

OPINIONPAGE

Our VIEW

Fear response

Proposal wouldn't end discrimination

This Friday, Sen. Kate Witek of Omaha proposed a state constitutional amendment that would ban preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, education and contracting.

At first glance, the resolution's language seems to support policies of non-discrimination important to a colorblind society.

But we do not live in a colorblind society.

And if you listened closely to Witek and other resolution proponents Friday, the resolution sounded little like a responsible public service and much like a response to fear.

Witek told the Judiciary Committee she worried her white son would graduate from high school and college and be denied an important opportunity because of his race.

She wants him to be judged, not on the color of his skin, but on his merits, she said. As would any good parent, she will fight for her son's right to avoid discrimination, she said.

But what will she fight against? Rampant discrimination? Or rumors and unsubstantiated fears?

Fears that policies designed to increase minorities' participation in state government and education will exclude the white creators of the systems.

Fears that the most qualified white man is frequently dropped from job or scholarship consideration because a minority quota must be filled.

Fears with little to no rational basis.

As a result, Witek could provide no specific evidence Friday on how the resolution would improve Nebraskans' daily lives.

We and NU President Dennis Smith believe the resolution would harm affirmative action programs, especially those designed to increase minority recruitment efforts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In addition to harm caused, the resolution would make futile stabs at a nonexistent problem.

As proponents of affirmative action, we have a duty to make sure the problem remains nonexistent by supporting stronger recruitment of minority job candidates.

But, as long as recruitment efforts improve, minorities will be equally or more qualified than their white counterparts and will be hired without discrimination, with no constitutional amendment required.

Haney's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Smoke screen

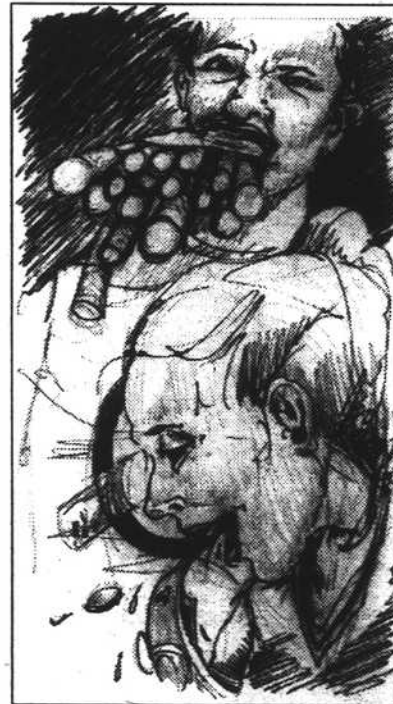
This letter is in response to the portion of \$3.50 Daryl Swanson, Nebraska unions director, wants to charge us each semester to help cover lost revenue from not selling cigarettes in the union. Quit fooling yourself! You know as soon as it goes into effect, you'll be asking for an extra \$1.50 or so to cover lost sales of complementary goods like pop and snacks, since smokers get the munchies, too.

Union Board President Saad Alavi agrees that students should not have to pay for the lost revenue. We shouldn't have to pay for it because smokers will only buy cigarettes somewhere else. So, Mr. Swanson wants us to, in essence, pay for increasing the distance between students and tobacco.

I was unaware that just because a product is for sale means it FORCES people to buy it. The truth is, some people choose not to smoke because THEY DON'T WANT TO, not because it wasn't being sold in front of them!

Mr. Swanson, before you so easily tack another \$3.50 to my bill each semester to keep me from smoking (which I've never had a desire to do), maybe you should consider some alternatives. How about outlawing smoking on campus? I know I'm tired of walking behind smokers who definitely don't promote my "wellness." Treat cigarettes like alcohol. Allow the sale of it, but restrict the use to the consumer's privacy.

Brett Otte
junior
finance



MELANIE FALE/DN

origin, and it was originally "The Real Mackay," likely in reference to the leader of the Clan Mackay. The phrase was widely used in Scotland well before it appeared in America, where it was transmuted into "The Real McCoy," probably by the promoters of the boxer Kid McCoy. It later came to refer primarily to bootleg liquor, where the good stuff was "The Real McCoy" as opposed to bathtub gin. It almost certainly had nothing to do with Elijah McCoy.

Please check your facts before propagating politically correct myths like this one.

Gerry Harbison
chemistry professor

Fact or fiction?

Multiculturalism truly is the affirmative action of the mind — the promotion of bad ideas over good ones, and of nonsense over fact, in order to boost some minority group's collective self-esteem. Your "Diversity in History" capsule today, in which you suggest that the phrase "The Real McCoy" refers to African-American inventor Elijah McCoy, is a beautiful example.

"The Real McCoy" is of Scottish

Racism?

I've seen a lot of silly controversies at UNL, but the "Hibler affair" takes the cake. Now, I'm hardly a fan of Dr. Hibler or his politics, but the statements by the DN, the administration and various students regarding his MUM literature e-mail newsletter border on the absurd. When an urban-dialect stream-of-consciousness dialogue that is comparable in every way to other pop

culture dialogues (rap music, movies, comedians, etc.) is subject to this sort of outrage, we know that the PC movement has reached its pinnacle.

I have to wonder if any of the students at the union crying about racial harassment and sensitivity training actually have read the dialogue in question. Hibler didn't call anyone "nigga" or even talk about "niggas." The language was not directed at anyone, it was part of a dialogue between characters who adopted urban language, of which calling each other "nigga" is a well-established part. Ask Toni Morrison or Public Enemy. And if the word itself is inherently racist, despite its context or intent, then aren't most rap groups, comedians, movie stars and authors guilty of racism, since they use the "n-word" as well?

Chancellor Moeser's ridiculous assertion that "anyone who read this garbage was offended" belies just how little this administration actually cares about academic rigor or intellectual pursuit. When students are encouraged not to think about what someone is trying to say just because they don't like some of the words he uses, then you have a seriously hostile atmosphere — an atmosphere hostile to the whole purpose of higher education. And how anyone could have possibly been actually offended by the content of the dialogue is completely beyond me. Put off by the message, fine. Discouraged by the disregard for grammar and spelling, OK. But for the very same people who argue for diversity training, affirmative action and acceptance of a "unique black culture" to say they are offended by expressions of that culture is hypocritical in the extreme.

At the end of the day, while the media and administration are just ignorant, the hard truth is that the people who are most upset by this are upset because they have a white man involved in "black culture." The minions of diversity and tolerance just can't stand to have a white man on their side.

Who are the racists now?

Greg Anderson
UNL alumnus
class of 1996

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