

OPINION

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Support Affirmative Action

Equal opportunity in education is essential for minority progress

The Supreme Court is presently reviewing two cases challenging affirmative action programs at the University of Michigan.

The chairs of the Tri-Caucus, comprised of three Congressional minority caucuses representing well over a hundred members of the U.S. Congress, issued the following statement of support for the continued existence of policies that work to increase diversity on college campuses and in the workplace:

"We cannot overstate the far-reaching ramifications that the Court's decision could have on every aspect of our lives. Right now, the nation's elementary and secondary schools have grown more segregated in recent years, not less. College is often the first place that students of different races and ethnic backgrounds learn from one another. Such interaction is central to the functioning of a diverse society,"

said Congressman Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

"For decades, affirmative action has made notable strides towards rectifying over a century of active and passive discrimination at our colleges and universities. But today, we hold our breath and wait for a decision that could halt the

Affirmative action is an important tool in our goal towards a society that recognizes individuals on merit rather than the circumstances of their birth," Congressman Wu said.

"We hope that the honorable Justices who have vowed to serve the best interests of the American public will see beyond the political rhetoric of the moment. The future

generations of Americans should not be condemned to fight the same battles for equality as their predecessors," Congressman Rodriguez said.

"A great deal is at stake in these Supreme Court cases. With the nation still struggling toward the ideal of equal opportunity, now is not the time for the branch of government charged with ensuring justice for all to turn the clock back 40 years. We in the Tri-Caucus are committed to ensuring every single person in this country is afforded the right to realize the American Dream," Congressman Cummings said.

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings represents Maryland's Seventh Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives and serves as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus in the 108th Congress

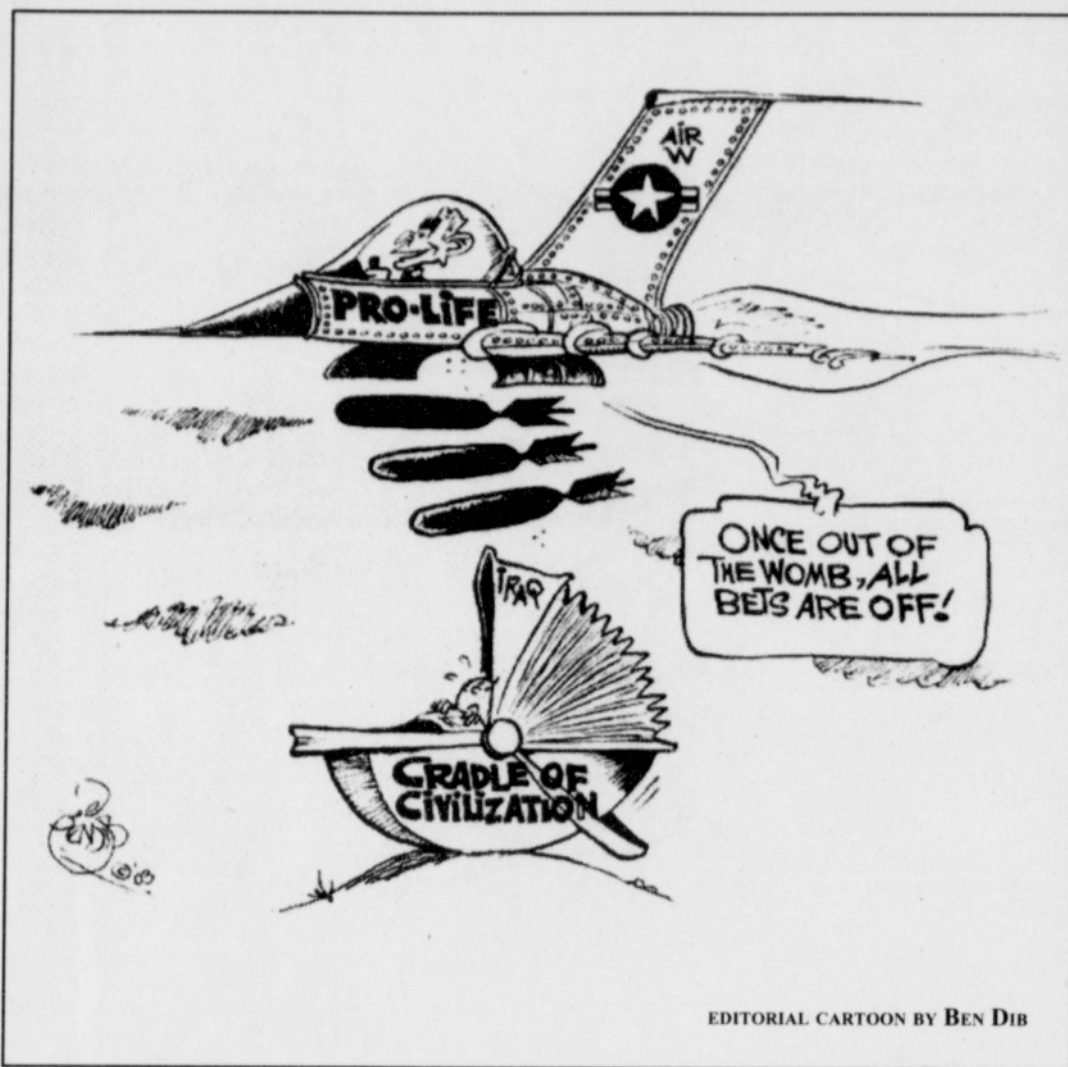
Now is not the time to turn the clock back 40 years.

