

Editorials & Comments

Court Right On Abortion

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5 to 4 decision on Monday that the federal government may refuse to pay for the majority of abortions for low income women. In its narrow split decision the nation's highest court upheld the constitutionality of the controversial Hyde Amendment.

The Hyde Amendment is an anti-abortion restriction that prevents the use of Medicaid money to pay for most abortions desired by women living on some form of public assistance. However the amendment permits federal payment for abortions in quickly reported cases of incest, rape or when the pregnant woman's life is in danger.

The amendment, originally enacted in 1976 and in limbo since February of this year pending a court decision on its legality, led to bitter outbursts by many

abortion rights groups following the court's decision. For example, Karen Mulhauser of the National Abortion Rights Action League said, "We are outraged (because the amendment is) an unconscionable government intrusion into the right of a woman to make the personal, private decision of whether to carry a pregnancy to term."

We disagree with Ms. Mulhauser's viewpoint and support the high court's majority decision. Our support of the anti-abortion

amendment is not because of any pro-life or firm moral issues but rather because too many unwanted pregnancies appear to be the result of sexually promiscuous behavior emerging from

our sexually permissive value system. Furthermore, with the abundance of birth control devices readily available there seems little justification for unwanted pregnancies.

For example, during the 31 months the Hyde Amendment had been in effect the yearly Medicaid cost of abortion declined from \$50 million to an incredibly low \$300,000. Significantly there have been no reported corresponding increases in the birth rate or deaths from illegal abortions.

In addition, the N.C. Department of Human Resources reports that in 1979 the state paid out \$1.3 million for 6,125 abortions. Significantly, 39 percent of

these abortions were performed on young women 19 years of age or younger and 90 percent of the 6,125 women were unmarried.

Public funds simply should not be used to subsidize the irresponsible behavior and too often the sheer laziness of women who cannot control their sexual desires or use preventive measures.

Illicit Drug Use Rising

Two recent federal government studies indicate that Americans, particularly young adults between the ages of 18 and 25, are consuming an ever increasing amount of illicit drugs. The situation has been characterized as "extraordinarily dramatic."

For example, in the 18 years since 1962 the percentage of the 18-25 age group that had tried marijuana at least once has increased from 4 percent to 68 percent and 40 percent continue to smoke the stuff, at least, occasionally. The number is the same age group who have taken stronger drugs - including cocaine, heroin and angel dust - has risen from 3 percent to 33 percent.

These facts don't tell the entire depressing story. The two studies note further that in the decade of the '70s, experimentation with marijuana and cocaine had in fact increased by 100 percent among youth between the ages of 12 and 17.

In reacting to the studies, at the Health and Human Services, Secretary Patricia R. Harris said, "The American people in general, and parents in particular have shown an increasing concern about the rapid rise in illicit drug use over the past few years. Their concerns are well founded."

