

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **THE 1990 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

The 1990's will figure as an important decade for the civil rights movement. With the ascendancy of a conservative majority on the Supreme Court, several important civil rights laws have been narrowly interpreted to limit civil rights claims. As a result, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1990. That Act, which was opposed by many conservative legislators, was vetoed by President Bush as a "quota bill." Now Congress is debating several new proposals that may become the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

The materials in this symposium reflect the current partisan debate over civil rights legislation. The symposium was presented at the annual meeting of the Association of American Law Schools on January 6, 1991.

Ralph Neas, Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, argues that the Civil Rights Act of 1990 represented an effort by Congress to repair damage done by the conservative Court. Roger Clegg of the Justice Department strongly dissents with Neas. In his view, the new legislative initiatives are efforts to introduce quota requirements in the private sector. Professor William Eskridge effectively places the arguments in a larger political perspective. He further analyzes the interaction between the Executive Branch, Congress and the Supreme Court during the past two decades and suggests some possible directions for the future.

Following the text of the symposium is an appendix containing the Senate debates, the House of Representatives and Senate votes on the Civil Rights Act of 1990 and the President's veto message. The appendix is included as a research tool and as a reference point for the symposium text.

The Seton Hall Legislative Bureau hopes that this special issue of the Legislative Journal will serve as a focus for further debate and legislative initiatives that will lead to a society in which civil-rights are fairly protected.

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