poster in a dormitory for an unsuccessful U.S. Senate candidate Harvey Gant was found scrawled with racial slurs. And earlier this month, the letters "KKK" were painted on several cars, including some university-owned vehicles.

Students and faculty offer various solutions. Some say the curriculum should be changed to include more minority programs.

Some students simply say they need to be more tolerant of one another.

"We can't just be passive," said John Patterson, a black senior from Columbia. "When we got here, we were made to believe this was an open-minded, liberal place, where everyone was concerned with education. It's uncomfortable to get here and realize it's not that way."

## Temporary Agencies Target Of Discrimination Inquiry

RALEIGH (AP) - Seven North Carolina temporary employment agencies are being investigated for possible job discrimination, federal officials say.

The investigation began after an employee of one firm walked into the Raleigh office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with company records that allegedly document discriminatory practices.

The documents from Personnel Pool of Raleigh-Durham Inc. include notations that appear to reflect employers' requests for temporary workers of particular races, sexes and ages. The News and Observer of Raleigh reported Sunday.

Officials say the practice is not an isolated one.

"The Personnel Pool case appears to be part of a national crime wave of discrimination by employment agencies," Evan J. Kemp Jr., chairman of the EEOC, said in a statement last month when he launched the investigation of the company. "We will prosecute such discrimination aggressively." EEOC officials say they receive reports almost daily of discrimination. The agency is investigating 100 temporary-help firms across the nation, including the seven in North Carolina.

Of those seven, EEOC officials will identify only Personnel Pool because it is the only one against which legal action has been taken.

The Raleigh investigation began after Personnel Pool employee Charlene Gaye Nicholas - armed

with what she said were Personnel Pool records - told officials her story. Investigators said they had been stunned with what she had to say.

In training to be an interviewer of temporary-job applicants, Ms. Nicholas said in a statement on file in U.S. District Court in Raleigh, she was told to write on their files "nice girl" or "OK girl" to designate a younger woman, and "nice lady" for an older woman. If an applicant were black, she was to circle the word "vocab" on the application.

By using code words to describe workers, a company could disguise its activities, EEOC officials said.

Copies of the firm's records - which are filed in federal court - show the letter "w" written on some clients' order forms. Ms. Nicholas told investigators that that meant a client wanted only a white worker. Other forms had the words "w/female only," meaning the client wanted a white female.

One copy of a job order form in the federal court file wasn't written in code. It said "blacks and Orientals only!" The client needed workers to do landscaping work.

Ms. Nicholas told investigators that, earlier this year, Personnel Pool executives ordered their office supervisors to destroy company records that might indicate discrimination. Some records were destroyed, Ms. Nicholas told investigators in a sworn statement.

The EEOC filed that statement in federal court as it obtained an injunction barring Personnel Pool from changing or destroying any more of its records.

The six-page statement forms the crux of the agency's investigation of Personnel Pool. Ms. Nicholas left her job in February after working there for nearly one year. She could not be reached for comment despite repeated attempts.

Ronald J. Arrington, an EEOC attorney in Charlotte who is heading the investigation, said the agency was satisfied that Ms. Nicholas had come forth with the information "to right a wrong." She was not a disgruntled employee, he said.

On Oct. 30, six federal officials began their investigation when they arrived at the firm's offices in Raleigh and Durham - unannounced and armed with court

subpoenas - to scour records.

Personnel Pool's attorney and its officials declined to comment.

But the company and EEOC officials say Personnel Pool is cooperating with the investigation.

Two weeks ago, Personnel Pool President A.J. King Jr. sent a letter to the company's clients saying the EEOC's allegations would not disrupt business and encouraging them to continue using Personnel Pool.

He also wrote, "A very few of our clients have in the past requested placements by race, sex, age and/or national origin." He added, "It has been and continues to be our policy that we will not unlawfully discriminate in any of our placements." A spokesman for a temporary-help trade group said that such practices were isolated cases and that the industry had a code of ethics that condemned discrimination.

"I don't see this (practice) as a great plague that is going to engulf our industry," said Samuel R. Sacco, executive vice president of the National Association of Temporary Services in Alexandria, Va.

He added: "The real villain is a company that calls in a job order in a discriminatory way."