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The Glass Ceiling – Code Word for Quotas

by Phyllis Schlafly

For more than 20 years, “civil rights” was a magic label which, attached to any piece of legislation, would assure its passage because politicians feared to vote against it. It became clear in 1990, however, that “civil rights” is now a code word for Affirmative Action Quotas.

President Bush’s veto of the Kennedy Civil Rights bill last year was sustained by the Senate because enough politicians now recognize that their constituents oppose Affirmative Action Quotas. When Harvey Gantt tried to make his support of the Kennedy Civil Rights bill a campaign issue, Senator Jesse Helms defeated him decisively with a television spot against Affirmative Action.

It isn't just minorities who seek Affirmative Action Quotas. The feminists are seeking Quotas, too, and they have invented their own code word to promote this objective. It’s “Glass Ceiling”; and if you haven't heard of it, you will, because this phrase has become the latest fad in Washington where words are the chief manufacturing product.

The feminists allege that there is an invisible, or glass, "ceiling" which women bump into on their way up the career ladder and which denies them promotions into high-paying jobs. No one can see this Glass Ceiling except the feminists -- hence the artfulness of the term.

Glass Ceiling is a semantic tool to achieve two goals: (a) to make businessmen feel guilty for not moving over and giving their executive positions to career women, and (b) to intimidate business executives into establishing formal or informal Affirmative Action Quotas for women in senior management. The feminists plan to accomplish these objectives by setting up a government commission so they can pursue their campaign at taxpayers’ expense.

A draft piece of legislation is floating around the corridors of the Senate right now to set up a Glass Ceiling Commission of feminists to use taxpayers’ funds to conduct studies and “research” which will “prove” the “findings” which have already been specified in the bill. These findings assert that women are

“significantly underrepresented in executive management and senior decision making positions in business” and that this is caused by “artificial barriers.”

Did you think that the demolition of the Iron Curtain and the liberation of Eastern Europe means that the threat from George Orwell’s Big Brother is gone forever? Don’t be too sure. This Glass Ceiling legislation plans for Big Sister to do Orwellian snooping on private business.

The Big Sisters on the Glass Ceiling Commission will have the power to investigate private business to find out “the manner in which business fills executive management and senior decision making positions.” They will conduct “comparative research” of businesses in which women are -- and are not -- promoted to management jobs.

Then these tax-funded feminists on the warpath will “encourage American companies to modify practices and policies” in order to promote the “upward mobility” of women into top jobs, and will provide “specific guidance” on how they should do this. Are you ready, Mr. Businessman, to be encouraged and guided by a feminist commission which has already decided that you are mistreating women?

The silliest provision in this draft legislation is the establishment of a “National Award for Excellence in the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Business” to be presented by the President. An invitation to the White House is thus promised to the businessman who does the most obsequious job of toadying to the feminist commission.

Just because there is a small percentage of women in senior management does not prove discrimination. It proves instead that the majority of women have made other choices -- usually family choices -- rather than devoting themselves to the corporate world for 60 to 80 hours a week.

The equal pay for equal work law has been j-n effect since L963i the Civil Rights Act has applied to women since t964; the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has been aggressively promoting equal employment opportunity for women since 1972. If systematic evidence of discrimination exists, the lawyers would be lining up plaintiffs for lucrative class action cases under existing anti-discrimination laws.
We've had 20 years experience with tax-funded “commissions” run by the feminists, most notably the 1977 Commission on International women's Year

chaired by Bella Abzug to which a muddle-headed Congress gave $S million of the taxpayers' money. The feminists always use such commissions as platforms to pursue their radical agenda.

Businessmen in "senior decision making positions" who are supporting a wife and family should not let the Glass Ceiling brigade make them feel guilty when they refuse to acquiesce in this ploy. You can bet that a Glass Ceiling Commission will not tolerate any representation in behalf of the wives of the men who would be the losers in a system of Affirmative Action Quotas for executive women.