-US Rep. Elijah E. Cummings on the Supreme Court

progress we have made," said Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez, Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

"Many Asian Pacific Americans, particularly the children of immigrants and refugees, deserve a second chance in life. The Michigan case has grave implications for these, and many other students, who start school with language and cultural disadvantages," said Congressman David Wu, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

"We are strong believers in the power of public education to improve the lives of individuals and ameliorate the injustices of history.



EDITORIAL CARTOON BY BEN DIB

Fighting the Good Fight

Michael Moore deserves applause for speaking out against Bush

By MICHAEL C. TUCKER

At the Oscars Michael Moore, winner in the Best Documentary category, expressed for a great many Americans, his growing terror - not over further 9/11-type horrors - but over our government beating "fairness" clean out of the American psyche.

The whip this administration uses is the weapon of fear. It comes wielded by a white-gloved neo-conservative fist of hypocrisy and corporate manipulation.

Patriotism cannot be drunk from the bottle of rhetoric our corporate controlled media pours down our throats every time we turn on a news broadcast. Such rhetoric has grown from a culture of total secrecy, and is clearly polluted by greed.

The case of this war, or what might more rightly be called a "slaughter", is but an example.

It's not about protecting the people of Iraq from the cruelty of their leader. It is not about weapons of mass destruction or terrorism.

No, this 200 billion dollar testosterone fantasy is about energy and water and those who are eager to control it. Earth-shakers with bedroom ties to the oval office plan on making incredible, unfathomable sums of money - off the backs of dead soldiers.

Patriotism is not some shotgun wielding redneck preaching to the choir of his favorite right wing radio demagogue about how upset he is that a kid thousands of miles away burnt an American flag.

Patriotism is a 61-year-old pure white establishment type getting arrested and jailed for wearing a T-shirt with "Give Peace A Chance", to an upstate New York mall food court where he'd meet once a week for lunch with his equally non-threatening son.

Patriotism is Moore, climbing on his TV horse in a nation propagandized against criticizing this fascist president, to ride and scream, "Dictatorship is coming! Dictatorship is coming!"

The Hollywood audience gave Moore a standing ovation. It's

not easy cheering for freedom when you can so easily now be declared a "Non-combatant" and carted off incognito to some secret jail.

People like Moore force us to question our morality.

We dare not lose hope of that which made us a somewhat wonderful nation. I don't ever want to believe there is no one left in this country to defend the American ideal. After all, we are a nation of good people. We have our quirks of course, like slaughtering the 20s labor population, racism, and McCarthyism, to name a few. But we usually do find our ways back onto the tarmac of honor.

So three cheers to you, Mr. Moore. May you continue the good fight. I'll root you on from the sidelines, even if Patriot Act II labels me a terrorist for doing so. God bless you for speaking up at the Oscars. God bless America for sprouting someone truly brave who doesn't have to put on a uniform to prove it. And God bless freedom - at least while we still have it.

Michael C. Tucker is a Portland area writer. He can be reached for further comment at mothertucker@hotmail.com, or by writing to this newspaper.

Don't Blame the Peace Movement

Added costs to city are a result of the war, not those who are against it

By WILLIAM SEAMAN

I am filled with sorrow and deeply shocked by the violent loss of life and grievous injuries that the US war on Iraq has already brought upon the world. I unequivocally reaffirm the Portland Peaceful Response Coalition's opposition to this criminal, unjust and immoral war.

I also strongly affirm the rights and the moral imperative of every person of conscience to be protesting this war, and condemn in the clearest terms those who would silence those protests either by calling for heavy-handed law enforcement or by threats of repressive, unconstitutional legislation.

The PPRC recognizes and decries the costs associated with the greatly increased police functions implemented by the City of Port-

land, but I am deeply troubled by those who would use the costs associated with the additional police activity to blame the peace movement for the shortfalls in our city, county, state and federal budgets.

"A nation that continues to spend more money on military defense rather than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

-Martin Luther King Jr.

This war now has the official price tag of over \$70 billion, \$70 billion that must be financed on the backs of the working poor, the unemployed, and the middle class of

this country.

The costs of this war were a central focus of the peace movement's opposition to the Bush Administration's policy on Iraq. Our call was to fund education, not war. The PPRC supports a fully funded human services budget, not billions of dollars to send Americans to kill and to die in the deserts of the Middle East.

Blaming the peace movement for the defunding of needed human services reveals the profound hypocrisy of those who support financing this horrifying cataclysm of death and suffering.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. said with such terrifying prescience, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense rather than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

William Seaman represents the Portland Peaceful Response Coalition. The PPRC is responsible for organizing several anti-war demonstrations in downtown Portland. For more information on the PPRC, email wseaman@attbi.

To the Editor

As the war and occupation of Iraq loom ahead of us, let us pledge to support our troops. Let us honor their loyalty, courage and sacrifice.

Let us protect them against the horrors experienced by Vietnam veterans, who came home psychologically damaged, knowing that virtually all Vietnamese opposed the foreign invaders. How can our troops be proud of their service, knowing that they are not welcomed as liberators but are feared by a hostile population?

Let us pledge to protect our sons

and daughters against the devastating Gulf War syndrome, which disabled 149,000 veterans, or 32 percent of the Gulf War troops, 9,600 of whom have since died according to the Veterans Administration. Depleted uranium in US warheads, again being used in this Iraq war, was largely responsible for those injuries and deaths.

Let us pledge to support our troops by seeking their safe return with a swift, political solution to this conflict.

Jamie Partridge
Northeast Portland

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