EDITORIALS

John J. Oliver, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Frances M. Draper
President
THE VOICE OF BLACK AMERICA SINCE 1892

Women must have a choice

Every time a man stands up and tries to tell a woman what to do with her body someone should take him not too gently by the hand and remind him that he does what he pleases with his own torso ... and until women tell him what to do, he should back off.

All this talk about whether abortion should or should not be a matter of choice boils down to one thing — does a woman have a right to decide if she wants to be pregnant for nine months ... or is it up to the do gooders who don't have children, can't have them, don't want them or who are practicing some other form of birth control.

But the really sad part about all the controversy is that the rich, pregnant woman is going to get an abortion — when she wants one — whether it is legal or not. She did it in the 1900's and she will do it today.

For a price, she will find a competent doctor hidden away in a safe clinic who will perform that abortion. She will emerge, after having the best of medical care, with her body virtually unscarred.

If abortions are declared illegal again, the poor, pregnant woman will also get that abortion. But history tells us she will go to the butcher, who charges less money and isn't too careful about sanitary conditions.

In some cases, she will either bleed to death or have her body so maimed that she will not be able to have children when she wants them.

There are women living today who remember the horror stories of the abortion mills that existed on college campuses where the coat hanger was the main tool. And many a childless woman regrets the butcher job performed on her in her youth, depriving her of the ability to bear children later, when she found the right man and married him.

They also remember the names of the good, black doctors who went to prison for trying to maintain safe, clean abortion clinics. Few white doctors, who did the same thing, joined them behind bars.

Doctors do this country and their pregnant female clients a disservice for not speaking out day in and day out about the tortures they know women went through before the 1973 Supreme Court ruling — Roe v. Wade — which made a safe abortion legal.

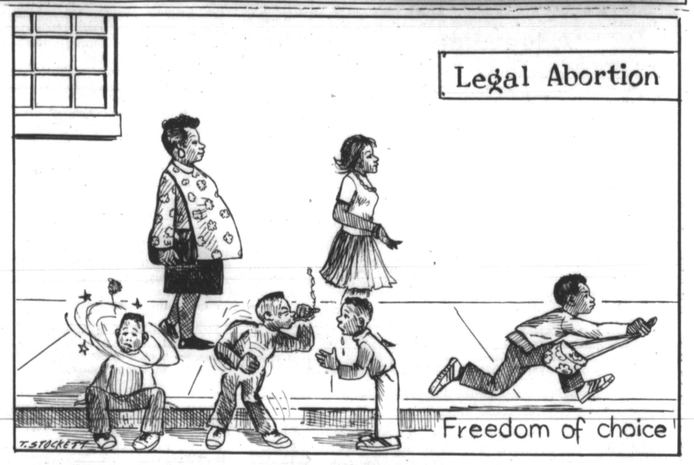
Whether the abortion follows a rape, is for a teenager, or a mother who has her hands full with too large a family ... it should be the woman's choice. She has only her family to answer to and her God, as she does in all of her lifetime situations.

America has too many homeless people, too many unwanted children, too many abused children and lord knows we have too many children out of control and strung out on drugs. If legal abortions can curb the numbers in any of these groups it would be a blessing.

Those who worry about genocide and zero population growth should take over the task of being breeders instead of protesters.

If they are really sincere about saving a fetus, let's all pray that it is the fetus of the woman who wants to care for and love a baby and not the one of the woman who cries out to be relieved of the burden before she reaches her third month.

No outsider can look into a woman's heart and determine what she wants for herself. That is why only a pregnant woman can make that choice. The option of a legal abortion will give her that chance to say yes or no. That really is what right to life should mean. Freedom of choice, then, is the best way.



G. James Fleming
Public Affairs Commentator

Reagan leaves mark on court

No one should be surprised at last week's Supreme Court decree, declaring unconstitutional the setaside law of Richmond, VA — an affirmative action law which insured that at least 30 percent of all Richmond's construction contracts should be let to minority businesses. The court's opinion applies to Baltimore and other jurisdictions.

