

BOARD EDITORIALS

NEGATIVE ACTION?

A law professor's forthcoming study points to a need for advocates and detractors of affirmative action alike to examine its effectiveness.

Questions about fairness rest at the heart of the debate over affirmative action practices. But dialogue about the basic effectiveness of these practices has not been nearly as evident. The results of a forthcoming study by Richard Sander, a law professor at the University of California-Los Angeles, should be enough to energize responsible supporters and critics alike to discussion. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, Sander found in his study that 51 percent of black law students have grade-point averages that place them in the bottom tenth of their classes and that 45 percent of black students graduated and passed the bar exam on their first try, compared with about 80 percent of white students. Sander went so far as to state that ending affirmative action in law school admissions would increase the number of new black lawyers by 8.8 percent. Regardless of whether a person considers the practice to be a cure or a crutch, the report should bring up serious concerns about whether or not this type of affirmative action is accomplishing its goal.

The general logic behind Sander's conclusions is strong enough to raise questions: Does being a less qualified applicant translate, more often than not, into being less successful than others in completing a particular school's workload? While affirmative action helps minority applicants in terms of the means, might it actually hinder them in the end? This doesn't pertain to the question of whether or not affirmative action is just. Instead, this raises the question of whether or not it truly helps minorities. By no means should the results of a single study lead to new calls for the end of this type of affirmative action. It is a single report, and some might question the methodology behind it. But experts, including both proponents and opponents of affirmative action, need to take a closer look. The purpose of gaining better representation for minorities in the academic and professional spheres might not be served by the practice, at least in the area of law school admissions. It's in the best interests of everyone, including the practice's friends and enemies, to find out for sure.

ONE ROTTEN APPLE

The College Republican National Committee set a poor example for political groups everywhere with its dishonest fund-raising practices.

A College Republican group out of Washington, D.C., acted in poor taste in using deceptive fund-raising practices to fleece senior citizens. The (Durham) Herald-Sun reported that the College Republican National Committee called senior citizens multiple times — sometimes in the same day — to solicit donations under different names. The College Republican National Committee raised more than \$93,000 in North Carolina. Although questions about the legality of the multiple-calling method haven't been addressed fully, the misleading nature of the strategy certainly qualifies as morally deficient. It sets a poor example for other college political groups to follow. Local College Republicans have rightfully condemned these questionable methods of fund raising. They received little, if any, of the funds collected by the national organization and had no part whatsoever in its fund-raising campaign. In fact, local chapters of College Republicans typically receive very little financial support from the national organization, the policy adviser of the Duke College Republicans told

The Herald-Sun. The Republican National Committee has also distanced itself from the disgraceful actions of a few at the CRNC. A spokesperson for the Republican National Committee has said that the RNC is not affiliated with the CRNC. The CRNC split from the Republican National Committee in 2002 to become a 527 group. Such groups can raise unlimited amounts of money, under the stipulation that they may not coordinate with any partisan campaigns. Intentionally misleading seniors is not representative of most political organizations, and it is sad that one bad apple can ruin the bunch. Politics and political organizations already have a poor reputation. If there is one thing that American politics do not need, it is another reason to doubt the honesty of those involved in the political process. Unfortunately, this is exactly the kind of behavior that reinforces the stereotype of dishonest, unctuous politicians and ultimately can discourage Americans from taking part in the democratic process.

POLITICAL CLEANING

New Hanover County voters showed character in electing an openly lesbian state Senate candidate despite a smear campaign against her.

New Hanover County voters demonstrated good sense and progress when they rejected state Sen. Woody White and his advertising campaign that berated opponent Julia Boseman for being openly gay. According to The Associated Press, the ads and mass mailings were paid for by the North Carolina Republican Executive Committee. The Republican group argued that the ads were shown to uncover that much of Boseman's campaign funding was raised by the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. The New Hanover County GOP Chairman Charlton Allen told the AP that, "It's not gay-bashing. It's pointing out the disingenuous nature of Ms. Boseman's campaign." But The (Wilmington) Star-News summed up the situation quite adequately when the paper retracted its endorsement of White not long before the election. The Star noted that it was one thing for White's campaign to point out Boseman's sources of funding but that, "It's something else to use language such as 'known lesbian activists' and 'radical homosexual rights and privileges' and to conclude by saying 'The truth is

