

Violence over Animal Rights Is Wrong

Attack on researcher accomplishes nothing, undermines credibility of activists everywhere

Police cars lined a Beach Flats block in the dead of night. But while police presence is not uncommon for a nighttime gathering in Santa Cruz, they were not there to bust a party, but for a much more politically charged purpose.

These police officers were there to respond to an attempted invasion of a faculty member's home. Earlier in the day, a group of six, faces hidden by bandanas, attempted to break in. They struck the faculty member's husband when he confronted them at the door. Neighbors identified the car, and police traced it back to Riverside Avenue, where they found evidence possibly linking to other incidents.

This is just the latest and closest in a series of attacks targeting UC researchers who work with animal testing. Previous attacks include a firebomb sent to a UCLA researcher and several thousand dollars of property damage over a number of incidents at Berkeley and Los Angeles.

But while the natural tendency may be to place these misguided souls in the same boat as our own tree-sitters, it is important to recognize the difference.

These attackers did a very stupid thing, and very few people are defending the attack. Animal rights activists time and time again explain that they do not support attacks on humans.

These attackers are also not representative of the activists in our community. They did nothing but set their own cause significantly back, as anyone who did take them seriously now writes them off as trigger-happy radicals.

There are avenues of dialogue available, and the debate over animal rights testing has by no means reached a conclusion. For those who feel ignored: Violence does not break down barriers. It only adds more.

What is most shocking is the fact that these people originally claimed the attack was a "protest," and they accused the police of using fear tactics to quell what was spun to be a

normal demonstration. This is not the case. Terrorism — that is, using fear tactics to dissuade people from a course of action — is not an appropriate form of protest, neither for activists nor the police.

Furthermore, the insistence that this was a legal protest led many to gather at the Riverside bust and protest the police presence, leading many onlookers to complain about the police and call shenanigans through independent media site indybay.org. These posts were also rife with spin, similar to the style that so many accuse the administration of using.

It is immoral and hypocritical to use misinformation and propaganda to win

people to a cause, and that is exactly what these people did. They complained that the police used excessive force, fear tactics and terror. Sound familiar? The police were responding to a crime, and had the right to take the precautions they found necessary.

Animal rights groups have done good acts in the past, exposing criminal animal cruelty and bringing about beneficial change. But senseless violence like this attack accomplishes nothing, and it should not be tolerated or defended. True protests and discussions can achieve stronger results without backlash, and these people could have spent their time finding a peaceful solution.

Single-Sex Education Unfairly Segregates Students

Boys will be boys and girls will be girls.

Or so say the growing number of American public schools who implement single-sex education.

Based on the belief that boys and girls learn differently, the single-sex education method separates children into all-male and all-female classes with the goal of heightening their learning experience.

Although the notion is nothing new — a look back in history shows centuries of sex-based educational segregation — the model is rapidly becoming a popular trend. According to a recent New York Times article, the number of schools with same-sex classrooms has risen from two to 49 since 1995. This steep incline can be attributed to two recent legislative changes: a 2002 overturn of the 1972 law that made coeducation mandatory in public schools, and a No Child Left Behind-related action in 2006 in which the Department of Education changed Title IX regulations to make single-sex education more feasible.

The pros and cons of the model are multifarious. Questions arise as

to how well children will be able to socialize with one another outside of school, or work with the opposite sex when they are older. For each doubtful question they receive, advocates of single-sex education cite benefits that range from higher academic performance to keeping the kids focused (surely many of us can remember being significantly distracted by a member of the opposite sex?). The agenda is not lacking in research or purpose, and single-sex education undoubtedly does work well for many children. But what happens when a child isn't exactly boy or girl? The division of children by their sex, into either a "boy class" or a "girl class," disregards those whose sex may not fit easily into either category. Take an intersexed child, for example. According to the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA), one in 100 births are babies "whose bodies differ from standardized male or female" anatomy. A lot of progress has been made to make these sexualities acceptable and accommodated for in American society, and in this respect single-sex education becomes a form of sexual

discrimination.

The discriminatory nature of forcing children into the categories of "boy" or "girl" is case enough to end it. The system does not only discriminate against children with intersex anatomy, but also creates an array of problematic gender misconceptions. Human rights and GLBT activists have gone to great lengths to make American society understand the difference between biological sex and gender. The two do not have to, and often do not, match perfectly. There are feminine and masculine elements within us all, and sometimes a person's gender is quite different from their apparent sex. Just as sexuality is not black-and-white (or, rather, straight or gay), gender cannot be divided into two neat categories. Instead it should be seen as a broad spectrum.

Sex-based segregation in public schools proves that not everyone has been reached by these progressions in public consciousness. Mandated single-sex education perpetuates gender stereotypes, traditional gender roles and a gender binary. There

is no room for anyone to move about the spectrum.

However, in light of the many shortcomings of public education, we can't blame them for trying. So long as the system continues to fail children, educators and parents will try to find ways to solve this. Same-sex classrooms are one of the many, sometimes radical, remedies to a desperately ill education system. And like the variety of other band-aid programs, mono-sex education cannot single-handedly cure the disease.

The problem with single-sex education is not their fundamental claim that "boys and girls learn differently." Of course they do — all children learn differently. Instead of concentrating on the "traditional" learning processes of boys and girls, educators should focus on catering to the individual, for each child's capabilities are certainly different from the next. Ultimately, the implications of separation and the consequences of promoting a boy/girl binary far outweigh the handful of benefits.

The answer is not, and has never been, segregation.