Everyone should have seen that kind of decision coming — and it is only the beginning. Now, that the court has a majority of conservative judges, thanks to Ronald Reagan, what the former president tried so hard to achieve during his reign, he will accomplish in his retirement, and long after he has shuffled off this mortal coil.

In the months and years ahead, it is safe to predict that the Reagan-Bush court, under the guise of "strict construction" of the constitution, will dismantle much of the civil rights laws and programs of the past 20 to 25 years.

Not only will the highest court be thus poised, but nearly every lower federal court will be similarly disposed — similarly tainted and dedicated — to return to the days of official discrimination, segregation and neglect.

The courts will open the legal doors of racism an inch further and local bigots, the Ku Klux Klan and self-interest factions will push forward (or backwards) to the days before World War II.

* * *

All of this is no surprise. The federal courts, since the coming of Reagan, have been the children of the ultra-conservative wing of the Republican Party, of which Reagan was the front-man.

The Supreme Court, the final arbiter of all constitutional questions, now has a Reagan majority and its decisions will be no different from what they would be if Reagan was still president.

Indeed, it is expecting too much of the Bush regime to think it will be fundamentally different substantially, from Reagan's. Of course, it will be different in style, human relations rhetoric and in offers of "sharing hands." The words will largely be those of George Bush, but the thoughts will be those of Ronald Reagan.

This is not because, by and large, President Bush is not a decent church-going, member of Lincoln's party; he will be the political creature he must be, however, because of the people who have sponsored him and upon whom he must depend for a second term.

Those are the same kind of people who made Reagan what he was as chief executive.

* * *

So far, George Bush has shown a spirit of inclusion and of reaching out. He included children as well as adults in his inauguration; he has met with black as well as with white leaders; he has made a courtesy telephone call to President Mikhail Gorbachev as well as to the heads of state of the friendly West.

His words have been Bush at his best, his friends hold. Next, he must be judged by his policies, his executive orders, the laws he proposes, the programs to which he gives his support.

One test of the real George Bush will be the opportunities he may (or will) have of making nominations to the Supreme Court — how far he will go in finding Reagan-minded clones or how far he will go in breaking with the ultra-right wing of his party.

But, President Bush is a loyal Republican; he owes much to the wheelers and dealers of the GOP, and he must build his party for the future.

Fortunately for the two-party system of the United States and the division of powers, the continuing Reagan-Bush era will be balanced by the fact that the Congress is of the opposition (Democratic) party, capable of questioning, of supporting, of approving, or of opposing.

Jesse Jackson on the Mitchells

Our African American elected officials are being threatened. Outspoken leaders of the African American community have, in disproportionate numbers, become targets of unfavorable press coverage, investigation and indictment. The conservative members of our Government's Justice Department have waged a dangerous campaign against African American leaders.

The clear and present danger is a repeat of the Post Reconstruction Period, 1880-1900, when every African American elected official was driven out of public office.

The attack against former State Senators Clarence M. Mitchell, III and Michael Bowen Mitchell are blatant examples of such harassment and selected persecution.

The brothers are the sons of the late Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. NAACP's veteran civil rights leader whose successful lobbying efforts earned him the title of the "101st Senator," so called by President Lyndon Johnson and United States Senate leaders.

Clarence and Michael carry on that strong tradition and have spent their lives fighting for freedom and "speaking out" for African Americans and other minorities.

The brothers were convicted on an obscure 1942 statute. On several issues of law, lead defense attorney, the nationally famous William M. Kunstler and co-counsel, believe the appeal to be meritorious and believe the Mitchells will be totally vindicated. The Mitchells must be freed.

Of significance is the fact that this case represents an unprecedented example of individuals being incarcerated for this type of crime prior to the exhaustion of the appeal process.

