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## Is the recent affirmative action decision a step forward?

### Race relations turn toward future

### PROCON Affirmative action meets races' needs

Instead of going to Cancun over spring break, I went water skiing. Now the real fun of water skiing isn't in the skiing, but in the water. For those of you from the water-rich Midland-Odessa area, water skiing involves a boat.



DAVID TAYLOR  
COLUMNIST

white counterparts. Every minority I have worked with on this campus deserves to be here. I would even venture to say most were more qualified to be at Texas A&M than me.



When the 5th U.S. Circuit Court struck down the University of Texas Law School's admission policy last week, it was hailed as a step forward, a triumph against affirmative action. Nothing could be further from the truth. Student, who are rejoicing because this ruling ends affirma-



AJA HENDERSON  
COLUMNIST

sions decisions, and I don't hear anyone complaining about that. If you end affirmative action for racial minorities, you'd sure better end it for these folks.

Now this wouldn't seem like such a big deal unless you realize that a boat doesn't drive like a car. There are no brakes. In other words, stopping takes a plan or two; the boat will always drift.

Affirmative action was the plan meant to stop runaway racism in the workplace. The idea was like putting a boat's engine in reverse. But the time has come to go forward again. Last week's decision of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals is simply the next step in race relations. The court rejected what it called "racial social engineering." Instead, it ordered that race-based programs must be narrowly defined to address a specific history of discrimination within an organization or institution, not by society at large.

In the '60s, when affirmative action programs were instituted, society as a whole was racist. Only a few years prior, "separate but equal" still ruled the South. The North was only a bit better.

In short, it was necessary to reverse the engine. Affirmative action was administered nationwide. Although many rednecks still remain, institutional racism is uncommon. Race-based remedies today do little except promote negative feelings, not affirmative ones. Apologists for race-based systems — like the admissions policy at the University of Texas Law School — claim race should only be a factor when all else is equal. But if all else is equal, why do we need race as an issue at all? If our educational system produces people of different color, but of equal qualifications, then we definitely don't need affirmative action.

If things are not equal — SAT scores, GPA, etc. — is color the reason for the difference? Nope. No one today really believes color makes any difference for intelligence. So what's happening here? Simply, affirmative action programs at colleges benefit minorities from middle class schools who are just as qualified as their

Economic opportunity is not necessarily a function of race, either. In fact, more white Americans live in poverty than any other race. The perception is skewed by the fact that a greater percentage of minorities live in poverty than whites.

This poverty leads to educational deprivation for all races — in other words, substandard schools. Affirmative action programs, as presently designed, do nothing to fix the underlying problem of economics. Here is the place for the next step. Unfortunately, no government-mandated program will solve the economic problems of South Dallas or Houston's Third Ward. But that's where the real problem is, and it's time to deal with it. The court made the right decision regarding this admissions policy, but racial problems still exist. The solution, however, lies in economic opportunity for poor neighborhoods — such as Jack Kemp's "Enterprise Zones" designed to promote business in inner cities.

It's time to take the next step in realizing the ultimate goal of civil rights policy — the "dream" that someday the only color that will matter will be in a man's blood.

David Taylor is a senior management major

action. If you think the need for that is over, take a look at the statistics. Equally qualified women earn thousands less than men in the work force, the gap depending on which industry you are considering. Women and racial minorities have to work twice as hard in their careers to be seen as competent as their male counterparts. So what? Well, if this court decision is upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, white men will be flocking to the courthouse saying, "Hey, I am more qualified than that woman over there, end this gender-based affirmative action!" The possibilities are endless and make me want to throw up.

I would like to see affirmative action end, but that can only take place when the racism and sexism in this country is eradicated. We have not yet reached that point, and stopping affirmative action programs is not the solution. I don't want to get a job just because I am black and female (unlikely), but I sure as hell don't want to NOT get a job because of that fact (very likely). Injustice still exists, so affirmative action programs should exist as well.

Aja Henderson is a junior political science major

## Domestic violence hits young couples hard

Every 18 seconds, a woman is beaten. Since the O.J. Simpson trial brought the issue of domestic violence to the forefront of news, a large amount of attention has been devoted to women who are battered by a spouse, boyfriend or an acquaintance.



KRISTINA BUFFIN  
STAFF WRITER

What has not been given much attention is the fact many women who are battered are college students. As we near the end of Women's Week, which draws attention to how far women have come and how much further they need to go to achieve equality, domestic abuse remains the key issue that continues to plague women.

Over the past year, I have become aware of how big the problem really is. Seeing students with black eyes and hearing stories of friends who are involved in abusive relationships have brought me back into reality, something I usually like to avoid. Two weeks ago, a girl told me about how her ex-boyfriend threw her down a flight of stairs, separating her shoulder. She responded by breaking four of his ribs and

trying to make sure that he was not going to have children for long time. Although I was glad to know he did not escape without injury, I was nonetheless disturbed by the story. It is the '90s, and our generation has grown up being educated about how to avoid abusive relationships. However, these acts of violence against women continue.

