

WILSON

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prohibited from participating, there is always this discussion.

One of the ringleaders in the fight against set-asides has been the Associated General Contractors of America. This organization represents at least 32,000 construction companies and few if any are minority-owned businesses. AGA innocently argues that the Richmond decision "strengthens the competitive bid system" because the courts "reject efforts to inject irrelevant factors, like race and sex, into awarding of public contracts." This argument ignores one major aspect of obtaining a contract—the necessity of bonding. In order to receive a contract, the business must be bonded. Most minority firms will put up land or some other assets to cover the amount of the contracts, while others get bonded through companies that specialize in this type of activity. Recently bonding has become an issue that has caused considerable discussion in minority business circles. The premise is quite simple - if you can't get bonded, you can't go after the big jobs.

The elimination of set-asides in many jurisdictions coupled with bonding difficulties for minority firms means decreased participation and few large jobs. At a time when some are claiming that we live in a color-blind society, the Supreme Court's decision

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decline: Miami (-16%), Cleveland (-10%) and Atlanta (-4%).

Nobody knows why Seattle is up 75% (gangs from LA?) or D.C. is only up 1% (legal crackdown?) or Miami is down 14%. But we do know, based on these and previous statistics, that the so-called inner cities are now war zones where life is cheap and drug-related turf battles and death from semiautomatics or 357 magnums that tear up the body are the occupants.

When asked to stop the carnage, police provide more excuses than security: drug pushers have rights, not enough room in jail, judges too lenient, making a case against the dealer is too tough, too few cops and dealers would be forced indoors.

On second thought, since no one is putting them in jail, what difference would being indoors make? At least, the neighborhood would look better. But aside from the police being unable to keep the streets free of pushers, I must conclude, another obvious question comes to mind.

Why not arrest the buyer? Is not buying drugs illegal? If legalizing drugs were to stop the demand for them, as Baltimore's African-American mayor and many Caucasian conservatives propose, which effectively

shows that lady justice has indeed removed the blindfold to look at who stands before her.

would turn African-American communities into graveyards, why not put "demand" away instead?

How will we ever win a "war" against drugs when the police tell us they're out-gunned and legally handicapped, and the courts let those arrested go because of their rights and a lack of jail space? What other alternative is there other than giving whatever available jail

space there is to the suburbanites who bash African-American neighborhoods by day and do their drug shopping there by night.

And let's not forget the African-American professionals who disdain their fellow African-Americans left behind in poverty, but go back to the old neighborhood only to buy drugs. Are you noticing the professional status of the self-confessed

drug addicts testifying in court, that they used drugs with D.C. Mayor Marion Barry?

If they, and their professional reputations, were exposed in the media, it would run the drug users, the demand, away from the supply, the ghetto youth, and eliminate the drug wars.

However, this suggestion has as much chance of being adopted as a balanced

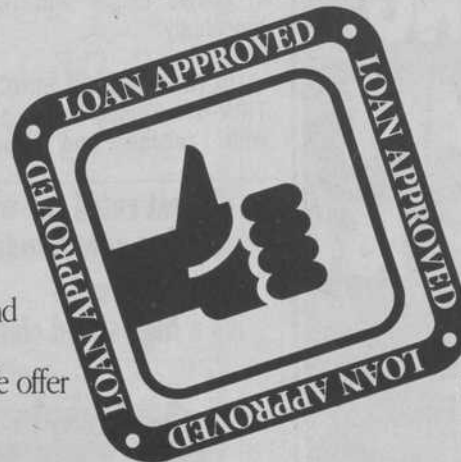
federal budget because the people who shop for drugs in the ghetto are the "decent" law-abiding voters from the suburbs and middle-class areas who vote for the very politicians who would have to have them arrested.

The answer to who is responsible for the awesome murder rate in the inner cities: the middle-class outsider who buys drugs.

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NOTICE

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SUMMIT COMMITTEE cordially invites the public to meet and discuss potential issues for the 90s with elected officials from Louisiana, Colorado, Tennessee, California, Oklahoma and Nevada in an open forum to be held Saturday, September 8, 1990 at 2:00 P.M. in the West Las Vegas Library.

For more information contact: Dr. Al Gourrier at 799-4910.