

Congressional Closeup by William Jones

Senate upholds Civil Rights Restoration Act

In a much-publicized March 20 override of President Reagan's veto of the Civil Rights Restoration Act (or, as it is more commonly known, the Grove City Bill), the Senate opened the lid to a Pandora's Box. The name of the bill is a misnomer. It has nothing to do with civil rights.

According to the new legislation, a university (either secular or Church-affiliated) which takes nary a penny in federal aid, but which is accepting students who are receiving federal loans to finance their education, falls under the federal anti-discrimination laws. If a single institution in that university is receiving some form of federal aid, then the entire university falls under the federal anti-discrimination legislation.

Now what is this federal anti-discrimination legislation?

It encompasses the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (against discrimination on grounds of race, color, or national origin), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (against discrimination because of sex), the Age Discrimination Act of 1978, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (concerning discrimination against the handicapped).

The bill gives a virtual carte blanche to the federal government to legislate the activities of private institutions. President Reagan noted in his veto, that it is a blow to religious freedom.

Such legislation, which applies purely negative sanctions to those whom government administrative

bodies judge to be guilty of discrimination, is incapable of dealing with the real grievances which minority groups suffer. The real problem, is that the economy of the nation as a whole is collapsing. Instead of civil rights being a program for equal sharing of economic progress, it has become a political game of sharing-out what has become a steadily increasing misery for all.

That was the case during the battles over school busing in the past, which set black and white communities over each other's throats. What is the point of busing children across town to a different school, when both schools are flooded with drugs, when the teachers teach "alternate sexual lifestyles," and when the child has no hope of a productive job upon graduation?

Today, the "civil rights" issue is being used as the pretext for irrational and dangerous policies, such as the failure to adopt public health measures to curb the AIDS epidemic, because of the lobbying of homosexual activist groups.

Let's look at the various rulings regarding section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The previous Department of Health, Education, and Welfare extended the definition of "handicapped" to include drug addicts and alcoholics. This meant that employers receiving any form of assistance from the federal government were forbidden from refusing to hire persons because of their use of or addiction to alcohol or dangerous drugs.

In a Supreme Court decision on March 3, it was ruled that a communicable disease (in this particular case,

tuberculosis) is a "handicap." Recent decisions in the courts and administrative agencies have moved in the direction of extending this law to prohibit discrimination against AIDS patients. It is not at all unlikely that the Rehabilitation Act, combined with the Civil Rights Restoration Act, could be utilized to force hiring of AIDS patients by university cafeterias and hospitals.

In a particularly ludicrous example, recent court decisions have also ruled that transvestites can be classed as "handicapped," and therefore, are protected from "discrimination" by these same federal provisions.

INF supporters seek to block 'killer amendments'

In spite of attempts by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) to try to attach several well-aimed amendments to the INF treaty before it is taken up on the floor by Majority Leader Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), the supporters of the treaty have succeeded in bringing it through committee hearings virtually unscathed.

The fighting was fast and furious at times during the meetings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on which Helms is the ranking Republican member. At one point Helms had to leave the committee room in order to prevent a quorum vote on one of his proposals.

A committee vote is currently scheduled for March 29. Helms is asking that the Senate hold a closed hearing to examine whether the Soviets have submitted the correct figures as