

## Whites reap benefits from similar programs

The first affirmative action debates concerned white college students who were getting draft deferments during the civil wars in Indochina in the '60s. Minorities were over-represented in Asia — not abroad while mainly white college youth were going to school uninterrupted and making their way to successful careers. Many of these are professionals who look advantage of affirmative action back then are opposed to it now, especially if they're desperate politicians who need wedge issue to win. Hence Proposition 209, which eliminates affirmative action in California.

So often the argument is made that there is no longer a need for affirmative action, that they are all equal now and this policy has gone too far and is discriminating white males. But how could white males possibly be victims? As a group, white males comprise 33 percent of the population. However, they comprise 80 percent of the insured professors, 80 percent of U.S. Representatives, 90 percent of U.S. Senators, 92 percent of the Forbes 400, 97 percent of school superintendents, 99.9 percent of professional athletic team owners, and 100 percent of U.S. presidents. A black professional woman with a college degree earns only the equivalent of a white male with just high school diploma, and in 1993 white males continued to earn a salary that was 33 percent higher than their counterparts of other ethnic groups. Just because the classrooms at this University are filled with women doesn't mean these women will be treated equally in the workplace. Women today

earn around 73 cents on the dollar for every dollar a white male counterpart makes.

Columnist



**Aja Henderson**  
Senior political science major

So if white males are victims, just call me Molly Foo-Foo. This debate really isn't about affirmative action at all. It is about affirmative action for minorities — a minuscule part of the preferential policies in our country. Why aren't preferential programs for white males ever brought up? Let's see ...

there are tax breaks for corporations, subsidies for middle-class homeowners, price supports for corporate farmers, scholarships for second-generation college students and mass transit subsidies for white suburban neighborhoods.

Don't forget the \$500 billion federal bailout for the savings and loan fiasco, the biggest set-aside in history. Our federal treasury gives about \$46 billion per year to homeowners, primarily benefiting people who have incomes over \$50,000 — a category that is overwhelmingly white.

But this huge network of special benefits is ignored, and the finger is pointed at programs that help minorities. I'm not saying all these programs are wrong and should be abolished, but I do think the twisted psychology that the Rush Limbaughs and Pete Wilsons are using is evil. These people take advantage of all sorts of affirmative action for themselves, but want to deny it to the most oppressed groups in society. How greedy. It is a weird argument to abolish

## PROFESSION

affirmative action because it insults minorities' intelligence. Corporate America is not stigmatized by its subsidies. The idiots involved in the savings and loan scheme aren't holding their heads in shame. Veterans reaping the benefits of the GI bill aren't sobbing and feeling worthless. When people of color are involved, certain white males become conveniently "frightened and sensitive" about some supposed stigma on self-esteem.

There is also the argument that affirmative action should be based on class, not race. This is just a sneaky way to give it all to whites. Why? Because the poor in this country are mainly white. Blacks who come from homes with a family income of over \$70,000 still do slightly worse on the SAT than whites with a family income under \$10,000. If affirmative action is based on class rather than race, whites will reap more benefits than they already get.

Don't believe the hype. People don't get jobs based on merit alone. If that were the case, networking and nice résumés would be completely unnecessary.

The person with the best credentials would get the job, hands down. But only a fool believes this is how the job market in America works. These phony arguments are just a cover-up for greediness.

The politicians spewing dumb myths neglect to tell the public that affirmative action for privileged white males will continue. Funny how when affirmative action is applied to minorities, it's "reverse racism," but when the so-called angry white males are benefiting, it's "entitlements."

**This debate really isn't about affirmative action at all. It is about affirmative action for minorities.**

## Equality hindered by race-based treatment

for college. However, affirmative action will see that they get jobs. With a less-than-adequate college preparation, the chance of them succeeding in their jobs is minimal.

It is in this way that affirmative action can actually hurt a minority. Moreover, affirmative action breeds a new type of animosity among whites towards minorities. Many whites are angered by the fact that minorities do not have to meet equal standards for college admissions and are given the benefit of the doubt when applying for jobs for which they may not be completely qualified.

Affirmative action is a blanket policy that targets all minorities, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

As a result, some minorities from middle- and upper-class neighborhoods and good schools are still given benefits they don't need.

Suppose two individuals, one white and one African-American, apply for a job. Both have the same qualifications and attended good colleges.

