

opinion

Violating aid forms

A federal court judge recently ruled that a law requiring students to register for the draft before being eligible for financial aid is "likely" to violate students constitutional rights.

The Minnesota case, heard by U.S. District Judge Donald Alsop is the first step to getting what is known as the "Solomon Amendment" off the books. The law requires male students to show proof of draft registration before receiving financial aid. It goes into effect July 1.

As it stands, the amendment puts the financial aid office in the role of investigator for the military. It ties students' ability to attend college with their convictions about registering for the draft.

The Minnesota decision is based on the arguments of six college students who testified that the law forces non-registrants to incriminate themselves. Surprise.

The law makes no distinction between those who fail to register for the draft because of political, religious, or moral beliefs as well as those who fail out of negligence or misinformation.

In what looks like a clause "in case" women become eligible for the draft, the law has everyone mark the registration line. By the way, the Department of Defense has recently proposed that women — at least those with medical credentials — be eligible for the draft.

The law forces students to write down that they have violated the law and have not registered for the draft. This is a direct violation of the Fifth Amendment which says, "No person shall be... compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself."

The Selective Service denies the law violates the Fifth Amendment rights of students. They say the law is just another financial aid qualification. That doesn't wash with us. Since when does the military get to write financial aid forms?

Denying financial aid amounts to punishment. The Selective Service cannot possibly go after the estimated 500,000 men who have not registered, but they now have it in their power to punish those men who want to go to college and cannot afford to without financial help.

In the words of Dave Fidanque, the Oregon American Civil Liberties Union associate director: "In essence, what the Congress is trying to do is punish people they think have broken the law," without giving them a trial.

The law is as unpopular with financial aid offices as it is with students.

The financial aid office could choose to ignore the law and go to court if government officials apply pressure, as one University faculty member has suggested.

It would be even better if the law was simply repealed. Rep. Robert Edgar, D-Penn., is trying to do just that.

The Minnesota judge's decision should strengthen the repeal argument, get the the amendment through Congress and end this poorly conceived and unpopular law.



letters

Sept. weather

I see the semester issue is being considered again at the University. I see also that the faculty proposal completely circumvents the idea of an earlier start in the month of September. The proposal advocates carrying the winter semester over past the Christmas break. The reason, says the faculty proposal, is the "weather problem." No one, after all, wants to go to school when the weather is nice in September.

When I was in grade school, we started the day after Labor Day, which followed the first weekend in September. In junior high, we started one day later than that, and in high school, we did the same. At Willamette University, where I did my undergraduate work, we started school the weekend prior to the Labor Day holiday, had fall semester finals in the second week in December, spent three and a half weeks at home for Christmas, and finished spring semester in the first week of May.

I've spent my whole academic career going to school in September. I'm still alive.

Terry Smith
graduate, industrial relations

Unacceptable

The announcement that students not registered for the draft are ineligible for scholarships or student aid represents an unacceptable invasion of University and student affairs by the federal government. The University should simply ignore

it and go to court if government officials apply any pressure or withhold any normally available funds on this account.

Everyone is born, lives only once, and has just as much right to take charge of their own life as does anyone else.

The only acceptable reason for the existence of any organization whatsoever, including national governments, is that they enhance peoples lives without damaging anyone. No officials, no matter what their rank, how respected they are, or what legalism their actions are clothed in, have any right whatsoever to enslave or to draft anyone else. People do not owe organizations anything. Organizations must continuously earn the respect and loyalty of their members.

When a government or any other organization tries to force people into courses of action to which they deeply object, objection, and if necessary, civil disobedience, becomes both their right and obligation.

This legislation aims directly at the small minority of students bright enough to understand this and courageous enough to act according to their conscience — the very ones most deserving of assistance.

Furthermore, it is grossly sexist in that only young men are affected — thus forcing universities to discriminate by sex in direct contravention to their legal obligations under other rules promulgated by various agencies of the same government.

Bayard McConaughy
professor, biology

Naivete

As I listen to some of the younger students in my classes I am continually amused and often appalled by their naivete. Last Thursday's "poll" in the Emerald underscored the problem.

James Baldwin once remarked that to be black and conscious in America was to be in a constant state of rage. One might say the same thing about being a woman. Yet, here on page one we had one young black man and two young women calling themselves "conservative."

For the unlightened, that means favoring the status quo. That means that Devall thinks it is OK that unemployment among young blacks is 40 percent, that means that Sara and Jan think it is OK that the ERA, which simply recognizes women as equal, is defeated. That means that all of you think it is OK that Reagan wants to spend \$1.5 trillion dollars to make us "safe" while hundreds of thousands of Americans are homeless, hungry, and in pain.

I need to remember that you were in diapers when Mario Savio founded the Free Speech Movement and when Malcolm X was gunned down. I need to be more tolerant of ignorance. I need to keep it in perspective, to recognize that you are the "me generation," with your focus on video games and "getting yours."

It would be easy if I could do that. I can't.

Michael Morrow
graduate

letters

Sexism

I would like to know why nearly twice as many men than women were interviewed in the Emerald's survey of University students on March 10.

Obviously Frank Shaw did not take speaker Jean Ward seriously when she cautioned journalists of using sexism in

reporting and editing, or did Shaw even read the article on Ward in his own paper?

I hope in the future the Emerald will be more liberal in reporting on, as the survey called it, a perceived "liberal school."

Kim Jean Taylor
senior, journalism

oregon daily emerald

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