

Like Cholesterol, Some Discrimination is Good

Written by Raynard Jackson
Wednesday, 01 May 2013 00:00



I was on “Washington Watch with Roland Martin” last week. This is a weekly TV show that deals with Black political issues, among other things. The roundtable discussion was very lively, but I was amazed at my fellow panelists’ response to something I said.

Americans somehow have this strange notion that all discrimination is bad. But it isn’t. We discriminate every day. You choose one restaurant over another; you watch one TV show versus another; you date skinny girls and not heavy girls.

As a matter of fact, some discrimination is quite healthy. If you know drug dealers sell their drugs in certain neighborhoods, why would you go there if you have no interest in buying drugs? If you are allergic to smoke, why would you go to a bar that allows smoking? If certain countries are more likely to kidnap an American tourist, why would you go there if you are an American?

I think most reasonable people would agree that this type of discrimination is good and healthy. Similarly, our immigration policy should have a certain level of discrimination built into the policy. I was totally surprised that my fellow panelists disagreed. They seemed to be in favor of an open borders approach to immigration. The open borders crowd basically believes that anyone who wants to come to America has a right to come here if they follow the rules.

I find this view very idiotic. If you are not an American citizen, then you have absolutely no basis for the assertion of any right. Post 911, at a minimum, our immigration policy should discriminate based on country of origin. We know that certain countries are a hotbed for producing terrorist: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Chechnya, etc. So, why would our immigration policy even allow people from those countries to come to the U.S. for any reason, let alone to get a green card or citizenship?

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Is this discrimination? You betcha —it's the good kind of discrimination. Just as you can have good and bad cholesterol, the same applies to discrimination. What we call affirmative action is called "positive discrimination" in France.

You don't see terrorists being trained in Australia, the Seychelles, or Trinidad & Tobago, so therefore there should be less concern about immigrants from these countries. Is this not reasonable?

American visas, green cards and citizenship are not enshrined rights, but are privileges. No one has a right to enter into our country and we don't need to justify our requirements for admittance into the U.S.

I am sure my fellow panelists would agree that an 80-year old-woman should not have to go through secondary screening at the airport before she gets on an airplane. Why? Because she is very unlikely to have a bomb or other weapon on her body. Is this not profiling? How many 80 year old female terrorists have you read about? Exactly my point.

But these same panelists took issue with me for saying that America should deny entry and student visas for people from certain countries. Is it discriminatory? Yes. Is it appropriate and reasonable? Yes.

Does that mean every person from a country known to produce terrorists is a terrorist themselves? Of course not, but that is not the overriding issue in my decision to deny them entry into the U.S. I am sure there are many good people from countries that are known for producing terrorists; but I am not willing to take a chance, just for the sake of making Americans feel good.

If you are the parent of a young boy, would you leave him alone with a Catholic priest? I wouldn't. And most of you wouldn't, either. I would venture to think that most Catholic priests are good people, but I am not willing to sacrifice my son's safety to prove a point.

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The two brothers from Chechnya who committed the bombings in Boston should have never been allowed in the U.S. Is this an indictment of all people from Chechnya? No. It simply means that the U.S. is exercising its sovereignty to determine who is admitted to its shores. This is a very reasonable and smart approach to our immigration policy. To do anything else is a reckless disregard for the future and safety of our country.

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