



La Voz de Esperanza

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- We advocate for a wide variety of social, economic & environmental justice issues.
- Opinions expressed in La Voz are not necessarily those of the Esperanza Center.

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Articles due by the 8th of each month

Policy Statements

* We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.

* All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.



The wrecking ball has done a job on our Mexican psyche in San Antonio, Texas and yet, here we are! It is this city that is the hope for the survival and flourishing of cultura, costumbres y lenguaje de Mexicanos and by extension, Indigenas and Latinos in the U.S. WE who have lived here hundreds of years—even before gente sin color set foot on the Americas—have been targeted by all types of wrecking balls.

The latest attempt to render us invisible was by SA's weekly rag, *The Current*, that published *The Badass* issue in March, 2016, lauding “movers and shakers” who’ve played an important part in San Antonio’s history. The “Badasses” seated at a table replete with Mexican food on the Current’s front page did NOT have a single Mexican from San Antonio’s ENTIRE HISTORY of being a MEXICAN CITY—worthy of having a seat at that table.

It is precisely because of occurrences like this that obliterate the presence of Mexicans in San Antonio that the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center focuses its work on the Westside of San Antonio where the barrio roots of this city originated. Our preservation efforts began in earnest in 2002 when *La Gloria*, with its rooftop dance floor and beautiful arches was demolished—in spite of heroic community efforts to save it. Since then, the *Esperanza* with other organizations has redoubled efforts to preserve Westside landmarks including shotgun homes, tienditas and historic community sites.

In 2010 we joined in celebrating *National Historic Preservation Month* with our annual *Paseo por el Westside*. We joined efforts to save the “pink building” across from the *Guadalupe Theater* and it (the *Maldonado* building) now stands as a testament to how preservation can work out in a barrio neighborhood. In 2013, however, the *Univision* building, birthplace of Spanish-language broadcasting, was knocked down to make room for more downtown apartments. Almost two years ago we joined others in turning back an effort to build a *Family Dollar* store on Guadalupe St. across from *J.T. Brackneridge Elementary*. And so the battle goes. The next building we’re trying to save is the *Basila Frocks* building. (To sign a petition go to: <http://bit.ly/BasilaFrocks>)

Our work, however, goes beyond just saving buildings to preserving and reviving the traditions and customs of the Westside through programs such as Fotohistorias and at the annual (7th) *Paseo por el Westside* that will take place on Saturday May 3rd from 9 am to 3 pm. Once again, we will offer tours through the historic Westside and a full slate of workshops, demonstrations, games and performances at the Rinconcito de Esperanza at Guadalupe & S. Colorado Sts. where we document and work to preserve the history and life of Westside residents, because if we don’t you can bet no one else will! Visit www.esperanzacenter.org for a schedule of 2016 Paseo por el Westside activities!

Among other offerings in this La Voz we continue with articles on The Fisher v. The University of Texas at Austin case (part II) and San Antonio’s Hydrosocial Landscape (part II). Submit articles, poems and other literary contributions to: lavoz@esperanzacenter.org

— Gloria A. Ramirez, editor of La Voz



ATTENTION VOZ READERS: If you have a mailing address correction please send it to lavoz@esperanzacenter.org. If you want to be removed from the La Voz mailing list, for whatever reason, please let us know. La Voz is provided as a courtesy to people on the mailing list of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. **The subscription rate is \$35 per year (\$100 for institutions).** The cost of producing and mailing La Voz has substantially increased and we need your help to keep it afloat. To help, send in your subscriptions, sign up as a monthly donor, or send in a donation to the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Thank you. -GAR

VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-voiced and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.



Supreme Court Crisis

Part 2 of 2



Why the next appointed Supreme Court Justice matters in Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, et. al

Elva Pérez Treviño

Note: Part I of this article appeared in the April 2016 issue of La Voz. Part II begins with a discussion of racism in the U.S. and the social construct of race as a political tool of separation. The founding of these United States of America was by men of wealth whose world view was limited to one of Conqueror and the conquered. At its core it is a nation founded on the idea of racial superiority by white-skinned European men fleeing economic, social, political and religious persecution. They came to this land with the dream of manifest destiny and made the assumption that it was “empty” and lying “fallow”.

To speak of race and racism is by necessity to speak of the concept of a racial superiority of intelligence, morals, values, and physical abilities simply based on physical feature and ancestry. Thus in the U.S. Constitution is enshrined the values, traditions, morals and priorities of white men setting up a government to function as they so ordained. This document then reflects what this community of men thought expedient and used it to construct government, its form and function, its laws. It gave definition to certain inalienable rights that all citizens possess as long as the U.S. constitution gave that individual a legally recognizable identity. It keeps political power where it was meant to reside. It still works this way.

To these men property became a powerful symbol of their basic human right. In the constitution they drafted to form a more perfect union they made property a boundary against state power. This boundary was to give definition to their concept of freedom and autonomy. Moreover, it was to give notice of a tension between an individual and a group, and securing property against majoritarian oppression, read tyranny of the many, was a central problem, it became an economic fear. They wanted to protect their property right; they wanted to actualize their manifest destiny. The framers failed to comprehend that protecting property rights is not the same as protecting individuals against the tyranny of the many. The focus of the constitution came to protect the vulnerability of proprietors. In this scheme, the judiciary functions as a protector of the status quo, i.e., it protects “constitutionally protected” rights. The colonists transformed their fear: the issue was cast as one of justice; the problem was cast as one of inequality and the solution was cast as one of liberty. Thus came into being a form of government that produces laws that protect those with property against those without property. Herein lies a major contradiction: there are big differences between saying rights are vulnerable to majority oppression and quite another to say an essential ingredient of a representative form of government is to protect rights that the

many will never enjoy.

When the Supreme Court usurps the authority to interpret the U.S. Constitution, it does so within this historical, political context. Within this context the laws and legal process became the means by which generalized racism in society was made particular and converted into standards and policies of social control. Laws were enacted to relegate black people into a lifetime and hereditary condition of slavery. For the Indigenous American, government action and laws eliminated tribalism as incompatible with the values of white European America. All efforts were about eliminating a particular way of living and holding property. It was about privatizing land that white settlers wanted to claim as private property. For Mexicans it was about criminalizing a people. For the Japanese, subjected to interment in concentration camps during World War II, it was about who could claim being white-skinned and whether you can ever look “American” enough to be trusted to be a loyal citizen. For the Arabs race is about blood and tribe and terrorism, and if they can ever be trusted to walk freely in the streets of the United States of America.

Race is a social construct. There is no biological basis for race. There is neither gene nor cluster of genes that makes up “a race”; rather “race” comes into being as a result of relations between groups. It is based on the relationship we place on physical features, personal and cultural characteristics and skin color. Race permeates our society: it dominates our society, it dominates our personal lives, it determines our economic prospects, it screens us, it selects us, it alters, challenges, creates, collapses political alliances, it mediates every aspect of our lives.

Enter hundreds of years later, affirmative action programs meant to distribute the property right to education for many who had never enjoyed that freedom to learn, to know, to gain meaningful access and possess true power.

Having come to an understanding of how the Supreme Court works and how it does things in Part I, we come to their understanding and framing of the Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin et. al.

To initially exercise its judicial authority to hear a case, the Supreme Court must first have before it —“an alive and real” —“case and controversy” — meaning the case must exist at each stage of the review, not merely when the complaint is filed. The threat must be actual and imminent, not conjecture, not hypothetical because the relief sought must prevent or redress the injury alleged in the lawsuit. The case must be about a particularized injury in fact that is directly caused by the perpetrator’s violation of a constitutional