In similar, highly publicized cases concerning Messrs. Deaver, Nofzinger and Biaggi, the defendants were allowed to post bail. In the Mitchells' case, a request for bail went to the Supreme Court.

Due to Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr.'s testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, in 1971, having told the Committee that by William H. Rehnquist's appointment to the Court, "the foot of racism is placed in the door of the temple of justice;" and, due to testimony being given before that Committee against Justice Rehnquist's elevation to Chief Justice by Clarence M. Mitchell, III and William M. Kunstler, Rehnquist was asked to excuse himself from decision on the Mitchells.

He did not, and denied bail. A second request went to Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who chose, due to his long history and friendship with the family, not to hear the application.

Even now, having been incarcerated and having being denied their freedom since last Spring, the Mitchells have been denied legitimate furloughs based upon a claim of "severity of offense," while others convicted of far more serious crimes are regularly granted such privileges.

In effect, when the convictions are reversed on appeal, Clarence and Michael Mitchell will have been imprisoned for a significant period of time, and in fact, will have served a substantial portion of their sentences for which there would be no adequate remedy, either at law or in equity.

The Mitchell brothers must be freed. At issue is the very integrity of our system of laws. The application of unequal justice is a concern not only to African Americans and other minorities — but to every American. I urge all of you to join with me in protesting the unconstitutional denial to these men, of appeal bond and right to a fair trial.

I urge national leaders to go to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, VA, to be present at the appeal to demonstrate our great concern that all Americans receive equal justice. (Details available — Mitchell Defense Committee, (301) 523-6275 or (212) 319-6333).

REV. JESSE JACKSON, SR.
Chicago, IL

Letters to the Editor

History revisited

As President Ronald Reagan accused black leaders of fabricating cases of inequity and discrimination in America, the Ku Klux Klan marched in Thurmont, MD and Long Beach, CA policemen harassed, arrested and falsified charges against black America males.

In both cases, television cameras captured the historical moments, thereby documenting two of many cases of inequity that occurred as we celebrated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The visual media transformed the printed transgressions into scenes seldom seen but often lived that are reminiscent of the 60s.

I could not help but flash back to my student days in Atlanta in 1962 when it was commonplace to see the klan openly opposing and antagonizing civil rights demonstrators.

The pain of the loss of friends and unknown black men and women at the hands of the klan and the White Citizens Council was relived in the

The major difference was the short segment in Thurmont.

The major differences was the open defiance of a handful of white anti-klan Thurmont residents who voiced their opposition to the klan and the racist beliefs they perpetuate.

With a few recruits, the klansmen marched around the town while elected officials stayed at home.

Why didn't Thurmont's elected officials openly oppose the klan? Their failure to do so perpetuates the hate group's beliefs and actions.

The Long Beach, CA policemen whose actions in beating and arresting a black man (a policeman who assisted in setting them up to show their abuses of black males) were reminiscent of Bull Connor's men.

These two examples of overt racism, one from a hate group and one from law enforcement officers vested with the responsibility to protect the very citizens they beat, depict the recurring injustices black America suffers at the hands of some white Americans.

Black Americans must speak out more when these incidents occur. These cases document the facts black leaders present on our behalf.

Ronald Reagan's assumption and belief that he is without prejudice is ridiculous given the reality of life in America. His own news media has made no impression on him.

It will be interesting to see if President Bush's perceptions will be influenced by the presence of his half Hispanic "brown" grandchildren's experiences, sheltered though they are.

In the meantime, blacks must speak out, document and fight for equity on all fronts.

WANDA E. GILL
Upper Marlboro, MD

COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

A legislative agenda for 1989

By Norman Hill

This is a very important year for our organization, the A. Philip Randolph Institute. 1989 is the 100th birthday year of the Institute's namesake and founder, A. Philip Randolph, America's greatest black labor leader and an outstanding civil rights leader as well.

Randolph believed that blacks and the trade union movement are natural allies in the struggle for economic and social justice.

To advance that struggle, he established the Institute—an organization of black labor activists—to serve as a bridge between the black community and organized labor.