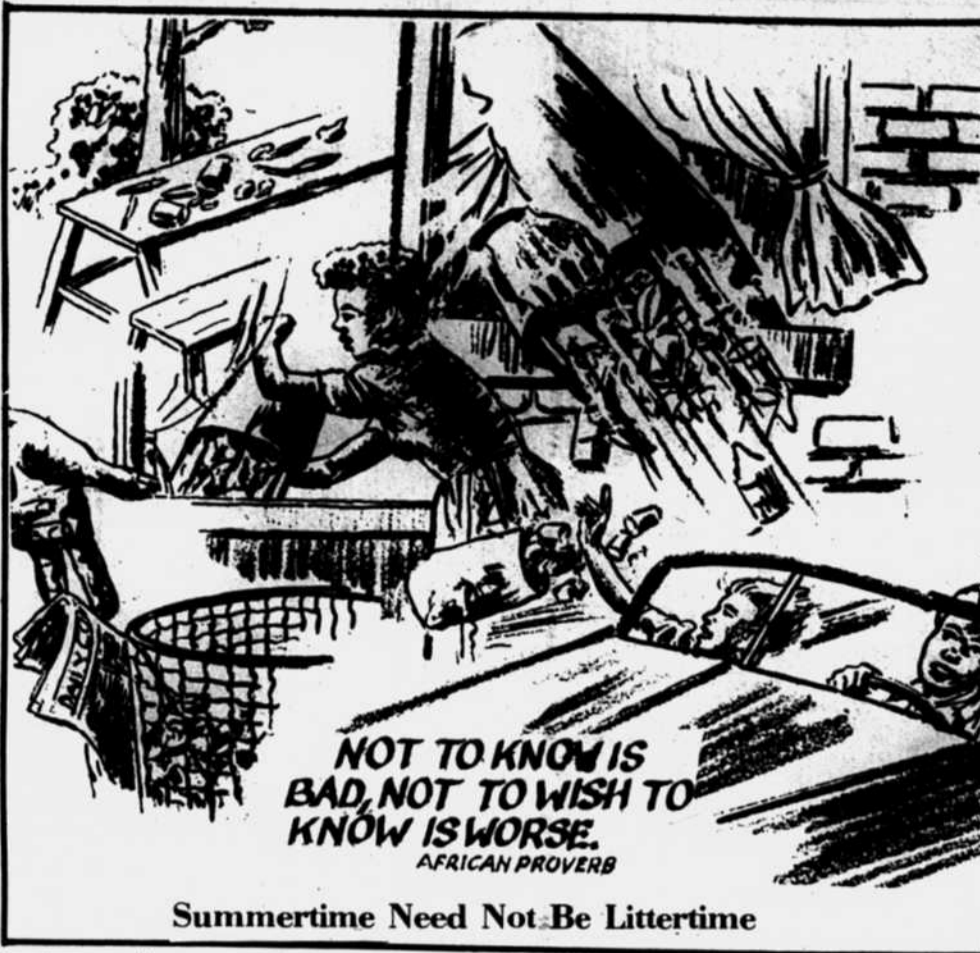
We find it difficult to believe that "parents...have shown...concern" when they, older adults, continue to allow, for example, television to repeatedly tell us that a simple pill - aspirin, bufferin, Ni-Tol or whatever - will let us sleep, wake us up, relieve all manner of pain and even change our personality.

It is the parent adults too who often want to inflate his or her own ego by pushing a youth into competitive sports while ignoring the often time abusive use of drugs to keep these youths in playing condition.

It is older adults too who give social acceptability to the use of alcoholic beverages, cigarette smoking, and even the use of marijuana by their own behavior and example-setting.

It is our judicial system that is increasingly letting drug users use the influence of drugs as an excuse for not being properly tried in courts of law for even such crimes as murder.

No, we don't think parents are concerned, because too many of them are also drug users of one sort or another. Until America re-thinks its values, including the rational meaning of fair competition, and until we find a way to ease the social pressures we place on young people, drug users in our nation will continue to rise.



Summertime Need Not Be Littertime

As I See It

Mandatory Retirement: Yes Or No?

By Gerald O. Johnson

Should a person be required to retire once he's reached a designated age? This question has become an issue recently. To get the answer to this question older people have formed a lobby group to place pressure on governmental officials. This lobby group is saying that mandatory retirement is unconstitutional because of age discrimination.

A very complex issue, but one that is easily solvable once both sides are aired. Therefore, this week I have chosen to give both sides of the argument and in conclusion give the practical solution to the problem as I see it.

Let us start by taking the older people's viewpoint. It is felt, and rightfully so, that to designate an age when all people will be forced to retire is discriminatory. Since we are all individuals a set age seems ridiculous. One man at age 65 may be senile while another is as sharp and witty as he ever was. Why then must one man who still has productive years left be forced to retire? Moreover, the retiree has nothing to say about it. He cannot choose if he wants to retire or not, the choice is made for him.

Taking this one step further, it seems ridiculous to place an able bodied individual on relief programs when he is capable of running a few more miles. If age makes one wiser then we are placing a lot of wisdom out to pasture.

On the other hand, the arguments for mandatory retirement are headed by the old "getting the young into the work force" idea. Young families (especially minorities) are faced with unemployment because of jobs that are currently being held by older people.



Gerald O. Johnson
this idea has two prongs, both of which are true and deserve attention.

The truth is, a company can save money by bringing in inexperienced young personnel to replace the older personnel with seniority. This seniority affords one higher wages, longer leave periods, and many other fringe benefits that the new personnel will not receive. Thus, if the young personnel can be trained in a reasonable length of time he will undoubtedly save the company money once they out the senior citizens.

