

OUR VIEW

Right to compete

As the Supreme Court debates the merits of affirmative action in collegiate admissions—reweaving cases out of the University of Michigan—now is a good time to assess what the program has done and meant since its creation by a 1978 Supreme Court directive.

The statistics are mind-boggling. Perhaps the most telling stat is this: Since the inception of affirmative action, the percentage of minorities attending four-year universities increased 85 percent.

Think that's not significant? Consider this: Last year, for the first time, the number of black men in college was dwarfed by the number of black men linked to the criminal justice system via parole, probation and imprisonment. That's not to say that affirmative action has been a criminal deterrent—such a statement would imply that criminality is a trait intrinsic to blacks, which is patently false. It is to say that without preferences, many blacks would never get to chance to prove they deserve to matriculate at the nation's best schools.

Without race-based policies, marginally diverse colleges and universities would be nearly all white. And isn't diversity an American ideal?

Justice Breyer certainly thinks so, stating Tuesday that he understood the University of Michigan's efforts to push diversity. "They think it breaks down stereotypes within the class, they think it's educationally beneficial," he told Associated Press. "They think...a legal profession, like business and the military, that is diverse is good for America."

And Breyer is right. Diversity is good. It's good for human relations—and there's no better place than a college campus to foster conciliatory human relations. If not for college, many whites wouldn't get the chance to interact with blacks, to learn about African-American culture, to learn about our strengths and weaknesses, our idiosyncracies and, yes, our diversity.

Contrary to Republican opinion, blacks aren't a monolithic race. Not all of us deify Martin Luther King, nor do all of us eat chicken, play sports, speak broken English, sport flashy jewelry, act like fools in church, sell drugs, peddle bean pies on street corners, gang bang, worship Kobe Bryant, wear baggy jeans and daisy dukes, give our children four-syllable names or fit any of the multitude of stereotypical behaviors assigned to us. Without exposure, many people wouldn't know that blacks are as entrepreneurial, inventive, creative, resourceful, enlightened and civic-minded as any ethnic group.

And without such exposure, many blacks would miss the chance to prove their academic mettle. Ditto for all aspects of American life in which race-based preferences are used. Without the government mandated to spend money with black businesses, a black man wouldn't have been named Small Business Administration 2002 businessman of the year for the state of Nevada. Without a push for fairness in managerial diversity, large-casino operators in Las Vegas wouldn't feel pressured to give qualified, competent minorities opportunities for corporate mobility. Without diversity initiatives, many major U.S. companies wouldn't strive to mirror the demographics of the communities they serve. Black excel because we have to; we are told they have to be twice as good as other employees. Without affirmative action, would we even get the chance to prove it?



— Playin' the race card —

By Al Triche
Sentinel-Voice

Ah! good, friendly faces, and not a moment too soon!

Buffy—the wife of Biff, who recently lost one of their two cars—just left, angry at losing the other when she called affirmative action “reverse racism.”

Staring at the race card and sweatin' like a whore in church, she'd inadvertently implied that her people should be striving to make themselves inferior to mine, and should do so henceforth with great vigor.

Her inspiration was a debate, of sorts, between a couple of boys: Sluggo, so white he could be related; and HanK, an African-American whose name is so spelled for reasons obvious to him. Each made his case, pro or con, in Nevada's largest race relations game room on March 25.

HanK is quite reasonable, though he says at one point that the “mutual history of slavery and discrimination must be expunged.” Inadvisable, since Sluggo's ilk would consider that license to run away with the plantation. Oops! I meant, uh...farm. Yeah, that's it...farm.

Now for the comic relief.

First, Sluggo quotes Uncle Sam's founding document, leaping like Mike to presume that slaveowners' proclamations have even tangential relevance to affirmative action, other than the corporate variety. He presents a psychotic's parallel with sla-

very, and his hindquarters for swift kicking by saying: “There is a word for that: hypocrisy.” There's another word for that statement.

The race card makes hypocrisy a capital offense, and while Sluggo the Stupid would've received a paper cut, Sluggo the Hypocrite earns a date with the guillotine.

Declaration of Independence as premise reveals all we need know about Sluggo: no integrity; plenty of diabolical 18th Century ideology, that “old time religion” of neo-conservative racists. But, Poof...the race card exposes him, and he loses credibility, benefit of doubt, even receptivity his point of view might have been accorded regarding affirmative action, much less racism.

Since second grade I've known the only thing self-evident about that document was the hypocrisy of its authors, and know today that its yield, personified in once-innocent children, is fruit of a poisoned tree.

Complaining that affirmative action promotes “disadvantaged minorities” who he speculates “may not be qualified,” and that it does so “simply because they are minorities,” Sluggo speaks with a Pharisee's forked tongue, poised as he is to participate in that wholly American tradition of white racists promoting fellow vermin—knowing they aren't qualified—“simply because they are” white.

A bizarre exposition, of history at its worst or revisionist history at its best, reeks of snake oil as Sluggo hisses, “I am furious” at “racial warfare...against the Republican Party,” invokes his authority as class dunce and “proclaims” it as a party that “has long stood for civil rights.” They stopped doing that when his parents, if not—judging from his infantile grasp of the subject—his grandparents were born.

In those days, like Herod, the Republicans' leader tried to kill our movement in its infancy, because, he felt, it was “moving too fast.” Giving succor to Dixiecrats, Republicans quickly degenerated from the party of Lincoln to the nightriders they are today—the party of Nixon, Thurmond and Lott.

Sluggo, Defender of The Froth, damns with great praise a “conservative Supreme Court” he thinks finished what Lincoln didn't, but the most insignificant feature of racists is the color of their robes—black, or white

with hoods. Decades ago, such as they titillated bigots by assaulting affirmative action via Bakke. They have persisted, like Iraqis attacking our supply lines, in stalking their prey into this very week, as they gaze at Ann Arbor, salivating.

Sluggo invents some asinine term: “affirmative racism,” and whines, “I'm tired of being called a racist for standing up for fairness.” Wah, wah, wah; sucks to be Sluggo. African-American students should observe how this imbecile exposes the vulnerable underbelly of American racism—a flabby mass of hypocrisy, and guilt.

It's the point of attack, the only weapon needed is a mirror...and, by the way, people who stand up for fairness are called saints. Sluggo's no saint, in fact, he's not at all tired of being a racist, he just doesn't want to be called one.

Racists don't cast reflections in mirrors, which reveal truth. Were Sluggo tired, he'd
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