

GOP renews attacks on affirmative action

By George Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Despite a landmark Supreme Court ruling upholding the legality of the University of Michigan's law school affirmative action program, affirmative action programs are coming under increasing attacks, sometimes with the complicity of the Justice Department.

A recent example involves a letter the Justice Department sent to officials at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale charging that three graduate fellowship programs designed to increase underrepresented women and people of color are unfair to Whites and males. The Justice Department said if the SIU programs are not terminated by Friday, it will sue the institution. University officials have requested a meeting and an extension to avert a legal showdown.

The three fellowships under attack are the Proactive Recruitment and Multicultural Professionals for Tomorrow, the Graduate Dean's Program and the Bridge to Doctorate. University officials told the *Daily Egyptian*, the campus newspaper, that 129 such fellowships have been awarded since 2000, with 12 percent going to Whites. Most university fellowships are open to all students and make no effort to increase the presence of people of color on campus.

Less than 8 percent of Southern Illinois University's 5,500 graduate students are Black or Latino.

The attacks on affirmative action are being led by right-wing think tanks, notably the Center for Equal Opportunity, headed by Linda Chavez and based in Sterling, Va. It has filed complaints with the Justice Department against SIU and North Carolina State University.

Even more troubling than attacks on programs designed to end the underrepresentation of people of color and women is the way that many universities have caved in without putting up a fight.

Roger Clegg, vice president and general counsel for the Center for Equal Opportunity, told the campus newspaper: "We have contacted hundreds of schools over the past few years about programs like this. The overwhelming majority have changed the programs after we contacted them."

In other words, the think tank has been able to accomplish through threats what it could not achieve in the U.S. Supreme Court.

The attack on affirmative action extends beyond graduate fellowship programs.

Last year, Clegg testified before the Texas Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education to oppose even the 10 percent plan favored by President Bush. Under the program, the top 10 percent of each graduating class is guaranteed admission to the University of



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would close the gap between people of color and Whites.

In an effort to identify all race — and gender-conscious programs — presumably so that they, too, can be attacked — Clegg's group has drafted what it calls a model "Racial and Ethnic Preference Disclosure Act" for states and the federal government to adopt.

The proposal for federal legislation would require annual reports from all institutions of higher education that receive federal funding.

Section 2 of the draft legislation states: "This report shall begin with a statement of whether race, color or national origin is considered in the student admission process. (If different departments within the institution have separate admission processes and consider race, color or national origin differently, then the report shall provide the information required by this report for each department

Texas.

The cruelest hoax is that the likes of Clegg are citing laws specifically designed to help African-Americans — the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin — to dismantle programs that, if successful,

separately.)"

This is part of a larger campaign by the misnamed Center for Equal Opportunity to eliminate all programs that address racial inequality. It has compiled a 41-page list of legal provisions in every state that it finds objectionable.

Among them: an Alabama law that requires that half of the trustees of predominantly Black Alabama State University be African-Americans, an Illinois provision that requires that five of the nine members of a Women's Business Ownership Council be female, a Kentucky law that requires that school board screening committees in communities where people of color constitute at least 8 percent be represented by at least one African-American committee member, and a Colorado law that insists that financial institutions holding state investment funds give priority for business loans to women and people of color.

Prodded by the Civil Rights Movement, the nation has made progress in reducing racial, ethnic and gender discrimination. However, that progress will come to an abrupt halt if right-wing groups are successful in their campaign to eliminate all race-, ethnic- and gender-conscious corrective programs.

Sadly, so-called progressives have failed to counter the right-wing attack on affirmative action.

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Bush administration character study in sleaze

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

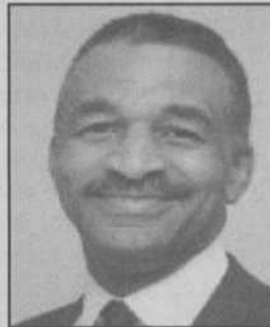
Has there ever been a time in this country when the "ruling" administration has done so much dirt, right before our very eyes, with such arrogance, such disdain, and such outright disregard for "the people"? Think about it. For a guy who was appointed president by the Supreme Court after a crooked election process in his brother's state of Florida, and even after that debacle, this same guy took his road show to Ohio for the next "selection" and did another in-your-face on "the people," your boy, George Bush, really has it goin' on. Can you believe some of the stuff he has gotten away with during the past five years? And the hits just keep on comin'.