This year we at the Institute feel especially called upon to pursue the black-labor agenda for three reasons: first, because it is Randolph's centennial; second, because we need to make up for lost time.

During the past eight years, the White House has opposed, with all-too-much success, most aspects of the black-labor agenda; and third, because our hopes have been raised somewhat by the incoming President.

He has promised a "kinder and gentler nation," has met with black leaders, and has told his personnel recruiters that he wants to appoint significant numbers of minorities to posts in his Administration.

So as George Bush enters the White House, we will begin our year's work by presenting a black-labor legislative agenda that we think deserves the support of the new President and the new, 101st Congress.

We urge the passage of four important health- and family - related bills that were derailed in the 100th Congress. One requires that all employers provide minimum health care benefits to their employees.

Another guarantees working parents the right to unpaid, job-protected leave to deal with personal or family medical problems, including the birth of a child.

A third piece of legislation provides funding for the development of child care centers, subsidizes child care for low-income working families, and sets standards of quality for child care facilities and personnel.

The fourth measure, known as the high-risk notification bill, establishes a program for identifying, notifying, and facilitating treatment for workers who have been exposed to hazardous substances in the workplace.

In addition, we back a new bill being introduced for the first time in the 101st Congress that toughens the Occupational Safety and Health Act's workplace health and safety rules.

We also support a group of bills that protect workers' employment security and standard of living. These, too, were introduced but not passed in the last Congress, in some cases because of a Reagan veto or a filibuster.

Passage of a minimum wage increase from its current $3.35 level is an essential part of the fight to assure workers a decent wage.

We also favor legislation to prevent construction firms from avoiding collective bargaining agreements by setting up non-union alter egos, a practice known as double-breasting.

Finally, a textile and apparel trade bill would slow down the deluge of textile, apparel, and footwear imports made with exploited, low-wage labor.

Another worthy legislative measure left over from the 100th Congress is Hatch Act reform to restore the political rights of federal and postal employees, who are currently barred from engaging in political activity.

Fortunately, some of the important legislation in the civil rights area can be removed from the 1989 agenda because of the excellent work of the 100th Congress in attacking discrimination.

The Civil Rights Restoration Act, passed over President Reagan's veto, overrode the Supreme Court's Grove City decision and strengthened the prohibition on federal funding of discrimination against minorities, women, the disabled, and the elderly.

The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 strengthened the enforcement mechanism of the Fair Housing Act.

Still on the civil rights agenda, however, is voter registration reform, to make the right to vote more accessible, and legislation to eliminate racial discrimination in the application of the death penalty.

Since the Institute opposes racial discrimination abroad as well as at home, we back a bill to strengthen economic sanctions against South Africa.

Finally, the Institute's agenda also includes opposition to legislation that has already been considered by Congress and which may resurface there this year.

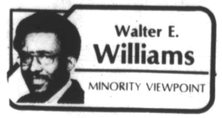
Among these undesirable proposals are constitutional amendments requiring a balanced budget and giving the President a line item veto, a bill for widespread mandatory drug testing of employees in the transportation industry;

And a proposal that would weaken the collective bargaining guarantees for transit employees in the 1964 Urban Mass Transportation Act.

We at the Randolph Institute start the New Year with the optimistic expectation that the new Administration will be more favorably disposed toward a program for economic and social justice than the outgoing one.

But the White House—and the Congress as well—can be sure that we and our allies will be watching them carefully to make sure that the black-labor agenda moves forward in 1989.

Norman Hill is President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute.



Walter E. Williams
MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Kill the messenger

John Thompson, Georgetown University's basketball coach, stalked out of a game. Temple University's basketball coach, John Chaney, labeled the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) a racist organization. And a number of high school basketball coaches rallied against the NCAA. What did the NCAA do?

The NCAA's Proposal 42, which goes into effect next summer, says high school athletes must score at least 700 on their Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), a college admissions test, and hold a 2.0 grade point average in order to be eligible for scholarships and financial aid.

