

# Nuclear power not our only future energy alternative

**To the Students:**

In his letter to the students appearing in the Oct. 3 issue of the *Carolina Journal*, Frank S. Preston gave a favorable estimate of nuclear power. The letter was poorly reasoned and contained a number of outright falsehoods — failings that are chronic amongst the supporters of nuclear energy. Point by point, this letter I am writing now is an effort to set the record straight.

1. Preston makes the claim: "The U.S. nuclear industry has been a poor path to

profits to date."

This is an outright falsehood. The nuclear power industry is a multibillion dollar affair, and like any other multibillion dollar industry, it produces many millions of dollars in profits. For every dollar invested in nuclear power, a profitable return is made. When the cost of building an average size nuclear reactor is more than \$1 billion apiece, it should be clear to everyone somebody is making a bunch of money.

2. Preston makes the claim: "The (govern-

ment) subsidy issue is a 'red herring' and not unique to the nuclear field." Let's take a closer look.

Whiel it may be reasonable for the government to help private firms to overcome the uncertainties of a promising technology, it is not reasonable this help should be so vigorous and extensive it undermines free market competition and disguises the actual cost of a product to the consumer.

The Federal Energy Research and Development Ad-

ministration has conservatively estimated the government has already spent \$9 billion in nuclear technologies. If the utilities had paid these expenses, the cost of nuclear generated electricity would have increased by more than 50 percent. And as if these past expenses were not enough, the government continues its massive spending on nuclear development. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) routinely spends more than \$1 billion a year doing research for the

atomic industry, about five times what it spends on the development of solar energy or energy conservation.

Perhaps the most significant federal subsidy of the nuclear industry is the Price-Anderson Act of 1957. This legislation limits the liability of a utility to \$560 million in the case of nuclear accident. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission itself has admitted a major nuclear accident could cause \$14 billion in property damage, about 25 times what would be available as compensation for the victims. But if it costs over \$560 million, we lose, not the utility. It's no wonder, then, private industry balked on atomic power until Price-Anderson gave it the financial protection it needs to operate such an incredibly hazardous technology. We should all ask ourselves: "If it's really so safe as they tell us, why can't they insure us."

3. Preston gives lip service to solar energy, but warns us "...not to look for this to supply more than 10

percent of our needs."

That is pretty pessimistic thinking considering the President's Council on Environmental Quality claims by the year 2000, 25 percent of our energy needs could be provided for by solar power, and more than 50 percent by the year 2050.

4. "Nuclear energy at present is our only viable substitute for fossil fuels."

Again, Preston makes an outright falsehood. Solar energy is only a substitute, as noted above. Another is energy conservation. Dennis Hayes of the Worldwatch Institute (Washington, D.C.) estimates we can cut energy demand by more than 40 percent if we spend money changing equipment and altering buildings to achieve energy efficiency. These savings cost far less than getting the same amount of energy by building additional nuclear plants.

If Preston is so sure nuclear power is our only viable energy alternative, he should

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## Nation affected by Bakke decision

By Michael D. Evans

The Supreme Court has proven once again to be inept and unable to steer in any one consistent direction. Warren Burger's court has failed to follow up on the initiatives set forth by the extremely progressive Earl Warren court, even to the extent of destroying what the Warren court accomplished, as is the case with the landmark Allen Bakke decision.

The Bakke decision has set the civil rights movement back intolerably once again. Justice Thurgood Marshall, who opposed Bakke's entrance into medical school, said, "I feel we have come full circle...Now we have this (Supreme) Court again stepping in, this time to stop affirmative action programs." The only way to save affirmative action programs now is to take advantage of the vague, noncommittal attitude of the court's decision.

After passing the Jimmy Carter School of Compromise with an "A," the Court must now look at what it has wrought. The Court's indecision means our elected representatives have a strong load left on their shoulders, in keeping equal opportunities available to the minorities of our nation. This is a task we cannot really afford to leave in the hands of a group of politicians. The decision should have been the Court's and the Court copped out on this one.

The situation brought about by the Bakke decision is still unresolved. There are a number of cases now pending before the Supreme Court which could provide a clearer focus for some direction on the Court's feelings on the affirmative action issue. The nation's dedication to the affirmative action programs is at stake with each decision of the Court, yet the Court seems perfectly willing to ignore their own importance.

Affirmative action is a necessary and vital concern of the nation. We cannot expect to set our sights toward a progressive, agreeable society for all until we have provided available means of equality for all. Perhaps a rereading of our constitution's idealism would be proper for the Supreme Court justices, since they have shown no desire to support the constitution in earlier decisions.

Unfortunately, the fate of affirmative action lies with the Court. It would be better off in the hands of the people who would benefit, and would-benefit each and everyone of us in the long run.

By Sammy Hamrick

A few weeks ago a great event for America freedom occurred: Allan Bakke went to medical school. Bakke's fight went all the way to the United States Supreme Court, the landmark ruling ends the worst form of reverse discrimination: quotas. We still have a long way to go before this intolerable form of injustice is erased from our society.

The Bakke case stems from an attempt by some to allow the less fortunate to catch up through various forms of "affirmative action" plans. No doubt the intent of these programs are benign but their effects are not.

The fact is many of these programs have kept students who are qualified from being accepted to various colleges, graduate schools and from being hired by various employers. These students are disqualified only because they happen to be the wrong color at the wrong time. Many employers are instructed by government regulatory agencies to get that quota at all costs. These companies end up hiring less competent employees. Therefore many "affirmative action" plans actually breed incompetence. Incompetence in business causes waste. Waste will eventually result in a rise in prices which feeds the fires of inflation. Everyone is affected and in the end, all lose more than they gain.

In my view it would be the lowest of insults to know I was hired not for my ability but to fill a quota. It makes me wonder: was I admitted to UNCC because I met the requirements or because I was left-handed?

We must realize in our melting pot society, all of us are in some way a minority and have handicaps to overcome. There are too many rags to riches success stories in our heritage for me to believe it can't happen today.

True, Bakke opened the way for an end to reverse discrimination. These will be more court battles. Also Representative Robert Walker (R.Pa) has introduced a bill prohibiting the use of federal funds to require quotas for hiring or admissions. The Congress should take this opportunity to insure freedom by passing Walker's bill and President Jimmy "Human Rights" Carter should have no trouble signing.

Americans have always improved themselves through hard work. It's no different today. The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary. The nightmare of reverse discrimination must end.

## Carolina Journal

"I must Create a System or be enslaved by another man's." — William Blake

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