

EDITORIALS & COMMENTS

Last Hired-First Fired Paradox

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last week that municipal governments cannot ignore "last-hired, first-fired" seniority plans in order to protect blacks, women and other minorities who received their jobs because of past discrimination. The ruling, one of the most significant civil rights cases in the past decade, in effect protects higher-seniority white workers (mostly men) from being laid-off rather than the lower-seniority minority workers hired under an affirmative action program.

By a 6-3 vote, the Justices endorsed the viewpoint of the Reagan Administration to limit the use of affirmative action plans. Obviously the high court's decision represents a major defeat for civil rights and feminist organizations.

The case in point was that the Memphis Fire Department had incorrectly or wrongly protected blacks from lay-offs or demotions during the time of an economic crisis. The Justice Department and white firemen argued that such affirmative action tactics represented discrimination against innocent white people.

As much as it may hurt blacks, women and other minorities, we find it difficult to oppose the Court's decision because it in effect does result in reverse discrimination against innocent white workers. The individual white worker, whoever he may be, cannot and should not be punished - that is, discriminated against - because some white person or persons in the past discriminated against some blacks. This is equally as unjust as when one black is denied an opportunity because another black did not previously perform well.

Undoubtedly, the major flaw in much civil rights legislation is that the bottom line result in some individual whites in the 1980's having to suffer for injustice against blacks 20 or 30 years ago. In fact the issue deals with the basic fundamental rights of the individual and his right to expect his government to protect his rights. Again, as hard as it may be for blacks to accept, it may simply have to take the passing of a decade or two and the retirement or death of some older workers before the issue evens itself out.

We firmly stand in support of the rights of the individual as a basic fundamental principle of our society. Therefore, in the long run blacks, women and other minorities gain nothing if such gaining is at the expense of another's rights.

Added to the much publicized problems of American education now comes a study that says U.S. students lag far behind the scores, skills and abilities of pupils from Japan and Taiwan.

Schools Need Action, Not Talk!

The University of Michigan study, based on testing and observation of 1,440 first and fifth graders in the three countries, offered three partial explanations for the lower scores in America:

-American students spend less time in school than their Japanese and Taiwanese counterparts.

-American school children do less homework.

-When American children are in class, they are more likely to be engaged in academically irrelevant activities.

None of these observations are new. For example, as late as the

1950's, black schools in the South had shorter school years than the white schools so that black youth could be in the field picking cotton for the white land owners. It's a known fact that those black children lagged far behind the white youth in academic skills.

More significantly, it's past time to give our attention to correcting the shortcomings in our school if we assume that they exist. No more studies, please, on what's wrong with our schools. Indeed, let's get positive about what's right with our schools and begin to build on this positive aspect. Our youth, our teachers, our administrators deserve a positive challenge as a foundation for moving ahead, not negative vibrations.

Let's go, America, to a better education for our youth now and tomorrow.

BLACK BOOT-STRAPS

790000000000.00
(SEVENTY NINE BILLION DOLLARS INCOME OF BLACK AMERICA 1979)

'BLACK RETICENCE TO SEIZE INITIATIVE TO ORGANIZE THEIR COMMUNITIES IS A MAJOR FACTOR AND AN IMPORTANT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO OUR COMMUNITIES UNDER DEVELOPMENT.'

DEAN DOUGLAS C. GLASSGOW
DEAN - HOWARD UNIVERSITY



Letters
To The
Editor



Moral Fiber Of Our Country - We Are No Longer Pawns!

Dear Editor:

July 4 is just around the corner. It's called "Independence Day." This synonym for our country denotes the fact that we are no longer pawns to the English royalty. But what about freedom within our own United States?

There are those right here in the U.S. who would like to crush the moral fibers of our country. I feel that the passage of the ERA is one such tactic being used today. I feel very strongly that if the ERA is passed, our children will suffer; many of our moral standards will be torn down and more violence will occur.

Now don't get me wrong. Women should have equal pay, women should be hired to do the same job a man does without being harrassed out of the position. And if a woman enjoys going out in a war zone battle field, then let her.