Coaches claim these new "tough" academic standards are racially discriminatory since the SAT is culturally biased against blacks.

The SAT consists of two parts — verbal and mathematics. The maximum score for each is 800 points, giving a total of 1600 points. Therefore, the NCAA's new "tough" requirement is for athletes to score 44 percent on the test and maintain a C average — not too-challenging a requirement, especially when you consider that the average national SAT score is 900.

Naturally, basketball coaches are upset with the new requirement because it threatens their ability to recruit and retain star black basketball players because of poor performance on the SAT. Thus, the allegation that the SAT is culturally biased.

Several issues are made apparent by this allegation. First, any test is bound to be rooted in some kind of culture; there is no such thing as culture-free tests. Second, blacks do just about as badly on the math part of the test, which can be said to have fewer culture-based questions, as they do on the verbal.

Third, Asian-Americans have an average SAT score of 926, 25 points above the national average. Why do Asians, America's most culturally different population grouping, do so well on a supposedly culturally biased test?

The debate over the NCAA's requirement for a minimum SAT score of 700 is much ado about nothing in the larger picture. Black students, as a group, scored an average of only 728 on the SAT in 1987 — a 10 percent improvement over 1980.

At some of the nation's finer institutions like Columbia, Brown, MIT, Duke and Georgetown universities, over half the student body scores 1200 and above on the SAT. The tragedy is these schools are often at the forefront in recruiting black students.

To take any student, black or white with SAT scores in the 700s, and place him in such a high-powered environment is akin to academic genocide. It will be difficult for him to maintain a C average unless he takes "Mickey Mouse" courses.

The academic achievement picture for blacks is more dismal with the GRE (the admissions test for graduate and professional schools). Blacks, after four years of college, still face an enormous achievement gap.

The response of the Education Establishment and civil rights organizations to this tragedy is to blame the tests, call for more busing, and more money as they've been doing for years. While this charade goes on millions of black kids' prospects for improvement in their life is snuffed out.

College coaches and administrators are upset over the NCAA requirements, and naturally so, because it threatens the money-making part of their operation.

But that's their problem. Black people must have a different agenda — to figure out how to stop black politicians, civil rights organizations, the Education Establishment, and white liberals from fulfilling the Ku Klux Klan's dream of black education.

I pray for the day when black people will rise up to these charlatans; and just say, "No more!"

Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

The Richmond decision

Since the Supreme Court handed down its decision in the Richmond case, the telephones in my offices and in my home have been ringing incessantly. "Has the minority business program been ended?" "Is this the end of affirmative action for minority businesses?" "Where do we go from here?"

Stop, remain calm, don't panic!

The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Richmond v. J. A. Croson* was unfortunate, if not entirely unexpected. Obviously, we had hoped that the Court would have taken a more expansive view of when minority business set-asides would be permissible.

By striking down the Richmond Ordinance, the Court is now requiring state and local governments to produce particularized findings of discrimination to justify MBE programs.

However, the Court's decision in no way affected the legality of any federal minority business programs.

While this decision poses additional obstacles for local efforts to integrate the marketplace, these obstacles are not insurmountable.

We are quite certain that the evidence of discrimination necessary to justify affirmative action on behalf of minority businesses exists at the state and local levels. Now, state and local governments will simply be required to document that record of discrimination without reliance upon federal findings.

It is important to note that all nine of the Justices have stated unequivocally that this decision in no way precludes a state or local government from taking action to rectify the effects of identified discrimination within its jurisdiction.

The overwhelming majority of the Court also agrees that if the City of Richmond had evidence before it that non - minority contractors were systematically excluding minority businesses from subcontracting opportunities, an MBE program to end the discriminatory exclusion would have been a permissible response by the City.

The Supreme Court has reaffirmed that business as usual should not mean business pursuant to the unthinking exclusion of certain members of our society from its rewards.

