



ROSSMOOR NEWS

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Republican Perspective

By Christopher Panton

How to Advance Your Civilization

A few weeks ago, the Contra Costa Times carried news of the Berkeley School Board's concerns regarding the disproportionate number (i.e. more than the phantom "quota") of black students being suspended. To address this imbalance - perceived as racially motivated - suspension as a punishment was simply taken off the table completely.

The board then forced the largely white teaching staff to attend seminars on "managing" (i.e. accepting) the disruptive and dysfunctional behavior of intransigent black students on the excusable grounds that "defiance" and "talking back" were foundational pillars of the black culture. Apparently, there are no plans to send teachers back to school to learn how to manage the idiosyncratic behaviors of other ethnic and racial cultures represented in the classroom.

Whoa! Do I detect the smell of (reverse) racism here? Let's see: Black students get a free behavioral pass; all other colors don't and mostly white teachers are left holding the bag. Hmm.

My initial reaction to this lefty nonsense was: "What do you expect? It is well known that Berkeley is the point source of the idiocy virus contagion around here, and is a world champion in applying it to all walks of life." But, boy, this jaundiced, parochial view of mine turned out to be so very wrong. And so it was that a subsequent news release trumpeted a remarkable, even dramatic, reduction in the number of suspended students in most school districts across the state! The success of this broad campaign was attributed to the use of substitute in-house methods in dealing with problem students. Certainly, the justification for the campaign seemed to make sense; suspension puts kids on the street and encourages dropping-out.

All very cozy, except for a shy little aside that managed to peep through the jubilant reportage. Thus, it was peripherally allowed that "many" teachers privately complained of increased disruption in the classroom and even threats to safety as a result of pressure not to remove the badly behaved. And, of course, the matter of black students' "willful defiance" as a tolerable, even forgivable, sin could not be kept out of the campaign commentary. Indeed, the good ship "Altruism" took a fatal broadside when officials

(bureaucrats, activists and assorted liberal riff-raff) went further by insisting that much more remained to be done on the basis of the 6 percent black enrollment in the state's schools receiving 16 percent of the suspensions. Ah, quotas. What would we do without them?

Like it or not, quotas - the love of the loony left - are back in town. There is a bill, already passed by the Democrat-controlled state Senate, wending its way through the state Legislature (inviolably Democratic) that seeks to gut Proposition 209. Passed in 1996, voter-approved 209 banned the state, including its universities, from giving preferential treatment to individuals or groups on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin. While not actually setting numerical quotas, the pending bill will allow the state's university admissions system the flexibility to discriminate in favor of "under-represented" ethnicities.

Naturally, the principal beneficiaries will be blacks and Latinos unable to make the grade under the current merit system. Hardest hit will be Asians, not only the largest intake in recent years, but at percentages far, far higher than "justified" by their share of the state's population. Interestingly, current data also shows that whites, too, are under-represented. I wonder how that will play? So, unless the courts kick this bill into the sewer where it belongs, state university education will veer downward towards the lowest common denominator, while these same popinjay politicians are simultaneously calling for improvements in state educational performance. Now, that's what I call really progressive!

Where does the buck associated with all this drivel stop? Probably not at the desk of our chief executive, where a sign says: "Do not disturb. The buck stops anywhere but here." However, the president and his attorney general recently proved the sign wrong by announcing that the federal government will no longer support the Zero Tolerance program in the nation's schools. The accompanying waffle that desperately attempted to justify this major policy reversal focused on an allegedly "poor application of the program's concepts and intent."

It is pathetically obvious that, sneakily buried somewhere beneath this unsatisfying generality, will be found data showing an over-representation of black students in nationwide suspensions. I can say this with a good deal of confidence as our black (actually, half-white) president is clearly a staunch supporter of the race-card assertions concerning "defiance" and "talking back." One has only to observe his text-book exploitation of these vital cultural qualities, as brought to you live, in his recent my-way-or-the-highway State of the Union speech. Now, that's what I call real 'tude!

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