What I'm talking about are the homosexual rights. If the Equal Rights Amendment is passed, the homosexuals will have the same rights the woman is allowed to have.

How many people have thought about this when voting, "yes" for ERA. Have they thought about homosexuals teaching their children? If ERA is passed homosexuals will be able to come into the classroom and what type of influence will this be on Christian children?

The Bible clearly speaks against homosexuality. In the Bible cities have even been destroyed by God because of it. Will ERA mean that a homosexual will seek to pastor our churches? Our laws condone no discrimination against sexes. It will do none the rights of homosexuals to take any job or position they desire.

Many may argue that homosexuals will be able to separate their personal desires from their jobs. But there will always be the exception. Around the country there will be homosexuals openly practicing homosexuality. Will our children think "If my teacher does it, it must be all right?"

Then I have heard the argument that if we raise our children correctly they will not follow the wrong path. I also want to provide an environment and place my children in an environment of as much right attitudes as I possibly can.

I do not hate homosexuals as people. I am sure many of them love, hurt and have faith like the rest of us. I don't want to stereotype them like many stereotyped blacks. All I am saying is that our country has based many of its laws along the line of the ten commandments Biblical and scripture. If we steal we are placed in jail.

If we kill sometimes the law kills us. To me breaking the law of heterosexuality is just as bad. And it's time that people take heed and understand the measure of the Equal Rights Amendment and its effect on our freedom.

B.D. Tabor



Coming Of Teenage Fathers

The sceneria is all too familiar: each year over a quarter million babies are born to teenage mothers - most unwed. Some of these mothers choose to keep their babies, thus causing them to seek aid from federal agencies. Fifteen million dollars worth of aid each year.

Often the fathers of these babies are pegged as being irresponsible or considered forgotten partners in the situation. However, recently the Ford Foundation set aside \$700,000 to fund programs in eight major cities to study and assist in the teaching of the young men as to their roles as being teenage fathers. The programs are designed to teach the fathers baby care, parental responsibility and offer counseling.

Most teenage mothers find themselves at or below poverty level at the time of their child's birth. These young women go on welfare and stay there. The pattern can be cut down and possibly eliminated with the sharing of responsibility from the father. Social workers are being urged by agencies such as the Ford Foundation via local agencies to seek out and befriend the scared and confused young man. The social worker is urged to help the young father realize that his fear and apprehension is common, and that talking and learning of the new experience will make the transition from boy to man easier. Thus when the young man faces his reality, he is persuaded to take part in the total responsibility of child care.

Through agencies funded by the Ford Foundation and the like, young fathers are made to understand the importance of financial support. They are taught such things as budgeting, comparative shopping, and how to seek and find viable work. Since most of the young men do not have high school diplomas, they are encouraged to seek the equivalency diplomas and later job skills training. Such suggestions help to give the young man a sense of worth and responsibility. Many of the teen fathers do not think of themselves as nurturers unless they can provide financial support; the programs teach them how to do both.

By having the father's support, emotionally, physically and financially, the young mothers do not have to depend 100 percent on public assistance. The working, supporting father oftentimes does not have a \$20,000 per year job, but a \$200 per week paycheck is enough to keep the couple off welfare. This feeling of being financially supportive also contributes to an idealism of dignity and wanting the best for the child. Many young fathers participating in such programs speak of giving their child the best possible, including a college education and lots of love. Many fathers do not want their children to live as they have and work to avoid that consequence.

For over three years, New York's Bank Street College of Education has been studying the role of the teenage father in the United States. The Ford Foundation is sponsoring Bank Street in such studies: its findings will reveal how to instigate fathers to become involved, and the special problems they face. Bank Street is also to devise programs that would best guide the young men toward greater involvement and share in the responsibility. The findings will be released later in the year.

