

# OPINION

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## Anti-Affirmative Action by Bush Tragic

A non-partisan consortium of six of the nation's leading civil rights legal organizations dedicated to affirmative action condemns President Bush's decision to file an amicus curiae brief against the University of Michigan's race-conscious admissions programs.

"On the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, the president's decision to attack affirmative action, the gateway to opportunity for many of the nation's disadvantaged minority students, is a sorrowful indicator that Dr. King's dream remains unfulfilled. For more than a quarter century, affirmative

action has been a building block for programs that corrected past discrimination and promoted racial diversity and excellence in higher education," a statement from Americans for a Fair Chance said.

"It is surprising to see that a President who demands diversity in his Cabinet and who will likely seek to nominate the first Latino to the Supreme Court would attack the University of Michigan for desiring the same goals," said AFC spokesman Antonia Hernandez.

"Affirmative action programs have played an essential role in opening oppor-

tunities for women and minorities to take their rightful place in our society. The President's decision represents a disturbing step backward in this nation's journey toward equal opportunity for all Americans," said Marcia D. Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center.

"Bush's opposition to the University of Michigan's affirmative action program sends a tragic message to millions of African Americans and Latinos who rely very heavily on education as an avenue to opportunity," said Shirley J. Wilcher, AFC executive director.



## Struggle for Justice Takes a Hit

Julian Bond, chairman of the board of directors for the NAACP, issued the following statement in response to President Bush's opposition to the University of Michigan's affirmative action program. The constitutionality of the program is now before the U.S. Supreme Court:

"As expected, President Bush has come down on the wrong side of the struggle over justice in higher education. 'Racial prejudice,' the president said, 'is a reality,' but at the same time he wants to end the most effective remedy against it.

The president characterized the University of Michigan's affirmative action program as a 'quota,' which it

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—NAACP chairman Julian Bond on President Bush's opposition to affirmative action at the University of Michigan.

is not. His use of the word 'quota,' with all its overtones of supposed preferences to allegedly unqualified persons, is an attempt to disguise his

failure to support justice.

Affirmative action is the just spoils of a righteous war, won at great cost and intended to heal division and end centuries of discrimination. Unfortunately, this is one war the president does not think worth fighting.

The president complained that black applicants at Michigan were given 20 points toward admission, not because of 'life experience,' he said, but because of race. But life experience in the 21st century is determined by race. Race colors all our lives.

Coming on the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., this is a sad, sad gift and a poor way to honor his memory.

## Letter to the Editor: Health Care Reform Needed

The Portland Observer has taken a good first step in supporting the Wyden-Hatch Health Care Act (Jan. 1 issue). Never before has there been so much collective frustration with the health care system in this country.

I would like to encourage The Portland Observer to take the lead in beginning a discussion of what constitutes effective health care?

Total spending on health care in the United States—more appropriately called "disease management"—was up 8.7 percent in 2001. That is both disheartening and tragic, but hardly surprising. The

trend will surely continue.

Economics have dictated that medical care maximize profit and minimize time invested in treatment, leaving both doctors and patients frustrated. That leaves us with a system that "treats" disease predominantly through medications that foster a lifetime of dependency on that system. Rates of chronic disease rise alongside the rising use of pharmaceuticals to hide their symptoms. Consequently, there is no reason to think the health care bill will decline anytime soon.

There are alternative ways to cre-

ate and maintain health, but they are largely ignored by a bureaucracy-heavy, profit-driven health care system. A health care system that actually enhances well-being while it decreases costs will come not about through greater access or cheaper drugs. It will come about through a different understanding of what it means to "treat" disease, and then working toward a system that supports that ideal.

Greg Nigh, ND, LAc  
Naturopathic physician and licensed acupuncturist

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