

Ferdie J. Deering

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Discriminating Against the Achievers

A FEW days ago we drove a couple of Oklahoma State University seniors to the airport where they caught a plane for Amarillo. These young men and a classmate were going for job interviews — for the same job.

Presumably, the employer selected the applicant he felt could best do the work available and who would fit well into his organization.

That is the traditional American system of enterprise and competition. It is a rock in the foundation of our business world. Unfortunately, this foundation is being pulled apart by interests intent upon advancing mediocrity by petalizing ability.

Take the case of the United Auto Workers in California. Union bosses are going into court to compel the General Motors plant in Oklahoma City to accept "volunteers" for transfer to jobs, instead of permitting the plant to select workers suited to its needs.

"Using criteria of attendance, discipline and job performance, GM has chosen what one union official called 'the cream of the crop,' the

news item reported. It appears that the union wants to compel GM to accept any worker who wants to move, whether qualified or not.

Another case in point is the dispute over access to background investigations on nominees to the Oklahoma Racing Commission, which is to supervise the state's racetrack gambling business.

None of the individuals nominated is suspected of having connections to gambling syndicates, but if such were the case the "cover up" procedure might prevent the public from knowing.

For decades, using leverage of campaign contributions and speech honoraria, union bosses and civil rights spokesmen have worked through congressmen and legislators to erect barriers against competency and job dependability.

The time is gone when a job application produced responses that would give a prospective employer a pretty good idea of what an applicant could do and how he/she might perform on the job.

About all that a job application

blank now may bring forth legally is the applicant's name, which might be assumed identification, and address, which could be fictitious. Employers are forbidden by law to ask a number of vital questions that might aid them in making sound judgments.

For example, it is considered to be discriminatory to ask about the number and kind of an applicant's arrests, even though the job to be filled might be one of responsibility and trust. An employer is in danger of hiring an embezzler or thief to handle his money.

Most individuals have both advantages and disadvantages for competing in today's world. Some of the greatest success stories involve people who have succeeded by overcoming difficulties.

Discrimination is a matter of applying good judgment. It is grossly unfair to impose laws or regulations that pretend there are no distinctions to be made or which attempt to advance incompetence by retarding achievers.