



Statewide

Employment & Education Guide

Robertson: Reagan Will Support Rights!

National Equal Rights Consultant Peter C. Robertson is optimistic that the Reagan administration will continue to support equal rights efforts in the employment arena.

In a luncheon speech given at the Sheraton Hotel in commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday on January 15, Robertson said that he was optimistic because he had seen a recent position paper from David Stockton, Reagan's nominee for the Directorship of the Bureau of the Budget urging Reagan to concentrate on the nation's inflation and economic problems by postponing

labor and Moral Majority talks.

"The new administration cannot possibly turn its back on 25 years of Equal rights progress if it hopes to solve inflation and economic problems," Robertson stated.

"Why is this so? Employers today say they must wipe out discrimination in their firms 'despite the government,' because to do so will lead to full employment. It helps business, Robertson observed.

"Current government regulations hinder employers from setting up the managerial systems needed to watch out for discrimination. But, employers

are working around this and starting to show the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) how to fight discrimination," Robertson explained.

According to Robertson, employers are working to eliminate discrimination because they now understand what discrimination really means. In Dr. King's time, the true definition of discrimination in employment was elusive.

In his "I had a dream..." speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said the law should be used as an instrument of change and that the courts should be used to interpret the meaning of discrimination," Robertson said. "When the Equal Employment Opportunity was passed, Congress set the EEOC up as a voluntary mechanism. The EEOC failed because it did not have the funds to enforce the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEO) and to thereby interpret its true meaning," Robertson continued.

In 1972, when funds were appropriated for enforcement, the EEOC finally started to define discrimination by interpreting the EEO Act, Robertson concluded.

Through the court interpretations, employers now know that Any employment practice which prevents minorities from achieving the same positions as non-minorities are discriminatory if they cannot be justified by business necessity. Employers can now start to avoid discrimination complaints On Their Own by watching to see that their employment systems are set up as

"non-discriminatory" from the beginning.

As a consultant, Robertson now works with government agencies and private firms to set up non-discriminatory employment systems. Robertson formerly served as the Director of Policy Implementation for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Robertson is also a well known attorney.