

## The Battalion Editorial Board

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## Minority money

### Should the United States allow college scholarships based on race?

### PRO



BRIDGET HARROW

Racism and discrimination. Two ugly issues most people try to avoid or overlook. Such is the case of a new federal appeals court ruling in Richmond Va, which states that scholarships given to college students on the basis of their race is unconstitutional.

The ruling, like many challenges to overturn past affirmative action practices and civil right advancements, takes a step in the wrong direction. It assumes that racial barriers in higher education have been overcome. When in reality, minorities, especially blacks and Hispanics, continue to be under-represented or absent from America's colleges and universities.

We do not have to look further than the Texas A&M campus to verify this. Blacks comprise almost 12 percent of the Texas population, and Hispanics comprise 25.5 percent. But both minorities combined only represent approximately 10 percent of the A&M student body.

This is frightening considering projections which show that by the year 2055, blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans combined will outnumber whites in society. Minorities will be the majority. If minorities are not educated now, all of America will suffer in the future.

Finally, we must eliminate the misconception that minorities receive scholarships solely because of their skin color. Scholarships are earned because of academic excellence, skin color has always been secondary.

But let's not dilute the real reason why a few scholarships are targeted towards minorities. Inequality exists and still persists in higher education. We should not accept that low minority representation on college campuses means that not enough minorities are qualified or want to attend institutes of higher learning.

Whether racism, past discrimination or insufficient funds is to blame for the lack of minorities enrolled in college, race-based scholarships is a solution, if not only temporarily.

The old black spiritual which says "We shall overcome," still does not apply to A&M or many other university and college campuses with regards to minority representation.

Considering that over half of all students enrolled in public schools are minorities, higher education should continue to target these groups and promote their recruitment. Race-based scholarships are not just correcting past inequalities, but guaranteeing an educated society in the future.

Harrow is the managing editor of The Battalion and a senior journalism major.

### CON



JON DESHAZO

The question of discrimination and racism in our society has reached a crossroads lately. The Bush administration and other conservative groups have challenged the present definitions of affirmative action, discrimination in the business arena and entitlements. Now, race-based scholarships to college students have come under attack, and a new federal appeals court ruling may mark the beginning of a welcome end to federal money awarded solely upon skin color. The ruling itself has little impact in the immediate future, but its implications are clear.

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia, handed down the verdict. College scholarships given out solely to right past discrimination are unconstitutional except where discrimination continues to be a documented problem.

Hispanic student Dennis Podberesky filed the case against the University of Maryland. Podberesky applied for the Benjamin Banneker Scholarship, but was turned down because the scholarship was reserved for black students. The university created the scholarships in 1969 after federal officials informed the university that its 99-percent white student body was unconstitutional. University of Maryland attorneys argued that since the federal government still monitors minority enrollment at the school, racism remains a problem.

The ruling allows new challenges to other race-based scholarships in at least 19 other states, especially those in many state universities in the South.

The impediments to attending college no longer lie in racial barriers, but in economic barriers. The best use for the scholarships tied to skin color is to use the money to help the economically disadvantaged get in and stay in college. Poor students who now receive the race-based scholarships will be unaffected, since their economic status will keep them eligible for need-based help. Education is becoming more expensive, and scholarships for poorer students are becoming more necessary. The diverted funds would be given to those who really need financial aid.

We need to reconsider the conditions under which money is awarded to students. We should also reconsider the role mere race plays in society's decisions. Scholarships earmarked to help a student of a certain race are unconstitutional and inconsistent with the ideals of equality and the reality of today's society.

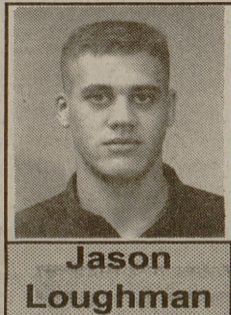
DeShazo is a sophomore electrical engineering major.



## Violence permeates society

### Peaceful childhood memories shattered by reality of today's crime

In the past, we have been largely insulated from the realities of violence and crime outside of this sanctuary we call Aggieland. Of course, we see the news reports when a particularly onerous crime has been perpetrated. Disbelief, frustration and anger are perhaps the feelings that most of us shared when we saw the videotaped shooting of Constable Darrell Lunsford as he conducted what he must have thought a routine traffic stop, or when we heard of the senseless, barbaric raping and beating of the woman jogging in New York's Central Park a while back. However, the impact of events such as these is diminished by the distance of the places where they occur; they seem abstract to us instead of close up and real. And as time passes, people forget, as if a dark and ominous cloud had briefly obscured the sun, but had in time passed on.



JASON LOUGHMAN

In the place that I did most of my growing up, a placid northwest suburb of Houston, things once were as they are here. I remember hearing about dangerous schools, street gangs and murders, but they always happened to some other person in some other place; these concerns were not a part of my world then, as they are not a part of ours now. In the four years since I left that largely tranquil neighborhood, it seems as if hell has descended upon the place.

A student at my old high school walked home from school recently and was accosted by a person who, having ascertained that the student was not a member of any gang, demanded the L.A. Raiders jacket he wore. The student was shot for his

refusal to relinquish the jacket. A black teenager was found dead, hanging in a tree. At first, it was thought a suicide, but his death is now being investigated as a homicide, and the rumor is that he was hung because he actually dared to date a white girl. Gangs roam the halls of the school and criminals prey on the subdivisions with growing and alarming frequency. The residents of one neighborhood are fed up with the depredations of one man who robs them on their own streets and breaks into their homes. Many of the residents recognize this man from his frequent visits and the word is that they are buying firearms and threatening to shoot him the next time they see him.