If the white person is given the job based solely on the fact he is white, it is called racism, and the employer can expect lawsuits from the NAACP, the ACLU and Jesse Jackson.

If the African-American is given the job based solely on

skin color, it is called affirmative action.

Scholarships for minorities are fine, but a scholarship for whites would be denounced as racism.

It is the same for all-black versus all-white fraternities.

Although I hate to throw the term "reverse discrimination" around, it is obvious there is a double standard, and the goal of equality is not being met.

Equality, after all, is what we're all striving for.

But equality does not include discriminating based on skin color, whether that color be white, black, brown or red.

Moreover, Johnson's reason for implementing affirmative action was to make up for past discrimination against minorities.

However, affirmative action is not benefiting those who were discriminated against.

It is benefiting their children and grandchildren, who are not subject to segregation and Jim Crow laws.

The original purpose of affirmative action is targeting the wrong people.

The solution is to make college admissions and job applications colorblind.

A box for race or ethnicity should not be included, so that everyone is on the same playing field.

We need to get rid of affirmative action and instead reform education at the primary and secondary levels.

When applying for college or a job, it shouldn't matter what race you are, only that you have acquired the skills necessary for success.

Getting a job or a college education handed to you because of your race is an ineffective attempt at equality.

Columnist



**Jon Appgar**  
Sophomore journalism major

Hopwood. Proposition 209. Affirmative action. These three phrases have ignited a national debate concerning an executive order issued by President Lyndon Johnson nearly 30 years ago in an attempt to make up for racial discrimination.

What Hopwood and Proposition 209 — a measure passed by California voters to outlaw affirmative action in their state — show is the increasing backlash and animosity towards affirmative action.

Why is there such opposition to affirmative action? Because affirmative action is deeply flawed.

Affirmative action in theory sounds great.

Minorities are at a disadvantage in terms of pre-college educational opportunities, and helping them overcome these obstacles is a noble cause. However, affirmative action targets the wrong areas.

Educational opportunities are terrible for inner-city minorities, and those who attend these schools often have an inferior education and are not prepared for the rigors of college.

When minorities are admitted to college under lower standards, they are then expected to succeed during four years at a university and emerge with a degree.

If they manage to graduate, they most likely will not have the best of grades because of their inadequate preparation

**Scholarships for blacks are fine, but a scholarship for whites would be denounced as racism.**



**MARGULIES**  
©1996 THE RECORD NEW JERSEY  
WWW.BERGEN.COM/MARGULIES

## U.S. Army's image goes AWOL

The Army has an image problem. Numerous Army training supervisors, apparently feeling they weren't seeing enough action on their tour of booty, are now facing charges of sexual misconduct.

The charges cover a wide range of offenses. At one end of the spectrum, an instructor was accused of writing a love letter to a trainee. At the other end, Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson (apparently modeling himself after the famed running back/wife-murderer of the same last name) was charged not only with rape and adultery, but also with forcible sodomy.

These charges produce an image problem for the Army above and beyond the usual money-wasting and hair-loss issues. If the Army isn't careful, people may assume that these cases of sexual aggression stem from the fact that anyone who sticks around the Army long enough to gain a position of authority is by definition a loser. And that just isn't fair.

But this rash of cases should not be considered a luke. Courts-martial for such offenses are nothing new, but the Army, knowing it now has a widespread problem on its hands, has wisely chosen to take a proactive approach. To avoid the look of impropriety and the error resulting from accusations of a cover-up, it has given every indication of weeding out the bad apples responsible for these cases of sexual misconduct.

But are these cases just isolated instances of bad people doing bad things? Or does it represent a pattern in which certain types of people are attracted to the military and — as females become more fully integrated into the armed services — have more opportunity to abuse their power? More likely the latter.

Columnist



**Mason Jackson**  
Senior marketing major

Also, how long has this been going on and on how large a scale? When you consider the low rate at which civilians report sexual abuse, it is a safe assumption that an even lower percentage of cases is reported in the military, where people who make waves are not looked upon kindly.

These are the types of issues the Army must face if it wants to prevent this from happening again as soon as the spotlight shifts elsewhere. Simply purging the current perverts will only be a temporary fix.

The image problems created by such cases of sexual misconduct have far-ranging implications. In a country trying to balance its budget some time this millennium, defense spending may prove an easy target for budget cuts.