Bush is bad enough, with his absolute dismal ratings among the people, but to add insult to injury, his boys and girls are worse than he is. Talk about sleaze with ease; they get the prize. Even before they joined Bush Jr's camp, guys like Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney were busy doing their dirt under Ronald Reagan, the Great Communica-

tor. The lovely and talented Condi Rice was doing the bidding of George Bush Sr. All the while, waiting in the wings (or was it a dugout? — or maybe a bar?), was George Jr., Karl Rove, Karen Hughes, Alberto "Speedy" Gonzales and all the others who have participated in raping this country — and several others. And where did they find Scott McClellan?

A laundry list of shenanigans will only scratch the surface of what they have done. They came in with war on their minds. They entered the scene determined to commandeer the energy market. They lied, cheated, misled, pilfered and smiled while they were doing their dirt. They continue to do the nastiest things to the neediest people of this country and we continue to allow it.

The Bushites are now mired in quagmires in Iraq, and in this country, they are trying desperately to get into others — Iran and



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Syria. They face indictments, charges, trials and convictions. They are Rovin' like a bunch of wild animals to see whom they can devour. They are Scootin' around, in attempts to deploy dirty tricks to destroy those on their enemies list. They are Delayin' justice and making every effort to change the laws to protect their comrades in crime.

All of these acts are committed under their ringleader, the diabolical Dick "Spiro Agnew" Cheney, the head-sleaze-in-charge.

They have presided over a concocted and contrived war. They have directed billions of dollars to their friends at Halliburton and all the others, despite taxpayers being ripped off by these firms with their exorbitant prices. They cannot account for some \$9 billion or so — in cash — that went "somewhere" to "someone" in Iraq. They watched while millions were being paid — in cash — to contractors in Iraq, while those who worked for those crooked contractors got kidnapped and beheaded as they tried to take care of their families.

The Bushmen and Bushwomen have cut the benefits of those they say they love, respect and revere. The soldiers fighting the war for them are facing a bankruptcy law that now makes it much more difficult to file. These revered soldiers must now pay for their own food and other necessities and come home to live in conditions worse than those they had in Iraq. The Bushites wouldn't go to war, but they sure are great at using the sons and daughters of others to do their dirty work and then mistreat them to boot. Sleaze with ease.

The top dog, or should I say, "The Top Gun," George Bush, has set himself up as an infallible, unapologetic, arrogant, capital

spending ("I earned capital, and I am going to spend it.") gunslinger from the Wild, Wild West. To really take the cake, he now thinks of himself as God. Did you hear him when he spoke of Russian leader, Vladimir Putin? Wasn't it something to the effect that he "looked into his eyes" and saw Putin's soul? And then his latest God-like announcement, as he spoke of his failed Supreme-to-be, Harriet Myers: "I know her heart." The last time I checked, knowing someone's heart was God's job.

It would take a book, a series of books, to write about all the things these guys and girls have done to "the people," but let's just take a few more of Bush's words and let them suffice. Recently, he responded to a question about his low ratings and the terrible job he is doing. He said, "There's some background noise here, a lot of chatter, a lot of speculation and opining, but the American people expect me to do my job, and I'm going to do it." (When?) Hey, George, "the American people," as you call us, are the ones who rated your performance to a toilet-low in the first place. Is this guy even awake when he makes those kinds of comments?

This makes me wonder if Bush went to a school to be as dumb and ignorant as he appears to be. Does he rehearse this stuff, or was he just born that way? If it were not so serious, it would be funny. But this is far from funny. Our future hangs in the balance, and the best we can seem to do is have George Bush and his den of thieves in charge of our fate. Lord, help us, because they have adopted a "Sleaze with Ease" campaign, and they are on the rampage. Why? The same answer Clinton gave when asked why he had his dalliance with Monica: they do it because they can.

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community notification requirements.

I would like to commend our local television stations for the myriad of ways they are endeavoring to expose sexual offenders. I admonish our municipalities and other folks in official and unofficial capacities to work collaboratively to make Nevada a safe haven for children.

A couple of weeks ago, Mayor Oscar Goodman was criticized for saying that to stop graffiti we should cut off the thumbs of the perpetrators. Well, I understand why

the mayor is proposing such harsh punishment.

In my humble opinion, when people are so heartless and ruthless that they can molest, strangle, murder or victimize an innocent child or teenager, in any way, he or she deserves the harshest punishment and nothing less than castration. I know that this probably won't happen in most cases, but I do think that it is a heinous crime that is deserving of the sexual predator paying with his or her own life for ruining the lives of precious children.