

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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ABORTION FUNDING UNDER FIRE

Planned Parenthood should save its health services, funding over abortions

Planned Parenthood will continue to provide abortion services for now, but it will soon be forced to clearly define which of the services it provides holds higher importance — is it the various health care services such as Pap smears, cancer testing, sexually transmitted disease testing and birth control? Or is it the single service that its name is synonymous with: abortion. In either case, it is abortion, which approximately 2 percent of visits to Planned Parenthood result in, that could cause



SARA FOLEY

the Texas branches of the organization to lose \$13 million in federal funding, according to The Houston Chronicle. Faced with this possibility, Planned Parenthood should no longer provide abortions, thereby saving its other important services

and vital federal funding. Under Rider 8 in House Bill 1 of the 2004 state budget, which takes effect in September, federal funds are denied to any organization that provides or contracts out other services to provide abortions. This concept is not new, as a 1995 law also prevents public funding from financing abortions. However, the law is difficult to follow and enforce.

Although Planned Parenthood finances abortions through privately raised funds, it can be difficult to prove where funding is generated. It is more difficult to draw lines between what can be seen as an indirect cost of abortion and what can not. For example, counseling that may result in an abortion could be considered an aid toward it and an indirect cost of the procedure. The morning-after pill could be considered a late form of birth control but also an abortion at the earliest stage. The hazy boundaries surrounding these issues forced legislatures to deny funding for clinics that provide abortions to ensure that the law is followed.

Planned Parenthood filed suit against Texas Public Health Commissioner Eduardo Sanchez on June 26, claiming that the restraining of these federal funds is unconstitutional, according to the Austin American-Statesman. Similar cases in Michigan and Minnesota ruled against Planned Parenthood and in favor of the state, however, proving that although Planned Parenthood might be inconvenienced, it must change its business practices or deal with reduced funding.

If the funding is lost, Planned Parenthood may be forced to close down some clinics

statewide or eliminate the various other services it provides in the ones that do stay open. But this is not the best option, as a reduction in non-abortion services would be a simple declaration of what Planned Parenthood feels is most important: the other 2 percent. If the organization chooses to remove abortion from its services and allow hospitals and clinics to administer them, its funds would not be affected.

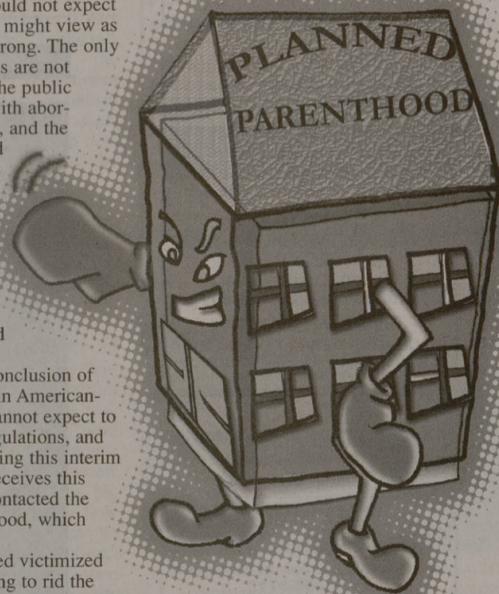
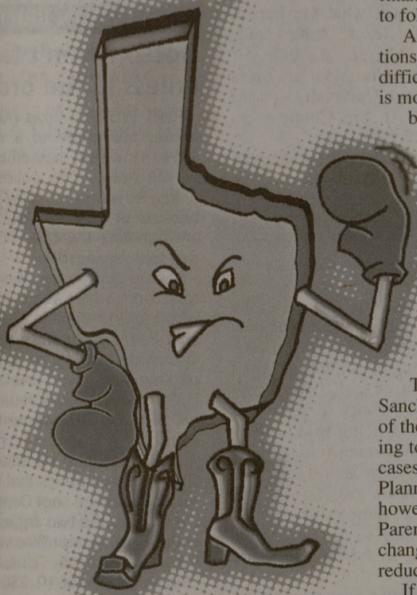
The lawsuit is pointless and a waste of money. Planned Parenthood is faced with a simple decision, backed by an 8-year-old law that needs to be strictly enforced. Although the organization may be reluctant to give up its throne as the abortion king, it should not expect taxpayers to fund an act that they might view as deeply, morally and religiously wrong. The only way to guarantee that public funds are not used for abortions is to separate the public money from anything affiliated with abortion. A clear division is necessary, and the legal pleas of Planned Parenthood will do no good.

The lawsuit does nothing but stretch the length of time until the inevitable decision must be made. While Planned Parenthood is biding for time, a court ruled July 1 that abortions may continue until a separate hearing, scheduled for the end of July, which will determine if abortions can continue until the conclusion of the lawsuit, according to the Austin American-Statesman. Planned Parenthood cannot expect to receive federal money without regulations, and the continuation of this action during this interim period should be the last time it receives this separate treatment. The Battalion contacted the Bryan chapter of Planned Parenthood, which had no comment on the issue.

Planned Parenthood has released victimized claims that the government is trying to rid the state of abortion, but in actuality, the state is trying to prevent citizens from paying for someone

else's mistakes or regrets. The controversial cloud that surrounds abortion may not clear up because of this legislation, but it will shift abortion completely into the private sector. Pro-choice activists claim abortion is a personal issue. To preserve the privacy of this choice, the public should not fund it.

Sara Foley is a junior journalism major. Graphic by Gracie Arenas



Affirmative action and the multi-ethnic elite

'Assumed experiences' based on skin color silently fuel affirmative action

Last month, the Supreme Court gave another stamp of approval to affirmative action in American academia. This erroneously conceived and executed system is a product of a diversity-conscious culture. And while diversity is a beneficial ideal that, in the words of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, makes for "livelier ... enlightening and interesting" discussion, diversity for diversity's sake is not the real goal. At least in the academic environment, the goal of diversity through affirmative action is decisively elitist.

