

# OPINION

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The Portland Observer  
USPS 959-680  
Established 1970  
4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.,  
Portland, OR 97211

STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER  
Charles H. Washington

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
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EDITOR  
Michael Leighton

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DISTRIBUTION MANAGER  
Mark Washington

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Portland Observer PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208  
Periodical Postage paid in Portland, OR Subscriptions are \$60.00 per year  
503-288-0033 • FAX 503-288-0015 • EMAIL: news@portlandobserver.com subscription@portlandobserver.com ads@portlandobserver.com

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## Isolated and Marginalized

### Kendra James' death shows race is an issue

The following is an editorial of the Portland Observer:

Portland likes to project an image of a diverse city in which people of all colors and ethnic backgrounds get along, but that's far from the truth.

The investigation and response to the police shooting of Kendra James is an example.

African Americans have been left isolated and marginalized by the non-black political majority. The absence of racial unity demonstrates

how the color lines that divide us still dominate the city and the state of Oregon.

Wouldn't it have been fantastic if some non-black politicians stood up and said something's wrong when a 21-year-old woman is shot, regardless of race, during a traffic stop.

Wouldn't it have been reassuring for the cause of peaceful coexistence if our public safety leaders expressed shock or regret when a mortally injured woman is handcuffed and left to die alone on the street?

Shouldn't public servants of all colors question fairness when an officer is given days to put his

story together before being questioned by investigators?

Now we're told an unspecified suspension for the officer is "severe" but the public servant keeps his job.

The silence from our non-black officials at City Hall and the Capitol in Salem is deafening. This is not the time to sit back and watch.

Don't wait for another police investigation, the end of lawsuits, the end of union appeals or some other report to join the fight for a better Portland.

This is a sad chapter in our city's history that is not going away. Justice will not come until the errors of the past are righted.

## Sounding Off on Affirmative Action

The National Urban League applauds the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the University of Michigan Law School's admissions policies, thereby reaffirming its Bakke decision and stating unequivocally that the government has a compelling interest in promoting diversity in education and the workplace.

This is an historic victory for America and a reaffirmation of the nation's commitment to equality and diversity. The University of Michigan Law School should be lauded for taking on this fight. The efforts of a broad coalition of leaders in the civil rights movement, labor unions such as the AFL-CIO, Fortune 500

companies, and more than two dozen of the nation's top former military officers are also due applause for their courage and conscience.

With this decision, the court has made clear that diversity and excellence are not mutually exclusive.

so that they can train, promote, and build a high caliber workforce capable of meeting the needs of customers in the global marketplace.

In February, the National Urban League filed an amicus brief supporting affirmative action in admissions policies at the University of Michigan. The brief argued that because racial disparities stemming from past

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discriminatory practices continue to affect our nation's institutions at all levels, affirmative action remains the most effective tool for higher education institutions committed to educating a diverse student body that is reflective of the larger society.

Mark Morial is the president of the National Urban League.

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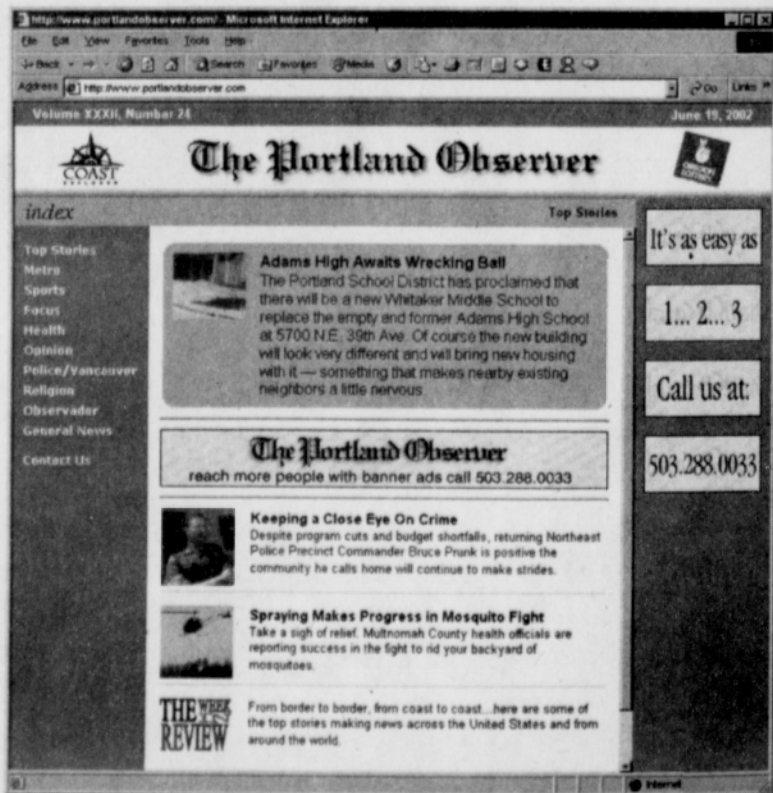
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## Wisdom in Leveling the Playing Field

