

Editorial

Affirmative action provides balance

The Supreme Court again will be reviewing the question of affirmative action in discussion today; we hope the court reaffirms the importance of affirmative action and prods the Reagan administration to pursue it more enthusiastically.

One question before the court concerns the application of affirmative action to jobs traditionally held by men — whether women can be promoted over men with higher test scores in regard to a job.

Hopefully, the court's decision will assert the importance of qualifications without obscuring the importance of affirmative action.

In any hiring or promoting, if two applicant's test scores are widely divergent, the higher scorer should be selected — whether male or female.

However, sex and race should be given explicit consideration, even enough to add points in scoring the applicant's overall qualifications. Women and minorities have made tremendous gains in breaking into the job market, but still have not achieved parity with the rest of the job market.

One of the large problems facing a woman seeking a promotion into a traditionally male job is that the perception of the job as male-oriented can make her qualifications seem less important. Thus, to be competitive she actually may need to be much more qualified than her male counterparts.

This is an unfair burden on women and minorities that affirmative action seeks to balance.

As we have noted in our support of maternity-leave benefits, the job market cannot afford to ignore the skills and contributions of women or minorities. Affirmative action helps them break into areas of the market to which they traditionally have not been able to.

Another question before the court is whether statistical disparities in an employer's labor force justify an affirmative action plan. We hope the court answers yes.

Affirmative action is primarily a corrective measure, and if a lower percentage of an employer's labor force is composed of women and minorities than is the applicant pool, affirmative action is exactly the mechanism to correct the imbalance.

The court also will consider whether a public employer with a history of intentional discrimination in hiring and promotion can be required to promote one black employee for every white employee.

The intent of this measure is good, but the promotions should be made proportionally rather than one-for-one. If an employer's labor force is not exactly half black and half white, the employer will be hard pressed to find enough blacks, or whites in some communities, to match promotions.

Any statistical measures must be very carefully applied, based on the local population and applicant pools.

Equity in hiring and promotions is much better than it has been in the past, but it is still a problem that can only be solved by addressing the problem actively and directly.

Postponed appointments create partisan conflict

Neil Goldschmidt's request of the state Senate to postpone confirmation of several appointments to state positions was the kind of dynamic action for which we endorsed him, but he should have worked with Gov. Vic Atiyeh to avoid a partisan battle over the matter.

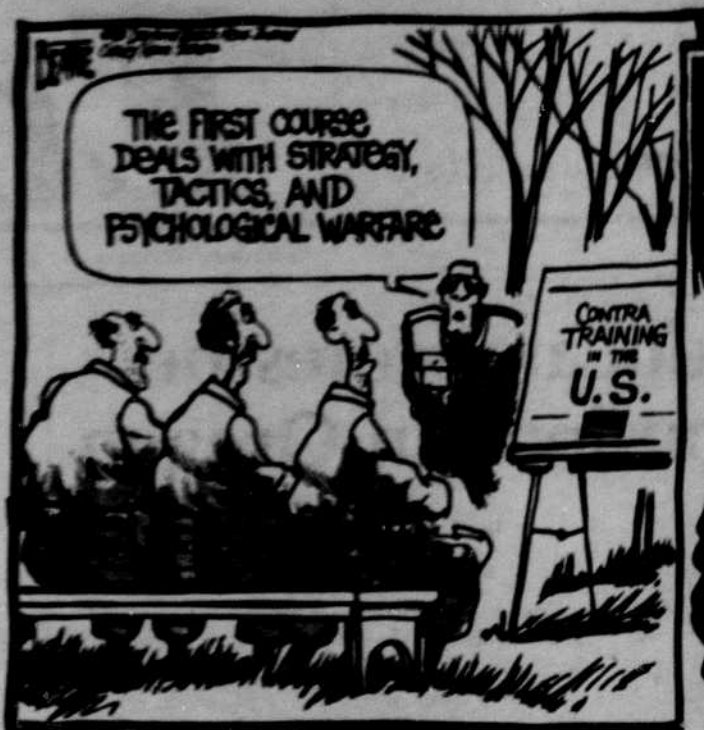
Goldschmidt was justified in seeking postponement of the positions; it is in Oregon's best interests to have Goldschmidt's energies spent on his agenda for Oregon rather than on battles with an entrenched bureaucracy.

However, it was rude and technically incorrect of Goldschmidt to request the postponement before conferring with Atiyeh.

The Senate, in committee, postponed appointments to board positions on the Oregon State Lottery Commission, Apprenticeship and Training Council, the State Board of Forestry and the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission.

Goldschmidt's agenda should be non-partisan, since it will benefit all Oregonians. He must be very careful not to alienate Republicans in the Legislature or old-guard Democrats.

Goldschmidt has excellent ideas for the state, and the appointees of key state boards and commissions should be willing to support these ideas. However, Goldschmidt and the Legislature should be careful to avoid having the agenda become bogged down in partisan battles.



Letters

Unjust letter

In response to Leisha Sanders' letter on Nov. 6, the letter you wrote was both unethical and unnecessary. The worst that happened to you is a strange man stared at you while you walked past his home.

For this you libeled his character, and endangered his life in a written statement that fits the legal definition of libel. You should be ashamed; to ruin another person's reputation by explicitly describing who he is and where he lives, humiliating him before the entire community on the flimsiest and most subjective evidence — the way he looked at you.

This is a man's life we are discussing, not a theoretical point about the relationship between men and women in this society, or a high school gossip session. If any harm comes to this man because of your vicious letter, I will do everything in my meager power to help him bring legal action against you for the intentional and malicious harm you caused him.

Micheal Francisconi
Custodian, physical plant
graduate student, anthropology

Moral wrong

Jerome Berryhill's letter on

Nov. 7 seems to ignore that there must be a sincere honorable effort on the part of a reader to understand the intent of a writer, both as to the intended scope of the words used, and the actual content, if real communication is to take place.

When Dr. Koop stated that "life begins at conception," it seems reasonable to assume that he was speaking of those species where conception does occur as the culmination of the reproductive processes.

The point is that at conception, and not at some later time, a new life begins. This is a verifiable biological fact, not a matter of legal or personal opinion.

My letter on Oct. 28 made no reference to the "right to life" of the new individual. I would point out, however, that in spite of the 1857 Dred Scott Decision of the U.S. Supreme Court that declared black people to be property and not persons with legal rights, slavery was still immoral.

In spite of the fact that the Nazi government imposed "legal death sentences" on millions of people, each of these deaths was truly wrong; legal, but wrong.

This is the exact nature of our society's practice of abortion on demand — it is a legal "right" because of the Supreme Court's

decision, but it remains genuinely, grossly immoral because each abortion destroys a defenseless, innocent human life. We are earning God's wrath with this inhumane practice.

William Moore
Music

Opportunities

Persons who voted for Ballot Measure 51 to make Eugene a nuclear-free zone may wish to observe the city council meeting Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. in the McNutt Room at Eugene City Hall — when the council will discuss rewriting the ordinance created by Ballot Measure 51.

Another opportunity for citizen involvement is the grassroots Economic Development Summit to be held all day this Friday at the Hilton. This is one of many local public meetings being held around the state to formulate local economic development goals and strategies.

Results of these meetings will be presented to the new governor. Friday will be your chance to communicate your thoughts and priorities for economic development policy to the Goldschmidt administration.

Fergus McLean
Graduate student,
industrial relations

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