

Quotas emphasize affirmative action

The Supreme Court's ruling in favor of temporary use of strict racial quotas is a victory for affirmative action. It promotes civil rights and eliminates a history of discrimination in Alabama.

The decision rejects the Reagan administration's stance that racial quotas are not the best way to fight for discrimination, and establishes a precedent for the use of quotas to remedy severe cases of past discrimination.

The 5-4 decision upheld two lower court rulings requiring Alabama to promote one black state trooper for every white state trooper. The court placed conditions on the promotions saying qualified blacks must be available and the order will be dropped when the state develops an acceptable promotion procedure.

The decision also calmed fears that the court would support the administration's position on affirmative action because of Reagan's appointment of Antonin Scalia as a new associate justice.

The conditions stated in the ruling are very important because they prevent future abuse of the court order and reduce the propensity for reverse discrimination. In the fight for equal employment practices, reverse discrimination has become a major obstacle. The search for a happy medium — one that promotes affirmative action without harming white workers — has not ended. Unfortunately, in many cases the effort to give minorities more opportunities has backlashed into the white community. Ironically, some quotas force employers to overlook more qualified whites and a similar form of discrimination occurs.

Unlike affirmative action plans to lay off white workers over blacks, this recent quota deals with promotions. According to Justice Lewis Powell, it does not "disrupt the lives of innocent workers."

The wording and restrictions in this court-ordered quota does not lend itself to any form of discrimination. The Alabama case was a unique form of repeated discrimination. The state ignored repeated orders to hire black state troopers. And it never carried out promises to hire black troopers.

The issued court orders also were not enforced. In 1984, 12 years after the first court order, the state was forced to promote eight black troopers and eight white troopers. This is the only instance in which the order was followed.

Alabama's resistance to these quotas emphasizes the discrimination practiced by the state. Justice Powell stated in his concurring opinion that it was this "persistent violation of constitutional rights" that gave the court the power to impose the quota.

The Supreme Court's decision is integral to the wider concept of affirmative action and civil rights. It delivers a message to employers that discrimination will not be accepted. In his concurring opinion Justice William Brennan said the court's ability to "... employ racial classification essential to remedy unlawful treatment of racial or ethnic groups subject to discrimination" had been well-established.

The flexibility of this quota is its strongest advantage. It allows states to develop their own promotion procedures as well as fight the discrimination problem. Nobody should be upset at the ruling because it promotes the idea of civil rights. It is a fair and efficient method for curing a persistent problem.

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Letters

Preached views

Well, here we go again. 'Round and 'round with the abortion issue.

My first draft of this letter included a list of questions addressed to men about whether or not they would carry a baby to term (if they could) under certain conditions. (You can imagine my examples: after rape, at age 12, if you had AIDS and would be passing it on to your child, if childbirth endangered your life, etc...) Typical.

I decided that that had been done just as often as all of the arguments I am getting so tired of, and are constantly printed in the ODE and discussed in classes.

I notice that a lot of the arguing comes from people (men and women alike) who have never been in the situation themselves and feel that they can preach their views (no matter how uneducated about the issue they may be) and force their opinions on women and men experiencing the intense frustration, anxiety and pain that comes from making a decision weighing the lives of their

children, their own lives, and the lives of their families.

You cannot know what that means until you have been through it yourself— being pregnant with, or the father of, the child. It is true, abortion is either RIGHT or WRONG, but it is so only in terms of the specific situation.

Melanie Moseley
Theater arts

Coerced fees

Recently, I found in my mailbox a disturbing message from the Accounting Department. It was a two part message: The first part was a bill for \$172.55. This, in itself, is disturbing enough for someone whose bank account rarely totals half that figure. The majority of the bill was made up by the infamous "dollar a day" fine levied against you if you move out of University housing. It accounted for \$152 of the \$172.55.

The second part was a letter which informed me, in no uncertain terms, that the above charges were due, and I should make haste in paying them. If I happened to be negligent, I was informed that, "... assessment of late fines, interest, assigning to the State Department of Revenue or other collection agencies... requiring of past due amounts in order to enroll for the current term, or other appropriate legal action" would be taken. Fighting words to say the least.

I realize now that this university is primarily concerned with

money. A dollar a day does not equal a dollar a day, but a lump sum of cash although the contract I signed states, "... pay \$1 per day for every day of service remaining in the academic year..."

I have no history of bad credit; in fact, I've paid tuition the first day possible. Apparently that's of no concern. All that matters is that the bills at Oregon Hall are filled to the brim with coerced payment.

James Anderson
Anthropology

Thing to avoid

Mary Sullivan raises an important point in her rebuttal to Jeff Hoyt (ODE, Feb. 11) concerning the pro-choice/pro-abortion distinction.

While agreeing with most of what she says, I do take exception to her statements concerning "all of the other men who... clutter the Emerald... with their views on this issue."

Numerous "pro-life" letters in the Emerald have been written by women: e.g. Lori Parkman, to name a perennial contributor. I seldom comment on abortion issues because as a man I will never be directly faced with such a decision; however, I am, and always have been pro-choice (NOT "pro-abortion").

Beware of stereotypes, Ms. Sullivan, they can divide you from your allies.

Hiawatha
Graduate, music

Oregon Daily Emerald

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