### Decision is setback for radical right and Bush administration

BY REV. JESSE JACKSON SR.

Although a clear victory, the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action should be interpreted to reaffirm the value of advocacy and direct action.

The victory is in no small measure a result of the broad national mobilization and sets back the assault by the radical right and the Bush Administration to re-segregate the nation.

Important elements of the decision include the recognition that race is a legitimate concern, that diversity is still a compelling state interest, that affirmative action does not require proof of prior discrimination, and affirmative action need not be remedial.

The historic decision confirms

the wisdom of leveling the playing field for all Americans. We have come too far in our struggle for equality to allow the clock to be turned back now.

Since Brown v. Board of Education, the Supreme Court has served as an institution that protects minority rights. But affirmative action is not a special interest, it is a major-

ity proposition. Beyond the civil rights community, corporate America and the military realize that America's strength is its diversity. The Supreme Court has moved to protect a conservative remedy: affirmative action for the majority—women and people of color.

Unfortunately, we realize that it may be left to future administrations to right this egregious wrong,

science to join us on Aug. 23rd for a march on Washington to continue to bring about the promise of equal opportunity and inclusion. We must register and vote as if our national security depends upon it, because it does."

Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. is the founder and president of the Rainbow Coalition and long-time civil rights activist.



*We have come too far in our struggle for equality to allow the clock to be turned back now.*

## Race-Neutral Options Best

The court's decision on affirmative action reaffirms the president's and my position that diversity in our public institutions is an important value and that institutions of higher education must engage in a good faith assessment of workable race-neutral, non-discriminatory ways to achieve diversity on our nation's campuses.

We agree that not all applicants to college and graduate school start from the same place—too many students in this country have been left behind by schools that have failed to prepare them to meet the competition of college and graduate school admission. But there are many effective, race-neutral options available to promote broader access and diversity in higher education today.

As the court acknowledged, race-neutral policies can and are working across the nation. This spring, the department's Office for Civil Rights released a report detailing these programs and brought together many of our nation's distinguished higher education leaders for a conference to discuss effective race-neutral ways to achieve diversity. Consistent with the court's opinions, the department will continue to do its part by examining and highlighting effective race-neutral approaches to ensure broad access to and diversity within our public institutions.

Ron Paige, U. S. Secretary of Education

## A Victory for All

The decision by the Supreme Court upholding affirmative action is a victory for all Americans.

As our nation continues to struggle with the vestiges of systemic bigotry, we should not underestimate the critical importance of affirmative action efforts for minorities and women.

We are not talking about quotas; we are talking about efforts to address the egregious inequities of the past and to make sure that our institutions reflect the communities that they serve.

The government has a compelling interest in promoting diversity in education. I commend the Supreme Court for recognizing this in its decision.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer, Congressman from Portland

## Rulings Mixed Blessing at Best

The Supreme Court's rulings on affirmative action are a mixed blessing, at best.

The supporters of justice and equity should be sobered by the narrow margins in both cases. We should recall how we celebrated the Bakke decision as a victory 25 years ago, despite its obvious retreat from the goal of insuring fairness in American life.

For now, let us reaffirm our commitment to affirmative action as a remedy for past and present-day discrimination, and celebrate the Supreme Court's endorsement of diversity.

Julian Bond, NAACP Board Chairman