

Minorities in america

Business



February is black history month. Many African-Americans would have just wanted to be able to sit at the front of the bus 75 years ago. They were not even thinking about having a month dedicated to them. In terms of racial equality, the United States has come a long way. However, the racial gap has not been closed yet.

Like comedian Chris Rock once said “ Why do blacks still get the shortest month of the year?” 47 years after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his most famous speech titled “ I Have A Dream” on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D. C., his dream has only partly come true. The Jim Crow laws have been abolished.

Every public institution has been desegregated and minorities have the same freedoms under the law as white Americans do. The efforts of almost every Civil Rights activist have been recognized and honored. For example Dr. King’s birthday is observed every year as a national holiday. Nonetheless, here is a fact: Dr.

King’s Birthday was not observed in all 50 states until the year 2000. There was a lot of opposition. This was led by prominent leaders such as former President Ronald Reagan who threatened to veto the bill and the former Senator from North Carolina, Jesse Helms who questioned whether Dr. King was important enough to receive such an honor. In my opinion, the observance of this date not only commemorates Dr.

King but also everyone who fought for equality. The fact that opposition existed shows that there is still some animosity left in the country toward the Civil Rights Movement. Nowadays, it can be said that legal equality has been

achieved. Now the question is why minorities are still so far behind. In 2000, only 16.5% of African-Americans and 10.

6% of Hispanics age twenty-five and older had received a bachelor's degree. As a result, African-Americans and Latin-Americans earn far less than white Americans. In 2003, 4.8% of black males were sentenced to prison compared to 0.7% of white males and 1.

8% of Latino males. Those numbers are impressive and one asks oneself what can be done to prevent such disparities. Many government programs have been put into effect and many charities have been started. However, they have only slightly helped. When contrasted to whites with comparable levels of education and residing in comparable regions, African-Americans and Latinos earn lower wages and have lower employment rates. This is a vicious cycle.

Minorities come from poorer households and most of the time cannot afford college. If they do end up going to college it is likely that they will drop out because they have not been prepared well enough in their poor public schools. When they drop out they have a very hard time finding a job, which in many cases leads to criminality. W. E. B.

Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, two of the most influential black leaders of the first half of the 20th century had conflicting views about how to end such disparities. Du Bois believed that social equality could only be attained through equal rights and opportunities. Washington thought that minorities had to work hard in order to get to the top while accommodating to a hostile

environment. Once at the top social equality could be earned. I believe in a mixture of those two views.

Equal rights are elemental to get ahead but hard work is also necessary. Equal rights have been given; now it is up to my generation to close the gap through hard work. If you say it can't be done, take the President for example.