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Affirmative Action Under Trump: Where Can It Go?

By Robert Weiner and
Paula Hong

Few remember but in December 2015, presidential candidate Donald Trump called Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia out during his campaign, saying he, "did not like" Scalia's belief that minorities, specifically African Americans, would be better off attending "slower-track schools" —disregarding affirmative action's purpose to provide minorities with opportunities.

The hope for minorities that President Trump would remain "fine with affirmative action" was short-lived with Trump's appointment of Betsy DeVos on February 7, 2017—who denied 77 universities funding requests on



Robert Weiner

Thursday, May 25, 2017 for inadequate "formatting rules" which she blamed Obama for creating.

The contradictory decisions left minorities confused and despondent about the increasingly right wing influenced Court and White House on issues such as education, health care, small business support, food aid, and police reforms.

Michigan has had an intricate history of approved then overturned then re-approved bans on the issue of affirmative action in college admission. The decision by the Supreme Court on April 22, 2014 to overturn the Michigan Civil Rights Amendment case (Hudson vs Michigan from back in November of 2006) was a reversal for minorities who hoped to bring back what University of Michigan's President Mark Schlissel believed was a system devoted to increasing the "benefits of diversity in higher education." Rep. John Conyers (D-Detroit), Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus and the House of Representatives, called the decision "counter to Constitutional equal protection." Conyers has led a series of Congressional forums on voting rights protection.

Under the Administration-supported, House-passed repeal-and-replace health plan, three million African Americans and four million Hispanics will lose their "accessed coverage (currently) through the Affordable Care Act."

What Trump boasts as being a "great plan," will cause upwards of "an estimated 51 million people under age 65" to "be uninsured, compared with 28 million who would lack insurance under current law."

The 2014 Census Bureau found that "the number of Michigan residents with health insurance grew by a quarter million during the first year of Obamacare."

Not only has the new Administration left minorities worrying about their future health, but their safety. The Trump administration argued against Federal Judge James Breddar's decision on April 7, 2017 on police reforms.

Breddar brushed off General Jeff Session's "review of more than a dozen federal agreements with police forces that [would] address problems of racial profiling, discrimination and use of excessive force," and instead, approved the Baltimore police force's plea to change what the Obama Justice Department found as unconstitutional and discriminatory practices.

Despite the new Attorney General's attempt to slow walk Obama's reforms, there are ways that progress can still be made.

On May 15, 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court surprised liberals by refusing to take a North Carolina case that targeted "African-Americans with almost surgical precision" during voter registration according to Circuit Judge Diana Gribbon Motz.

Many considered the conservative Roberts Court's denial to take the case as a victory, a step in the right direction for making it easier for minorities to vote. The decision will limit Republicans from "restricting access to the ballot", according to Democratic National Committee chair Tom Perez. The Court's decision provides hope that sometimes, but not always, the current U.S. Supreme Court could come out with rulings to protect minority rights.

President Trump made Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach a leader of his Advisory Commission on Election Integrity committee (stacked in favor of obstacles to voting). Minorities believe



Paula Hong