

Our Unrelenting Obsession with Race and Gender

Though I generally enjoy my solitary days, living alone as the caretaker for my daughter's four-bedroom house is not always idyllic. In addition to my own work, I keep the yard shaped up, maintain the house in reasonably good order, and prepare my meals. I try to eat healthy foods but take little pleasure in cooking for myself.

So this past week, thinking that it might be nice to have some company to break up my solitude, I decided to hire a housekeeper/cook. Here's the ad I wrote:

Wanted: Young single white female, preferably in her mid-20s, to serve as live-in cook and bottlwasher for older gentleman. Good looks, a love of laughter, and an interest in literature are definite pluses. Free room and board with a modest salary. No experience necessary.

What do you think?

Just kidding, of course. Post a help-wanted ad like that one, and I'd be labeled a sexist, a misogynist, a racist, an ageist, a dirty old man, and an idiot. Cancel culture would be on me like a bear on honey, and rightly so, and I'd be disappeared quicker than you could say "Stupid is as stupid does."

Which brings me to Joe Biden.

When Justice Stephen Breyer recently announced his intention to retire from the Supreme Court at the end of June, Biden [announced](#) that he would nominate a black female to replace Breyer. Undoubtedly, there are candidates in this group worthy of the position, and a black woman sitting on the Court would

be a historic first. She might also bring a different perspective to the bench than that of a white male or an Asian-American woman.

Nevertheless, how is Biden's announcement not racist and sexist?

If I had actually advertised for a young, white, female housekeeper, I would justifiably be tarred and feathered. Such an advertisement would also be stupid of me to run, for if I were serious about wanting the best available help, I wouldn't limit the pool of applicants by their sex or race. Instead, I would look for someone, male or female, black or white or any other color, who was ambitious, hard-working, and qualified by dint of their previous experience. In short, I would hope to find the best person for the job.

Not so with good ol' Joe.

The current population of the United States is around 332 million, the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) reports. Approximately 51 percent of this total are female, and about 13 percent are black.

Which means that Joe Biden is eliminating 93 percent of the population from his search for a Supreme Court Justice, including a great many qualified individuals, before he even begins to consider those in his target pool.

Which also means that our obsession with race and gender has led us far from the vision of equal opportunity and of judgments based on character and talent as opposed to group identity.

If we are to thrive as a nation, we need to seek out the best qualified candidates in all fields of endeavor. Here sports should be our guiding light. The player population in the National Basketball Association in no way reflects the racial makeup of our country. In 2020, [74 percent of NBA players](#) were

African American. Everyone knows why. It's because the players who make it to the NBA are the ones who bring the most talent to the court. Simple as that.

When you need an expert, competency tops the list of desirable traits, does it not? Do you select your doctors by the color of their skin or by their reputation and skill? When a pipe bursts in your house, are you more concerned about the plumber's gender or whether she can fix the leak? When a thief breaks into your home and you call 911, do you really care whether the officer who comes to your rescue is white, black, or brown?

In the last few years, however, America has embraced a renewed segregation, a tribalism that some of us believed was becoming a part of the past. Rather than declaring ourselves members of one race, the human race, we are tumbling into division, discord, and even hatred.

Oh, and one PR hint to President Biden and his handlers: If you're going to engage in racism and sexism, do it quietly. Appoint that black female if you wish, but don't publicly announce your bias ahead of time. Keep that thought to yourself and make your selection. Maybe you believed this announcement will help your sagging poll numbers, and maybe you're right, but what you've broadcast is the very definition of prejudice.

"... none of us is responsible for the complexion of his skin," said famed contralto Marian Anderson. "[T]his fact of nature offers no clue to the character or quality of the person underneath."

To judge others by their character and talent rather than by their sex or skin color was the hope. And it's high time we aimed again at making that hope a reality.

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