Finally, the truth is, by allowing senior citizens to hold jobs that could be filled by younger personnel, you would possibly stifle the growth of the country. A senior citizen being employed generally is not a case of survival, but rather one of ego. The senior citizen has more often than not only himself and possibly a mate to support. The children have gone, the mortgage is paid, and the bills are less in comparison to that of the younger families getting started. The younger families are in a more desperate need for jobs than the older families. Moreover, the cost for having the older family on relief is far less than that of having

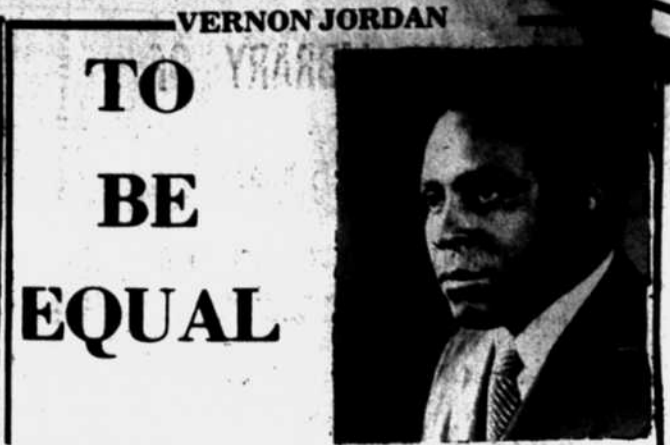
a younger family on relief. Another problem a lot of companies feel will occur if mandatory retirement is lifted is the discrimination involved in choosing who stays after 65, how long, etc.

If there is no designated age that means somebody has to be able to tell elderly employees when their time is up. Obviously, if they felt that they were not ready for retirement at 65 then they probably won't be ready at age 70. So then, how is one going to be told his services are no longer needed? Even more importantly, what distinguishing characteristics or guidelines will be used to tell one person that he need not retire at age 65 while telling another he must retire at 65? This type of decision making will surely open pandora's box to all sorts of discrimination charges.

Finally, with age comes a closed mind. Because of the years put into doing things a certain way; it is difficult to succumb to change. Yet our business society is based on innovative ideas that are constantly changing the way we do things. Consequently, getting younger, more up-to-date minds contributes to the continuing well being of the business structure.

As I see it the arguments are strong on both sides. But in careful analysis of this situation the issue boils down to emotionalism vs. rationalism. Consequently, I am in favor of mandatory retirement at age 65.

I don't think that age discrimination in this case is discriminatory at all. Unlike being born black or white, male or female, where we will remain in this state until death; age or growing old is one bridge we will all cross if we are lucky.



TO BE EQUAL

List Is Veritably Endless

By Gerald C. Horne, Esq.
Special To The Post

Many recognized that affirmative action is at root a political struggle moreso than a legal one. Politics got us the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Politics are taking over our hard-earned gains of the Sixties. Hence, 1980 as an election year should be viewed with more than passing interest by affirmative action advocates.

The November elections are just around the corner and it appears that the choice we are being handed is Jimmy Carter ("born-again" right winger with more guns and less butter) vs. Ronald Reagan (sometimes spelled "Ray-gun," a man who achieved prominence by attacking the "welfare mother").

For Black voters and all fair-minded people, this choice is a Hobson's choice - no choice at all. Some might argue that we should vote for Carter as the "lesser evil"; but voters have been doing that for years (recall Carter vs. Ford in '76 or Johnson vs. Goldwater in '64 or Truman vs. Dewey in '48 - the list is veritably endless) and look where it has brought us. The so-called "misery index" (the rate of unemployment added to the rate of inflation) is at the highest level in the nation's history with Blacks being disproportionately hit. Another "victory" for Carter and we'll be in the positions of the "victor" Pyrrhus, King of Epirus or the troops at Thermopylae - i.e. another "victory" like this and we'll be totally undone.

The political situation of Blacks is exacerbated by the miniscule percentage of Black elected officials. If ever there was an area deserving of affirmative action, this is it. And the sad fact is that the situation is not improving but getting worse.