Especially since defense has become a misnomer, with all of our military actions now dealing with policing other parts of the world. Sure, Canada seems to be copping an attitude, but Mexico poses no imminent threat to invade (at least not in an organized fashion).

In the world today, it is more likely that economic forces, rather than military forces, will determine a country's future — just ask the former U.S.S.R. Creating even more room for military downsizing is the fact that technology has made the armed services more potent. A few strategic bombers can take the place of thousands of foot soldiers, an effective "less can be more" situation.

These reasons almost ensure that defense spending will continue to decrease. This leaves the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines in a competition to avoid the largest cuts. And in the politics of funding (as in journalism), image is everything.



## MAIL CALL

### Revisionist history teaches new lesson

Regarding James Hemene's Nov. 15 Mail Call, "Sull Ross deserves respect from A&M's":

As graduate students of the Department of History at Texas A&M University, we find it appalling that students of this "world class university," continue to perpetuate the myth that the Civil War was "mainly fought over states' rights" and that slavery was "a minor part of the whole picture."

This myth was created by Southern apologists following the war to excuse the inexcusable acts perpetrated by the South under slavery. It has been rejected unilaterally by academics, historians and anyone who has seriously studied the causes of the Civil War in the last few decades.

The Civil War was not only an issue of slavery, but also of racism. Those are undeniable facts.

The South could never have justified, nor continued slavery if the group being enslaved was not only easily identifiable but also considered inferior.

Furthermore, it was not only the continuation of slavery that the South desired, but also its expansion into undeveloped territories.

Perhaps if people would consider the facts, rather than what they want to believe, they would understand why the Civil War and issues of racism continue to divide this country.

Mark Klobas  
Graduate Student  
Accompanied by 16 signatures

### Column should be taken at face value

Regarding Aja Henderson's Nov. 13 column, "Sull Ross reeducation sullies A&M":

I am disappointed with the personal attacks on Henderson. Yes, perhaps her earlier article on "napping" was inappropriate for a serious opinion page, but is this sufficient grounds for me to take Befort's advice and reject her argument against Ross? The two issues are unrelated.

Particularly disturbing is Befort's declaration that "if the end purpose of her column is to start a ruffe and make waves, then she should stop."

It is so difficult to suppose that Henderson might hold different views than the majority at Texas A&M? Should we really censure her for those views? I challenge Befort to write for The Battalion next semester. Maybe he will be able to write opinions we can all agree with.

For his implicit comment regarding Henderson's lack of maturity, a subject he seems to understand so well, I think Befort owes Henderson an apology.

I think it is just dandy that Sull Ross saved Texas A&M and governed the state.

If, however, people are going to declare he was a "Great Man" perhaps they should add the qualification "to white southern men in the 19th century."

I don't know the facts. I don't know if Sullivan Ross was a slaveowner.

If he was, I think we should follow Andes' advice and "come out of the past."

If Ross was a slaveowner, his statue belongs in a museum, not in front of the Academic Building.

Jon S. Beeler  
Class of '97

### Columnists only deserve respect

Regarding the Nov. 14 editorial, "Thinking Smart":

The editorial stated that "Students do not agree with her, but they should respect her opinion." (referring to Aja Henderson).

This statement is wrong — we are under no more obligation to respect her opinion than we are to respect the opinions of Nazis, Communists, Creationists, Democrats or anything else, for that matter. What we are obligated to do is respect her right to have an opinion.

I disagree with almost everything Henderson has said in her columns. I find her arguments simplistic, ignorant and, in fact, rather insulting to women and African-Americans. And I do not respect the opinions she expresses anymore than I respect the opinions of Nazis, Communists, or Creationists.

That is my opinion and I am just as justified in having it as Henderson is in having hers.

The editorial seems to suggest it is OK for her to express her views, but not for us to express ours. By all means, Henderson can say what she wants — that is her right in a free society and I would never try to take that right away from her.

But to quote Hubert Humphrey, "The right to be heard does not include the right to be taken seriously."

So, by all means, let Ms. Henderson say whatever she wants to say, but don't get upset if some of us disagree with what she says.

Isn't people disagreeing with what she writes just as strong an expression of freedom as her writing it in the first place?

Brendan Guy  
Class of '99

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

The Battalion - Mail Call  
013 Reed McDonald  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX  
77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111  
Fax: (409) 845-2647  
E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu

For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.