

February 27, 2006

The Montgomery County Public School System encourages the acceptance of “diversity” by students. This is important and a good objective. Our county contains a wonderfully diverse population.

What do you mean by “diversity”? What members of our society are included? Are some defining a “diverse” society to exclude certain groups?

Montgomery County’s Student Affairs Office sponsors “workshops” on diversity under “Leadership Courses for Students”.

One such workshop is from National Association of Student Counselors (NASC) and another from the Maryland Leadership Workshop (MLW). The NASC Workshop features a role playing exercise containing, 24 “role playing cards” with the following groups listed on each:

“male, female teenager, senior citizen, pre-teen, millionaire, bisexual male and female, lesbian, gay male, Muslim male, and female, Jewish male and female, African American male and female, Hindu male and female, Hispanic male and female, Asian male and female, Immigrant, white male ‘redneck’, and white female ‘hick’”

Perhaps this is a “diverse” listing, but aren’t some significant “groups” omitted? And why are white males and females the only ones coupled with derogatory terms? Are all white females “hicks” or white males “rednecks”? Why are Christian males and females or heterosexuals, ex-gays or middle age or middle income people not included in a “diverse” grouping? And what happened to Native Americans and the disabled?

What are the criteria for establishing categories of diversity?

Tough question. Ours is a very diverse society containing a lot of different, often overlapping groups. Sorting it all out and being fair and inclusive could just be a daunting job fraught with likelihood of omitting or unfairly treating some groups.

Here is a simple solution; forget all the different groups and settle for just one group: people deserving equal and respectful treatment

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What do you think?