Perry Bacon Jr., writing for TIME magazine last week, profiled his experience with affirmative action. He readily admits that, as a minority, his career as a writer has been marked and propelled forward by affirmative action. But affirmative action has not allowed Bacon simply an education or job. Instead, being black allowed Bacon access to the best education and career path. Bacon, a graduate of Yale University, states that, while he could have grown up on a farm in Arizona, being black "leapfrogged" him over similarly qualified applicants. But why Yale? Why TIME? The answers to these questions lay alongside the quiet goal of affirmative action, which Bacon writes, is "the creation of a multi-ethnic elite."

It should surprise few that the battle for affirmative action has been waged within the halls of prestigious institutions in America. The call for diversity rings loudest at schools like University of Michigan, not the University of Idaho, and the New York Times, not The Daily Texan. If affirmative action has



MICHAEL WARD

not always been focused on getting minorities into the top universities and jobs in America, then certainly the goal has morphed to reflect that. Thus, one finds that affirmative action is less about diversity as a means of enriching a learning environment and more about the surgically precise diversification of selected preeminent "white" institutions.

If diversity is so necessary for a quality education, as the Supreme Court suggests, how does one explain the preeminence of the Ivy League colleges? The average age of these institutions is 250 years, and for a large part of that time — while they were establishing themselves as superior institutions — they were home to only the sons of wealthy white men. One is left to believe that, without diversity, these institutions still rose to their lofty state. Now, diversity through affirmative action is not about any educational value.

Contrary to the ideas of Justice O'Connor, the presence of minorities does not necessarily "break down stereotypes" or "enable (students) to better understand persons of different races." As Bacon writes, "...a Michigan Law School student would learn a lot more about the 'unique experience' of blacks in America if he spent a day in an inner-city school in Detroit than he would sitting in a torts class with me." Yet, as institutions increasingly use race as an admissions tool, one will find classes filled with white students sitting next to minority students. While the image of diversity may be there, hearing about the experience won't trump living the experience. Affirmative action is a sham, a "glass menagerie" for modern academia. As

Bacon writes about this multi-ethnic, "rainbow" elite, "I want to join that elite and be expected to deliver the 'unique experience' of my whole life rather than an assumed experience based on the color of my skin." But it is this assumed experience that fuels the silent goal of affirmative action.

For years, Ivy League schools catered to their aforementioned select group, and those outside its ranks were left to find an education elsewhere. Affirmative action and its sidekick diversity seek to reduce the number of white students enrolled at America's top institutions while increasing the number of minorities. If one is white then he had a relatively easy life; if one is black then he had a tough life. Misguided and fueled by grotesque stereotypes, affirmative action reduces each person to a skin color with the ultimate goal of making sure those with more melanin go to top schools.

Last month's Supreme Court decision reflects the political climate of the nation. O'Connor admitted as much in her separate dissent by giving affirmative action a 25-year grace period. But, diversity driven by affirmative action only promotes a fragile collection of minority elites within this nation. Granted, they will be well-educated leaders in society, but they will have been given the chance to be so under false pretenses and merely because of the color of their skin — nothing more, nothing less.

Michael Ward is a senior history major.

MAIL CALL

Administrators aren't welcoming others' views

In response to Dr. David Prior's July 8 mail call:

Dr. Prior has now joined Dr. Kibler in attacking The Battalion for running a cartoon that depicts affirmative action as a discriminatory program that only a racist organization like the KKK would embrace. Make no mistake, the cartoon deploras both the KKK and discrimination by college administrators. This, of course, offends Prior since he is one of those administrators that prefers using race in the admissions process.

He states, "This cartoon is yet another of its kind, published in The Battalion, that is supremely insensitive and highly offensive to those of us in our academic community who care deeply about diversity." Ironically, a fondness for affirmative action by administrators such as Prior is

supremely insensitive and highly offensive to those students who believe that Texas A&M should not care what color their skin is.

Had the cartoon depicted the judging of people based on the color of their skin, in order to achieve "diversity," Prior and other administrators would likely be applauding The Battalion for taking a "progressive" stance on a controversial issue.

Most disturbing about Prior's mail call is that University administrators are using their positions of power to attempt to coerce The Battalion to adopt their own politically correct agendas.

While Prior states that we must welcome the expression of differing views, the rest of his letter leads me to believe this only applies so long as the "differing views" do not conflict with his own.

Kristin Foulk
Class of 2003

Teachers should embrace homosexuality in schools

In response to Lindsye Forson's July 8 column:

In her July 8 column, Lindsye Forson asks "why single out one class of people for protection when myriads of other classes and sub-classes also face similar teasing?" But earlier in her same column, she quotes the new language from the Maryland State Board of Education that bars discrimination based on "sex, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age or disability."

It seems clear to me that the Board is definitely not "singling out" homosexuals for protection from discrimination, but rather, including them in the protections afforded other groups who often face discrimination.

She also states that "educating children about an issue such as homosex-

uality oversteps the bounds of a public school's function." I couldn't disagree more.

If we want to send children out into the world prepared to embrace diversity and respect people from all religions, genders, ethnicities and so on, then we can't afford to pretend these issues

don't exist just because of their volatility.

I also would suggest that perhaps we shouldn't just shrug off statements such as "you're gay" as kids being kids. If it's hurtful, it shouldn't be condoned.

Robert Powell
Class of 2001



Thursday, July 10, 2003

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1-2 female roommates for 3brdm house in Bryan, TX. 4.

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