The plight of teenage parenting is against odds for success, but the odds can be beaten. Teenage parents first face the yearning for freedom and the demand of responsibility. Special programs geared toward their special problems may be the key factor in breaking that stress line. The statistics on these people are heart breaking: they collect welfare, are jobless, uneducated and discriminated against based on the mentioned factors. Yes, these young people have made a huge mistake - the mistake of taking on such a responsibility at such a young age based on romantic notions of happiness ever after.

Teenage fathers are as unique as the mothers that bear their children. They too need the support of the community in making decisions. Programs such as the ones sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Bank Street College are imperative to the success or failure of these young men. Too often they are forgotten, or tagged irresponsible but that must change. Young men should be made to understand that fathering a child does not end at the time of conception, nor is it a way of proving masculinity. Any "thing" can have a baby, but very few can truly be considered fathers to the children. Fathering is a commitment and a child's life is not to be toyed with.

From Capitol Hill

President's Policies Carried Out?

Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post
At 3:00 John Wilson, Public Affairs Director of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, ushered me into the spacious room, once occupied by J. Edgar Hoover. Sitting behind the desk was the slim William Bradford Reynolds, Assistant Attorney General who is the chief director of the Civil Rights Division. After exchanging gracious greetings, we got down to the purpose of the interview, which was to assess the Reagan's Administration's civil rights actions.

Q: You are against busing, even in some instances where the Court has decided that it is necessary for desegregation. How do you plan to remedy segregation?

A: We don't have busing in our plans. We reach consent decrees. We have instituted magnet schools. We have put forth that plan in Bakersfield.

Q: The NAACP says that magnet schools are not for the purpose of desegregation.

A: They have busing as a back up plan. We don't have busing as a mandatory back up. In the Cincinnati case, the NAACP accepted a plan that is exactly what ours is. It doesn't matter what the back up plan is, if it works.



Alfreda L. Madison

The point I'm making is that the NAACP has signed off on the kind of remedy we have put in place because it does what busing does not do. It addresses the educational needs in the public school system of Blacks who are caught in an environment that is not only segregated but also educationally bankrupt. There is an extra project called "rise" which is an extra educational component for those schools that are not magnet schools to ensure that the children who don't choose to go to magnet schools will have a curriculum that will address all the various needs of the students and will allow for the parents to interact with the schools.

Q: In some places busing has gone fine, for instance Norfolk. Did you tell the school board that it didn't

have to go to court; that they could institute their plan for getting rid of busing?

A: We had conversations with Norfolk School Board. I can't disclose the nature of those conversations. My own view was and still is, if Norfolk School Board wants to change their existing plan it could do so without going to Court. I understand the school board preferred to use the court.

Q: You insist on correcting discrimination on an individual basis. With 26 million Blacks in the U.S. how long do you think it will take for Blacks to reach equality?

A: I think we've come a long way in equal job opportunities, but there are still some employers who need to ensure that there is no discrimination. We look to where discrimination occurs and we address that violation.

Q: How many Deputy Assistant Attorneys General do you have in your department and how many are Black? How many special assistants to the Deputy Assistants do you have and how many are Black?

A: I have three Deputy Assistant Attorneys General. No Blacks. I have two special assistants. No Blacks. I have seven section chiefs. Two Blacks

and two women.

Q: Peter Sherwood, the Blacks' attorney disagrees. He said the Court upheld goals and timetables and race consciousness.

A: I'm saying that race consciousness is a constitutional matter.

Q: When you testified on legislation concerning Grove City, you said the legislation would interfere with state and local government? Isn't that a return to states rights?

A: No, it is written in a manner that is so vague and so susceptible of broad interpretation that there are no discernible limits as to what the Federal government can do.

Q: Wasn't the basis for the '64 Act, the denial of Blacks' constitutional rights?

A: If the '64 Act went that far we wouldn't need this legislation.

Q: Didn't the Justice Department change sides in the Alabama case?

A: Certainly not. The Court asked us to come into the case as an intervenor. We told the court that we would not take sides until we have the full facts in the case.

There are many discrepancies and inconsistencies in Mr. Reynolds' responses that I will respond to at another time, since space will not allow that now.

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