For example, the number of Black elected officials in the United States increased by only 2 percent between July, 1978 and July, 1979 - the smallest annual increase since 1970, when the figures first were collected by the Joint Center for Political Studies. But even this figure is misleading since the 2 percent reflects 23 officials from the Virgin Islands included on the roster for the first time.

Yes, the number of Black elected officials has increased over the past 10 years but they still represent only 1 percent of the entire total of 490,265, while Blacks comprise 15 percent of the nation's total population.

A closer examination reveals once again that like most employment areas, Black elected officials are disproportionately represented at the lower rungs of power. Forty-eight percent of all Black elected officials are at the municipal level. Of the 191 Black mayors, 70 percent are from communities with populations of 5,000 or less. Twenty-five percent of all Black elected officials serve in education positions, school boards and the like.

With all due respect to the officials involved, though it is positive that we have Black mayors of villages and hamlets and Blacks on school boards, this does not represent where power rests in this country.

So where does this leave us? Well, the old-timers recall that Blacks have not voted Democratic at all times.

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From The White House

Carter Reaffirms His Non-Committal To Humphrey-Hawkins

Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

The platform committee which was overwhelmingly composed of Carter forces prevailed in seeing that the President's issues dominated the platform. The public would certainly like to take the platform measures seriously, but usually candidates on the campaign trail are entirely different from the elected person. Candidates generally tell the people whatever they think might get them elected. Then having achieved that goal, all promises are laid aside.

In his platform, Carter reaffirmed his commitment to Humphrey-Hawkins. After the fanfare of signing the Act into law, he has done nothing at all about meeting its goals. Humphrey-Hawkins calls for an unemployment rate of 4 percent by 1983. Yet, the Administration's policies have been geared to increasing unemployment from the time of signing the bill in 1978 which was 5.9 percent to 6.2 percent in 1979 and 7.4



Alfreda L. Madison

percent at present with a prediction of a rise of more than 8 percent for 1981. The Act also calls for inflation reduction of 3 percent by 1983. At present it is over 11 percent and all indications are that it will rise higher. In the platform reaffirmation of its Humphrey-Hawkins commitment, the President has extended the goals' time for unemployment until 1985 and inflation to 1987. Mr. Carter has used the Nixon-Ford trade off theory of raising unemploy-

ment for reducing inflation. This is a clear violation of Humphrey-Hawkins, and inflation has not been reduced. No framework has been provided by the Administration for carrying out the mandates of the Act, which requires policies for employing people to reduce needed goods and services which are economically sound, socially desirable and anti-inflationary.

Further violations of the Act by the President have been the budget cuts, besides employment, the training program, aid to state and local governments, youth employment programs, student loans, education for handicapped, low income housing assistance, child nutrition programs and others.

The President's platform states that the Administration has added 8.5 million new jobs to the work force with 1 million of those being for blacks. It failed to show that overall unemployment has risen to 7.4 percent with black overall unemployment to 14.7 per-

cent. This unemployment rate is higher than it was when President Carter came into office.

So if the Administration calls the disaster it has made, through its complete violations of the Humphrey-Hawkins Act a commitment reaffirmation of the same, can only lead to complete devastation for the majority of the Ameri-

Push Hits Housing Inequities

A recent Chicago Tribune series has pointed out how blacks in that city experience a "hidden" flow of their dollars from the community to the suburbs. The study has shown that as many as 10 times the number of loans are granted to those outside of the city, than to those actively utilizing a bank's facilities. The dollar amounts granted in the loans reflected the same disparity between suburban and urban dwellers.

Through difficulties in procurement of loans for housing and home improvements, inner-city neighborhoods are suffer-

ing, while those in the suburbs prosper. An unofficial "black tax" as The Tribune put it, affects those living in urban centers elsewhere. It is one of several impediments to home ownership and improvement which affects millions.

To address such problems in housing and economics, Operation PUSH has devoted an entire day of its upcoming convention in New Orleans to black business and housing. Addressing these problems directly will be Moon Landrieu, Federal Secretary of Housing and Urban De-

velopment in Washington; George Johnson, president of Johnson Products; the Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of Operation PUSH, in addition to others in the position to instigate change.

Among topics on the week-long agenda are education, employment, international affairs, health and other areas of vital interest.