When I found out about the things that have been happening in my old hometown, things that four years ago only happened on television, it was personal. Violence and crime were no longer distant in my mind because these things were occurring in a familiar context, in a way that allowed me to relate to them as never before.

"Yeah mom, cut off the crusts on my sandwiches, oh and by the way, I'm taking the pistol to school today if you don't mind."

At this point, some of you may be sympathetic. Some of you are seeing the same phenomenon taking place in your old hometowns. And perhaps some of you think I've been whining because you grew up in a place where crime was already a constant reality. There is a point to this tale. The time is coming when almost all of us will see in the places we live the sorts of tragedies that now seem to exist only on a TV screen. Most of us will leave this place at some time in the future, and it is the reality of this degenerating society that will greet us. And, like my old neighborhood which was once a haven, Aggieland too will eventually come to know the full extent of crime. In fact, this process has already begun. The bicyclist who was the intended victim of a recent

drive-by shooting, not in Houston or Los Angeles, but here in good old College Station, would most likely agree.

I have no explanation for why crime, and especially violent crime, continues to spread and to occur so much more often. It is probable that one reason is our growing inability or unwillingness to effectively deter criminals. Some inmates say that they prefer penitentiary life to that on the outside; three hot meals a day, a place to sleep at night, televisions, weightlifting sets and few responsibilities. On the outside, they would have to look for work, pay the rent and live from hand to mouth. What does such a person have to lose from robbing a convenience store or killing an innocent bystander in a drive-by shooting?

Why have we allowed prison to become a place that criminals actually desire to be?

The judge who ruled that Texas prisons were overcrowded should be thrown into one of them. Any on-campus student who has lived tripled-up in a small dorm room has paid to live in more crowded conditions than are allowed to exist in our jails.

In any case, whether we leave Aggieland or whether we stay, we will all soon have to consider the increasing possibility each day that we will meet someone who means us harm, or who may be willing to kill us for a wallet, a purse or just a thrill. How will we react to these threats to our safety? Some of us will wait for the government to do something and in the meantime, hope for the best. My advice, however, is to buy a gun and learn how to use it. Learn gun safety and learn to secure firearms from inquisitive children. More armed homes translate to more dead criminals. Events seem to indicate that this may soon be the only deterrent there is.

Loughman is a senior journalism major.

## Mail Call

### Andro's remarks draw criticism

Reading Anthony Andro's remarks on watching the Olympics, my first thought was that he must be joking. One must look long for so many ridiculous remarks in one article.

Andro claims that the Summer Olympics are much more entertaining than the Winter Olympics. He finds watching speed skaters skating around in circles very boring. I suppose running around in circles is that much more exciting.

It is sad that Andro has not yet grasped the excitement of slalom and giant slalom. The reason they are hitting poles, Andro, is that they are trying to ski as straight as possible down the course to pick up speed. These events are real nail biters, with an added plus for people with Andro's attention span: You only have to watch the first 15 skiers in the second run. No skier skiing after that will affect the top positions.

I admit Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards adds color to the sport of ski jumping. It would also be fun to put Pee Wee Herman as a nose-guard for the Redskins. However, I believe both of them would be better off leaving it to the real pros.

My greatest fear is that CBS will devote too much time to figure skating and bobsledding. Granted it should be covered, but not to the extent that feel like vomiting after you've seen figure skaters day in and day out, form the time the flame was lit until it was extinguished. Please CBS, distribute your coverage to all events, not just the ones you believe the U.S. has a good shot of winning a medal in!

Jan Tore Kilec '93

### A&M needs reform

While I'm here at A&M watching R.A.P. (Republican Administrative Programs) rapidly change our world vision, reading the Battalion, and thanking others for identifying all of the problems surrounding my life; I curse the sciences

which promise complexity, and hope that someone else will solve my problems for me. Perhaps it will motivate me to learn something else on my own. It takes an educator who has some vague interest in ME and not my daddy's money (there ain't none) to motivate me to do homework. I cannot do it while some researcher with a long "rap" sheet of qualifications allows a graduate student to teach the very subject I once dreamed about. It had to be my own fault for studying six hours a night (no it's the \$,,\$,\$,\$,\$,\$,\$, the \$,,\$,\$,\$,\$,\$,\$ the \$,,\$,\$,\$,\$,\$,\$). Does anyone else care or dare to call out for change. I can't put my hand in the cookie jar until my own grades improve.

This was a composite of the Aggie student. Any questions?

Eric A. Negron Graduate student

### Profs deserve break

How many times have you been sitting in class

with about 5 or 6 minutes left in class, when the class, collectively decides that it is time for class to end. Unfortunately Ags, this occurrence happens everyday. Put yourself in the professor's shoes. If you were lecturing on a topic and the students started packing up their books and made all kinds of noises, how would you feel? Probably not very good, yet we (Aggies unite together) put our professors through this almost everyday. Now with the 20 minutes in-between classes, there is no reason to have to leave class early. Remember your old teachers saying in high school, "The bell doesn't dismiss you, I do." Let's give them the respect and attention they deserve.

Kevin Gonzalez '94

### Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers. All letters to the editor are welcome. Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will not be published. The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee that letters will appear. Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-5408.