



Obama's Race to the Bottom: Punish Schoolchildren by Racial Quota

Last year I wrote about a Tucson Unified School District social engineering plan that had the effect of meting out punishment based on racial quota. The school board had insisted, reported Arizona Republic's Doug MacEachern, "that its schools reduce its suspensions and/or expulsions of minority students to the point that the data reflect 'no ethnic/racial disparities.'" (It wasn't reported whether the students cooperated and started committing infractions based on racial quota.)



It's the kind of thing that, though outrageous, you might expect from a fairly large city with a leftist government.

But now, with a big Windy City leftist in the White House, this plan is going nationwide. As University of Illinois-Urbana Professor of Political Science-Emeritus Robert Weissberg writes:

[Department of Miseducation bureaucrats'] latest education-destroying innovation is eliminating the disproportionate suspension and expulsions of African-American students. This is not empty rhetoric; it is included in the Obama administration's \$4.3-billion Race to the Top initiative, and schools that fail to mend their ways will lose federal funds and face expensive litigation at a time of shrinking education budgets. In fact, the future is already here, as schools are increasingly being targeted in resource-draining civil rights complaints about disciplinary unevenness.

...How is this seemingly alluring "racial fairness" to be accomplished? The answer is *not* on a case-by-case basis by scrutinizing millions of outcomes to detect bias. Instead, bureaucrats will use the "disparate impact" approach — i.e., it will be assumed that racially disproportional punishment inherently equals racial discrimination. Thus, if African-Americans constitute 30% of the student body but half of all expulsions, racial discrimination is demonstrated.

... [And] [a]ctually, racial disparities are just the beginning. Obama's Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, has also called for proportionality for disabled students (see [here](#)), and while "disabled" might conjure up images of wheelchair-bound students, this category also includes those with below-average intelligence, often compounded with psychological problems inclining them to disruption, if not violence (see Tomsho and Golden, "Educating Eric: A Troubled Student Was Put Into Regular Classes. Then He Killed the Principal." *Wall Street Journal*, 2007, May 12-13).

Professor Weissberg then delves into many of the problems this scheme presents, such as the removal of teachers' discretion and the cataloguing of racial identities (think: a half-white man who becomes an all-black candidate for political benefit). He asks if schools will have to hire a "Racial Identity Officer." Weissberg also points out that the quota system victimizes the very group it is ostensibly meant to liberate, as undermining discipline in racially mixed schools hurts the education of all — including



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 15, 2010

blacks.

Obama's scheme is also a disaster for race relations. After all, what kind of emotions will be evoked in white and Asian students when they receive punishment while blacks get a special dispensation? Like the Black Panther fiasco, Joseph Lowery's anti-white statements at Obama's inauguration, and The One's handling of the Henry Louis Gates affair, it's yet another example of our "post-racial" President's biracial passions.

But since modern America is so intent upon ensuring fairness, I wonder, since boys are disciplined far more than girls, will proportionality be applied to the sexes, too? Well, doing so when a reality redounds negatively upon males would be something new. Quotas and proportionality, however, are anything but.

Did you ever wonder what happened to height and weight requirements for police officers? The Supreme Court and "disparate impact" are what happened. Dr. Larry Jetmore writing at PoliceOne.com explains:

In 1971, The United States Supreme Court in *Griggs v Duke Power Company* (U.S. 424, 431-2) found that Title [sic] VII prohibits not only overt discrimination, but also practices that may be fair in form, but discriminatory in operation. Examples of practices that may be subject to disparate impact include written examinations, interviews, height/weight, and education requirements.

In layman's terms, this means that if "victim" groups don't perform as well on a given test, the test is considered discriminatory. It doesn't matter if it measures skill relevant to the job in question. And it doesn't matter if the test reflects common sense. So when women couldn't measure up to the height and weight requirements of police forces, the requirements had to go. (As a result, some years back I saw a 12-year-old girl in NYC heading to a costume party dressed as a police officer. Actually, it turned out she was a member of the city's Babes in Blue and one of the Left's modern inventions: the miniature cop. Cute as a button she was.)

Now, it should be pointed out that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 says nothing about "disparate impact" — that's something the Supreme Court made up out of whole cloth. And another example of such judicial social engineering is the application of Title IX to scholastic sports.

As you may know, many sports opportunities for boys have been eliminated (wrestling teams have dropped like flies) owing to the application of Title IX. While the law merely states that there may be no sex discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal assistance, for years it was misinterpreted to mean that funding for and participation in men's and women's sports must be equalized.

This may sound good, but it ignores much. First, many more boys than girls are interested in sports; as an example, even in tennis, a game known for female participation, four times as many boys as girls compete in junior tournaments. Given this different level of interest, the only way to equalize the numbers of male and female athletes was to subtract boys. Case in point: In 2007, James Madison University eliminated men's swimming, wrestling, track teams, and other sports in deference to the feds. Yet while Title IX is used to rob boys of activities in which they're interested, it's never applied to extra-curricular activities in which girls dominate, such as debate teams.

Despite this, the Clinton administration decided to double-down on the mistake: It required "proportionality" in Title IX application. This means that at colleges where the student body is 57 percent female — the average today — 57 percent of the athletes must be also.



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To place this in further perspective, imagine there were boxing teams and the vast majority of participants were minority. What would be the reaction if we mandated that since 70 percent of college students are white, minorities could only have 30 percent of the boxing-team spots?

Then, departing from the hypothetical, if proportionality is an imperative, why are 57 percent of college undergraduates female in the first place? Shouldn't the numbers be equalized so that half the population (males) constitutes half the enrollment? Shouldn't all-important proportionality be applied not just to school sports but also what's truly important, schooling itself?

I wouldn't hold my breath waiting. But with Obama in office, at least "victimizer" groups will have some opportunities. After all, detentions, suspensions, and expulsions are all theirs.



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