

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

The *Richmond Journal of Law and the Public Interest* is proud to present its annual fall issue, which this year focuses on civil rights. In 1861, the city of Richmond became the locus of the Southern rebellion against the United States. This movement's motivation was concern over changing attitudes toward slavery and race relations in the rest of the Union. It sought to repress any forward movement in the struggle to expand legal rights to those who had not previously known them.

One hundred and fifty years later, that struggle has produced tremendous change, yet still persists in the face of more complex and deeply seated discrimination. On this anniversary, it seems fitting to commemorate the starting point of the conflict, and to survey some of the fronts on which the fight for greater rights continues.

In *Dred Scott v. Sandford: a Prelude to the Civil War*, author Faith Joseph Jackson reviews the infamous Supreme Court decision that proclaimed the invisibility of slaves before the law. Jackson uses the decision both as a historical moment and as a primary source to demonstrate slavery's place at the forefront of the conflict, as opposed to other supposed causes like tariffs or states' rights.

The second article, *From Closet to Court Room: Asylum as a Judicial Step Towards Full Equality between Sexual Orientations*, considers the incremental change that has in past been inherent in the expansion of rights to a particular group. Author Rory Riley argues in favor of using asylum cases as a judicial stepping-stone towards full marriage equality for gay and lesbian couples.

In Kristin Maun's comment, *The New Sanctuary Movement and De Facto Deportation for Children Challenging Parents' Removal*, the author assess the hotly contested issue of undocumented parents gaining legal residency through their U.S. citizen children. The author challenges the political rhetoric surrounding the issue, arguing that deportation of non-legal residents does effect de facto deportation upon their citizen children, and exploring the reasons why this is undesirable.

Finally, Katherine Womack's comment, *A Future of Equality for Virginia's Tribes: Reform the Federal Recognition Process to Repair Injustice*, addresses the obstruction Virginia tribes have faced when trying to procure rights and recognition. Womack examines the ways in which Virginia tribes have been stymied in their search for equality with U.S. citizens and other tribes, and how Congress should redress the current maze of regulatory approval.

We hope that this issue provides an engaging and informative reflection on the civil rights movement, beginning with its lowest moment and proceeding to a sample of its manifestations in the twenty-first century. Please enjoy the issue, and we look forward to bringing you forthcoming publications.

Sincerely,

Rachel E. Reynolds
Editor-in-Chief