Often times, women are too scared to report the abuse that they incur. We have all heard the excuses, "He apologized and brought me flowers," and "He just lost his temper and promised he would never do it again." But this does not change the fact that violence against anyone, whether male or female, is inexcusable. An apology does not mean that he will not do it again, and no matter how many times he says he loves you, punches do not equal love. Abusive relationships do not only involve physical harm, but mental and psychological as well. A friend of mine was involved in this type of relationship. Her boyfriend continually told her he needed her and that he couldn't

be without her. Although this was an unhealthy relationship, she continued to stay because she did not want to hurt him. She is an intelligent woman who graduated from A&M with honors with a degree in psychology, and despite how many times she denied it, my friends and I believe that he did at least once lay a hand on her.

What my friend's situation illustrates is that no matter how smart someone may be, no matter how much college education someone has had, no one is immune to abusive relationships. Critics do not understand how women continue to stay in these types of relationships, and no one has really come up with a good reason why. But what we do know is that unless society continues to educate the public that violence against women will not be tolerated, it will only continue. Women must realize they deserve better than what these types of relationships give them. It takes a lot of courage and determination, but in the end, ending abusive relationships will not only help the woman, but society, too.

Kristina Buffin is a junior international studies major

### THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

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## EDITORIALS

### TURNING OUT

#### Strong presence at the polls should continue through run-offs.

With the results of the student body elections in, the most notable outcome is not for whom the students voted, but that so many voted. More than 10,000 students cast ballots, the highest ever in the history of Texas A&M and the highest of any university in Texas. Texas A&M students have shown they understand the importance of selecting their representatives. With the mandate given by close to 25 percent of the student body, these elected officials can truly claim to speak for the rest of the students. The administration should note the results and keep their significance in mind when dealing with the elected representatives next year. All the students who voted deserve credit for caring enough to take action. The Election Commission deserves even more credit for all its work in promoting the election and ensuring its fairness. The candidates who won merit congratulations for their hard work and dedication, but their work is just now beginning. With the high voter turnout, their obligation

to represent effectively the students is especially crucial. They should take this responsibility seriously. Those who were not elected also deserve credit for participating and should not let this election discourage them. Students make valuable contributions daily in many areas of the University that do not require the vote of a single person. There are many opportunities for these students to channel their energy and concern for the University. Still, the job for the student body is not over yet. The April 4 runoff is as meaningful as Wednesday and Thursday's election, because the most important position — that of student body president — is not yet filled. With the field narrowed down to Carl Baggett and Ryan Shopp, students should study the two candidates and their platforms to make an informed decision about who would best represent them. If the quality of the runoff is similar to that of yesterday and Wednesday's election, the student body will be in good hands next year.

## THINKING BIG

#### Big Event should not be the only time of year for community service.

Everything is bigger in Texas. In that spirit, Aggies will fan out into the community this weekend to take part in the largest single-day community service project in the United States. The program has earned recognition for its success from a wide variety of people, including students, community members, and even George and Barbara Bush. Although participants can easily give themselves a proverbial pat on the back after this weekend's long hours of work, they should not break their arms doing so. Community service is needed more than just once a year. Big Event exists to show the Bryan-College Station community how much Aggies care, but a true caring attitude might be better displayed on more than an annual basis. By focusing all efforts on a single day, people might overlook the greater need. Although it seems unlikely, Big Event should inspire groups to take time out of each month to perform similar good deeds. Big Event is a great program that matches the energy of the student body with the needs of the surrounding community.

However, it could be seen as nothing more than a token effort if community service is not seen as a year-round goal. The Big Event Committee works year-round taking requests for work to be performed for this weekend. The members of the committee deserve credit for their commitment, and they should be proud of the results they will see this weekend. However, all participants in the Big Event should question their motives. The big question is, why does this work have to be done on one day? It almost seems inappropriate to attract attention to what should be good deeds done for their own sake. Some participating groups treat the weekend as a mere social event. Perhaps the committee should refocus its efforts to match willing workers with projects throughout the year. The emphasis should not be placed on the bigness of the event, but rather the idea behind it, and that can only be accomplished by focusing on more than one weekend. Although it is nice to see so much done in one weekend, workers should think about what could be done in an entire year.



## MAIL CALL

### New officers face tough responsibility

Congratulations to our newly elected officials. In taking your new offices, please remember one thing: Your positions are obligatory, meaning that the system has obliged you with these positions. The majority of us in the huddled masses, otherwise known as the student body, felt that most of these positions could drop off the face of the earth, and not a soul

would care. Some of the elected hierarchy is required as necessary personnel, but most of them are part of an inefficient bureaucratic design. What little that really gets accomplished could be done faster with a much smaller system. I respect your hard work and desire to serve, but please don't forget who you represent and how waning power really is. If leadership does not appear hard, you're no leader.

Chad A. Hesters  
Class of '96