... Julia Boseman seeks to be the first openly gay or lesbian state senator in North Carolina history." If an interested party was curious about Boseman's true agenda, he would find her issues listed clearly on her campaign site as follows: traffic and growth, lottery, economic development, education and experience. Her platform seems quite normal for a Senate candidate — as does her record as a county commissioner. Though White contended that he has not and will not question Boseman's private life or lifestyle, his ads sang a different tune. It takes an impressive amount of progress for a state so well known for its socially conservative traditions to vote out an incumbent state senator. It reflects even more progress to look beyond White's smear campaign and choose Boseman. Boseman has proven that sometimes being frank and forthcoming about the whole truth — what you stand for, who you are, and what you plan to do — wins out in the end. New Hanover County voters clearly felt that she was the best person to represent their needs in the General Assembly. More power to them.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, and were reached after open debate. The board consists of six board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2004-05 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Group to compel politicians to respond more to voters

TO THE EDITOR: After the election, many people have a lot of energy and opinions and a desire to make a difference, but just don't realize that they can make a difference without waiting four more years. Whether you are angry or relieved at the outcome, angry at the bitterness of the campaign or disillusioned with the whole system, listen up. It's time to harness your energy and emotions and to make a difference. The fight for democracy starts at home, and it starts today. Our generation is the generation that will win back American democracy. This is your chance to get involved in Democracy Matters at UNC. If you care about the environment, education costs, globalization and civil rights, then you should care about the dominance of big money in politics. When our government is responsive to voters — not just big donors — only then can we achieve true democracy where everyone's voice is heard. This is a nonpartisan group, and we welcome everyone who is ready to take back our democracy, including students, faculty, and staff. The Democracy Matters chapter at UNC is just getting started, and we need all the help we can get.

There are also leadership positions available. We are trying to get organized so we can start strong in January. If you are interested, let me know at jjfiel@email.unc.edu.
Jeremy Fiel
Junior
Chemistry

Like Clinton was, Bush is now everybody's president
TO THE EDITOR: In the post-election era we now find ourselves in, there are still signs of deep division in our country. There are many people, on and off campus, who maintain a deep hatred of President Bush. Interestingly, these are the same people who plead for peace and harmony. I wonder how those who preach the gospel of civil harmony can balance that goal against their extremist rhetoric. Back in 2000, when Gore won the popular vote, we on the right got an earful about the "will of the people" and how Gore hence should have been president. Well, now that Bush overwhelmingly won the popular vote this year, the people who voted for him are derided as racist, redneck, anti-gay nutjobs who hate everyone. I guess "the will of the people" only matters when it goes for a select candidate. I really hope the left will accept

Bush as its president this year. I'm not a big fan of Bill Clinton, but the fact is that he was the president of me and every other American. Let's hope that this time around, we'll not hear liberals decry President Bush as an illegitimate president.
Kris Wampler
Junior
Political science

Bad post-election attitudes will not help the country
TO THE EDITOR: In response to the "Position of U.S. president itself deserves our respect" letter, I agree that many people have ungraciously handled the election results. However, it is not only the unhappy Democrats who have behaved so shamefully. I too have been one of the wide-spread liberals who have claimed to be moving to Tahiti, but sending hate messages to Republicans is a little out of my league. But the facts are these: Almost half of our nation is hurt and disappointed, and Bush supporters should show more sympathy and class in this matter. Bragging and rubbing his reelection in the faces of such a large minority is not the way to unite this country. A popular British newspaper, The Daily Mirror, ran a picture of Bush on its cover with the headline

"How can 59,054,087 people be so dumb?" Though amusing, these post-election attitudes will not get us anywhere. Many of us are mourning, but we will recover and stand together in hope of a better nation. Until then, I ask those of you who are satisfied with the election results to show some respect to those who aren't.
Jenna El Hafez
Senior
Political science