It is important to note that the court has left intact the availability of MBE set-asides as a permissible remedy for discrimination in the marketplace. If more effort and work will now be required to justify the use of such programs, we are prepared to help state and local governments meet the challenge.

It would be a tragic error for local governments to retreat in their efforts to integrate minority businesses into the econmic mainstream because of this decision. We can and we must continue to move forward to eradicate the awful effects of racial discrimination from the marketplace.

Four cardinal points must be stressed.

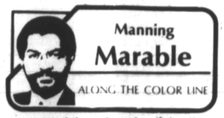
First, the minority business set-aside programs at the state and local levels have not been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the Court has set guidelines for such programs.

Second, state and local governments which must modify their programs to be in compliance with the Court's guidelines may continue to implement their programs while they are in the process of making modifications.

Third, the federal minority business set-asides are not touched by the Supreme Court decision—they remain in full forces and effect.

Fourth, the Supreme Court decision did not sound the death-knell for minority business set-asides. Just as the *DeFunis* case and the *Bakke* case did not destroy affirmative action, this decision has not destroyed set-asides.

We have lost one battle. Defeated? No! No! No!



Manning Marable
ALONG THE COLOR LINE

The crisis in Western culture

A central crisis which characterizes the white western world today, especially its educational institutions, is a cultural crisis.

For centuries, white America and Western European educational institutions have established their curricula and educational assumptions upon a series of ethnocentric distortions.

Creative, talented black intellectuals, writers, poets and scientists are traditionally ignored, while the architects of slavery, racism and economic oppression are championed.

For example, Artistotle, the father of modern western philosphy, was also the earliest defender of slavery and the "natural" inferiority of slaves and women.

Do the writings of Protestant reformer Martin Luther provide the sole treatment of religion worthy of study—or should we also turn to the thoughts of Martin Luther King, Jr.?

Does Thomas Moore's *Utopia* or the leviathan of Thomas Hobbes tell us more about politics than the writings of Frantz Fanon or C. L. R. James?

Can a young black woman or man learn better about life by reading a white novelist, or by reading Toni Morrison, Alice Walker or Richard Wright?

Which is more relevant to an understanding of humanity, Plato or W. E. B. Du Bois?

When education reflects the mythology that the white west has created for itself, the answers to these questions become obvious. The curriculum in traditionally white, mainstream environments reinforces ethnocentrism and an ignorance of the cultural and intellectual creativity of nonwhites.

Black and progressive educators have long recognized that the cultural battleground is absolutely decisive in the broader political and economic empowerment of oppressed people.

The values which are taught to our children largely determine their behavior. If a people are not seen as active creators of culture, playing significant roles within history, they will be ignored within our children's textbooks and classes.

In America, our economic system rewards people who possess certain values and styles of behavior, such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, initiative, and individualism.

But in their most extreme form, reinforced by the constant quest for dollars, such values in people deteriorate into greed and materialism. Culture becomes anything which can be marketed for a profit.

The media reflects the lowest level of public awareness and political discussion——"trash tv," symbolized by Geraldo Rivera, is the logical result.

Sexuality all too often becomes simply a commodity, an item which can be bought and sold. Religion becomes marketed by gradulent, hypocritical televangelists, seeking dollars and wealth more than the salvation of souls.

The cultural conflict is waged most intensely in the field of education, and especially on college campuses. White, conservative traditionalists are fighting against any changes in the Western civilization courses, to ensure that the next generation of white people is properly indoctrinated in reactionary, racist values.

At Stanford University, after two years of bitter debate, the faculty senate voted to overthrow the university's Western civilization course requirement. The new required course includes readings by people of color.

Stanford's modest acknowledgement of nonwhite cultures within its curriculum has been denounced by former Education Secretary William J. Bennett, who condemned the university for "trashing the classics" and capitulating to students' demands.

Dr. Manning Marable is Chairperson of the Department of Black Studies, Ohio State University.