# P.S. to the NEWS
**by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY**

RELEASE: February 27



Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415


## LOSS IN PRODUCTIVITY

According to President Carter's economic advisers, the productivity growth of the last few years has shrunk from three percent to almost nothing. In his annual economic report to Congress, he expressed alarm about what this means to our American lifestyle. "With slower productivity growth," he said, "our living standards individually and as a nation cannot rise as fast."

If President Carter is looking for the cause of the decline in our productivity, he can start with his own Administration's policies which regulate and interfere with private employment. Affirmative-action quota requirements make it impossible to hire the best qualified persons, and the regulations governing hiring and promotions are so conflicting and contradictory that compliance with one means noncompliance with another.

Here are some authentic comments, chosen at random from personal interviews around the country, made by persons who cannot be identified because of fear for loss of their jobs. From a chief accountant: "The government forced us to hire an applicant who had 'some courses' in accounting and no experience instead of a college graduate with a major in accounting and three years' experience."

From a business executive: "The government forced me to hire a secretary who types 40 words a minute and has only a high school education over another applicant who types 70 words a minute and has a college education." From a personnel manager: "I feel like a hypocrite interviewing male applicants for a job when I know I am required to hire a female." From a homemaker: "My husband has been told not to expect a promotion for ten years because all the promotions must go to women and minorities."

It is refreshing to note that Sears, Roebuck & Co. is fighting back with a massive lawsuit against ten federal agencies, charging that it is impossible for

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business to comply with so many contradictory regulations. These include the laws against discrimination, the regulations requiring affirmative action and quotas (euphemistically called targets, timetables, and goals), veterans' preference laws, and the new law prohibiting compulsory requirement (which makes it impossible to meet hiring and promotion goals).

Named as defendants in the suit are the Attorney General, the chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Secretaries of Labor, Commerce, HEW, and Housing and Urban Development, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, and the Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards. The federal bureaucrats must now face a formidable opponent. Sears has annual sales of more than $17 billion and employs about 400,000 people nationwide. It is the second largest employer of women.

Sears has a better record of compliance with antidiscrimination laws than the national average. Women make up 56.7 percent of all employees and 36 percent of managerial jobs. Sears employs 13.9 percent blacks and 6 percent other racial minorities. Minority managers make up 10.5 percent.

Sears has spent $100 million since 1965 trying to comply with federal antidiscrimination laws and still finds itself unable to do so. In addition to federal harassment, 1,500 discrimination complaints have been filed against Sears since 1965. Since 1974, Sears has had a quota system to increase the percentage of female and black employees, but now is being hit with lawsuits charging discrimination against white males.

When private industry has to spend so much money and so many expensive manhours of time trying to comply with conflicting laws and to defend itself in court, those costs are simply passed along to the consumer in higher prices. When individual wage-earners learn that they are not hired or promoted because of ability or experience or education, but only because they belong to a certain group which employers are not allowed to discriminate against, it's no wonder productivity declines.

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