'Big Media' aren't in touch with the average American
TO THE EDITOR: The mainstream media — let's call them Big Media — have been emphasizing that the election results mean Democrats are out of tune with the average American. What about Big Media? Bush not only beat the Democrats, but he also beat Big Media as well. In fact, I'm still waiting for Big Media's concession speech. Don't get me wrong, Big Media put up a good fight. In a stroke of genius, Dan Rather whipped out his forged documents. Some fellow at ABC sent out a memo essentially instructing his reporters to give Bush rough coverage. Evan Thomas of Newsweek readily admits the leftward bias of Big Media. Big Left Media (= Big Media)

gave it all they had in this election — they had the eye of the tiger. Yet, after some introspection, Big Media might come to see that they too are out of touch with average Americans — those who root for elitists are elitists themselves. This conclusion is bolstered by the trend of democratization in the dissemination of news. Bloggers, Fox News and the like are on the rise. People are growing increasingly distrustful of Big Media, and rightly so. Perhaps Big Media will take the advice they are giving to sulking Democrats: come down from your ivory towers. Big Media, meet the common man, and give him the facts without political prejudice. You won't lose another election if you don't actively participate.
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ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt; Nothing's so hard, but search will find it out."

ROBERT HERRICK, ENGLISH POET

EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

Making the world better for everyone is a real moral value

My guy Kerry lost last week. I feel like I got sucker punched, nailed right in the gut — like Houdini — before I had a chance to brace myself. Somehow, I'd grown to believe that the Democrats could really take it this time. Somehow, my view of the world and the nation still isn't wholly shared by the majority of my fellow citizens. Somehow, despite moving 1,500 miles across the country since the last presidential election, I am still living in a red state.



DAVID HAVLICK
OVER THE HILL

My parents in Colorado, also a red state, had it worse. Fine citizens, they spent Election Day volunteering as poll watchers on the north side of Denver. The precinct's voting took place in the lobby of an assisted living center for the elderly. As evening came and polls on the East Coast began to close, a woman who was a resident at the center started poking her head in now and then to give volunteers election updates. "Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina just went to Kerry!" she offered at one point. Then later, "Kerry leads the electoral vote 73-10!" It wasn't until later, on their drive home from Denver, when my parents heard on the radio that quite the opposite was true. The elderly informant had apparently confused her red and blue states. Perhaps in 40 or 50 years, I too will have a chance to mix up my primary colors or to skew political realities to fit my fancies. No doubt, some faithful readers think that I already do. Be that as it may, I'm trying to make sense of what happened. By most accounts, what tipped the scales for Bush this year was not the war in Iraq, which a majority of Americans believe is going poorly. It was not the lack of affordable health care, the squandered

budget surplus, the overall loss of American jobs or even the increased sense of fear and vulnerability that carried Bush to victory this year. On each of these counts, he rated less than outstanding. No, the telling issue when all was said and done was "moral values." Moral values. As I understand them, moral values have to do with how we ought to treat one another and to live in the world. A few examples of sound moral values come to mind: caring for those less fortunate than ourselves, living peacefully and with respect for a diversity of life, trying to act thoughtfully and working to ensure a healthy future for generations yet to come. I can even think of people who have exemplified these traits, people who I would say lived in accord with strong moral values. Mother Teresa of Calcutta comes to mind. As do Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas Gandhi, Gautama Buddha, Albert Schweitzer, Rachel Carson and Jesus. Some of these people held religious beliefs in common. Others did not. But each of them acted largely in accord with certain moral precepts of which most of us — regardless of religious conviction — would likely approve. As a result of each of these individuals' efforts, the world is surely a better place to live, regardless of your station in life. That, to me, is a fine measure of moral values.

What leaves me puzzled and saddened from this past week's election is not only that my guy lost, but also how so many people could vote for his opponent, whose policies these past four years have consistently worked against programs for equality, justice, peace and caring. Don't get me wrong — I recognize George W. Bush as a man who abides by certain religious principles and seems confident of the righteousness of his purpose. But we cast ourselves into some peril when we conflate religion and governance. The separation of church and state ought to remain one of the strongest principles in America to guarantee that my religious views do not morph into the law of the land or become horribly constrained by these laws. It's an arrangement that protects the lot of us, whether we are evangelical Protestants or Druids. The moral values vote worries me not just because it seems dangerous to blur these distinctions between faith and legislative fiat, but also because I don't trust its current application. After all, how can you both claim to care for "the least of these among us" and support cutting social programs for the needy? Where is the morality in rewriting environmental standards to favor industry over the health of our children? Does the sanctity of life extend to all lives, or do we manage to exclude, say, the lives of Iraqis or those of pregnant women facing life-threatening complications? I'd like to think that our president has carefully thought through such questions. I guess we'll have yet another four years to find out.

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