

What do you think?

an opinion for The People by pete edwards

Is affirmative action racist?

In a unanimous vote, the Cleveland City Council has enacted an affirmative action hiring policy. The policy is included with a diversity plan drawn up by the Municipal Technical Advisory Service at the request of Cleveland City Councilman, Avery Johnson. For those of you who are unsure what affirmative action is, it is the preferential hiring of minority applicants for city jobs to force a diversity quota. In the case of the Cleveland policy, it seems to be mainly the preferential hiring of African American individuals over Caucasian Americans. In a letter to Cleveland Mayor, Tom Rowland and fellow city council members, Johnson specifically mentions African Americans and says, "I personally feel the same as our City Manager and many of you that our City staff and employees should reflect the same diversity percentage makeup of our community." The name of the new policy is "The City of Cleveland Diversity Plan" and "The Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Employment Opportunities." The reason, it is said that the policy is necessary, is because only one black person has been hired by the Cleveland Fire Department in 20 years, and a prospective black applicant for a city job was unable to get an application form from city hall.

If Cleveland government were a bunch of practicing racists, a premise I don't believe is true, I would think it better to weed out the institutionalized white supremacy than to enact rules to try to combat perceived anti-black hiring practices. The new policy requires people be hired on a quota because of their ethnic origins or minority status over otherwise qualified applicants is likely to encourage resentment within the local government workforce. There are provisions to help with transportation, day-care, special training and career advancement

that are designed specifically to help minorities be hired. Let us examine the facts to try to make sense of this declaration that city managers may be closet racists.

Bradley county has a volunteer fire service, and although there are suitability requirements and training mandated, all firefighters donate their time for this voluntary community service. My understanding is that there have been very few, if any, African American volunteer fire fighters since the department was founded in 1993. Therefore, because most full time paid city and county firefighters are hired from the already trained volunteer ranks, it would not be surprising that they were mainly Caucasian American. You can only get out what goes in, and in this case black's are not volunteering as firefighters in significant numbers to be hired when jobs become available. This is something that may need to be looked at but is not apparently racist based. Forcing a hire because of minority status will disadvantage the trained and qualified white volunteer just to satisfy a quota. This may be good for diversity but is unlikely to improve the service for taxpayers.

Then there is the lack of application forms at city hall. This was true and has since been rectified. Forms are now available to everyone, but remember, there were no forms available for white applicants either. This could indicate hiring discrimination, but not racial discrimination. It is likely, even probable that nepotism exists within city government. Just look at the cliques of family and friends who provide the foundation of city employees. There seems little evidence of minority discrimination, as the new hiring policy suggests, then why would the Cleveland City Council give the impression there is?

Now we get to the sordid

and unpleasant truth about the racism that does exist, but it is not coming from a white racist but a black one. Councilman Avery Johnson, who is black, seems quite an okay guy but what he has unleashed on Cleveland government is purely black on white racism. His affirmative action plan uses the threat of white councilors being labeled racist if they vote no, to create a racist policy under the guise of diversity.

Don't misunderstand me, I am not suggesting Johnson is working alone. Councilman Bill Estes, a white radical liberal who serves as a professor of Education at Lee University is a reverse racist. Estes serves on the state Task Force for Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention, an affirmative action panel, and is a member of the far left Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), an organization devoted to open immigration and diversity indoctrination in U.S. schools. SPLC also publishes the names of organizations it deems as hate groups which includes conservative, libertarian, anti-tax and immigration reductionist groups. Estes is the Cleveland City Councilman who accused one of our writers and this newspaper of racism because it dared to criticize affirmative action as being demeaning to minorities, racism based, and unfair to white Caucasian males and businesses.

Racism is an ugly word to use against an individual, but in this case, where racism was not a driving force, someone needs to speak out. To enact a quota hiring policy, is racist toward white males and is just as much of a disgrace to our community as if it were discrimination against black males. Avery Johnson and the Cleveland City Council needs to encourage harmony between ethnic groups not divide them with racist policies.

That's what I think. What do you think?

City County cooperation lives on, in private.

With few exceptions, elected officials are required to conduct all public business in public. An open government is a healthy government. Openness helps prevent unscrupulous officials scheming in private to influence government actions. That is why it is illegal for elected officials to make deals secretly. That is why we have open meetings laws. Many officials complain it stifles efficient government to say everything in public. But government is supposed to function for the people.

A very important agreement has already been voted on by the Cleveland City Council, and by the time you read this will probably have been ratified by the Bradley County Commission. This agreement does not contain one important piece of legislation but four, all grouped together, labeled a global settlement.

Each piece of legislation is potentially controversial and far reaching for city and county taxpayers but being bunched together stand a far better chance of being ratified by both legislative bodies. This is where the scheming in private by elected officials comes in. Cleveland City Council member Richard Banks, who is by profession an attorney, figured the four individual motions were unpopular had

little chance of gaining either the City Council or the County Commission nod of approval, so he conceived a plan to lump the legislation under one motion knowing that some parts of the whole would appeal to a majority of votes. As of this writing, he was proved right with the majority of the city council voting affirmative, but how to get the same motion to the County Commission without appealing to them in public was his dilemma. For obvious reasons the exact chain of events is sketchy because it was done in secret, but it appears a call was made by Banks to County Commissioner Jeff Yarber, who suggested Banks fax the proposal to commission assistant Amy Moore. Somehow County Commissioner Lisa Stanbery, who is running against County Mayor D. Gary Davis for his job at the next election, managed to obtain a copy of Banks' motion for presentation to the commission to vote on.

What were the four pieces of legislation that had everyone in a twist?

1: To vote on the unpopular merger of the county volunteer fire department with the city paid fire department.

2: To vote on supplying a public sewer line to the new county elementary school planned for Minnis Road as a carrot to get item one approved.

3: To vote on the way the

half percent sales tax increase would be divided between city and county. Another carrot.

4: To vote to form a task force to combine the city and county planning departments. Yet another carrot.

Both Banks and Stanbery refused to separate their motions so each item could be voted on separately. This in itself appears to prove collusion between elected officials to influence the outcome of a vote on some very controversial legislation. Whether it violated the open meetings law is difficult to say, but it did violate the spirit of open government and does prove Banks and Stanbery are sneaky and can't be trusted to conduct business openly. Is it in the best interest for city and county taxpayers to have these important measures lumped together? I don't think so. They were combined for political reasons, to get the fire merger passed, not because they were good for the community. Lisa Stanbery is a County commissioner but is a city supporter. Having people like Stanbery on the Bradley County Commission is why the City of Cleveland runs roughshod over the county. Genuine county commissioners often lose votes to these rogue city implants. Taxpayers may get duped by this duo but at least they will know who they are.

That's what I think. What do you think?

