

Letters

Fusion classification

What many of my colleagues do not know is that the DOE or its predecessor organizations, the ERDA and AEC, have tried to suppress not only work done under their sponsorship and funded by them but also peaceful ICF work by unfunded outsiders like me who have never been exposed to any "secrets" the government claims to protect. For example, when I submitted some time ago a paper on controlled fusion research to a scientific journal in England, the DOE in cooperation with the British government stopped publication of my paper after being tipped off by someone. In another case several years back, the AEC even went so far as to solicit the cooperation of a Soviet official in Austria who is one of the editors of a journal published by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. In suppressing the scientific work of unfounded outsiders like me, the DOE has excavated a legal dinosaur called the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. This act in effect tells every citizen that whatever he may invent in the area of nuclear energy is classified at the moment of its inception and can only be made public after and if it has been declassified by the DOE. Apart from the fact that such a law clearly violates rights under the first amendment it is also completely out of step with the realities of 1980. These realities are that since the inception of the act in 1954 five countries have successfully developed and tested hydrogen bombs. In view of this fact it is not clear what kind of secret, if any, the government pretends to protect. The arrogant claim by the DOE that it or its large government funded laboratories are the only places having the right to know about these concepts and are the sole source for them not only is intellectually dishonest but also an insult to the intelligence of other scientists. The reason why every country is not in the possession of thermonuclear weapons has nothing to do with secrecy but is a consequence of the extremely complex and expensive manufacturing process associated with the production of nuclear explosives and which enables only highly industrialized countries to pro-

duce these weapons. It is a delusion to believe that nuclear arms proliferation can be stopped by declaring something secret that has long ago ceased to be a secret. The present DOE policy is in fact not only self-defeating but rather against than in the national interest. Controlled fusion research done in secrecy is removed from the scrutiny of the scientific community at large. If secrecy persists, errors will be made that will cost the taxpayer many million dollars. Ironically, by imposing secrecy on controlled thermonuclear research for peaceful power production, the government just may precipitate a thermonuclear energy war its secrecy policy wants to avoid. The third world wants nuclear energy for its people, and views all attempts by our government to sell them the uneconomical solar energy option as a new form of colonialism. Fusion is the great hope also for them.

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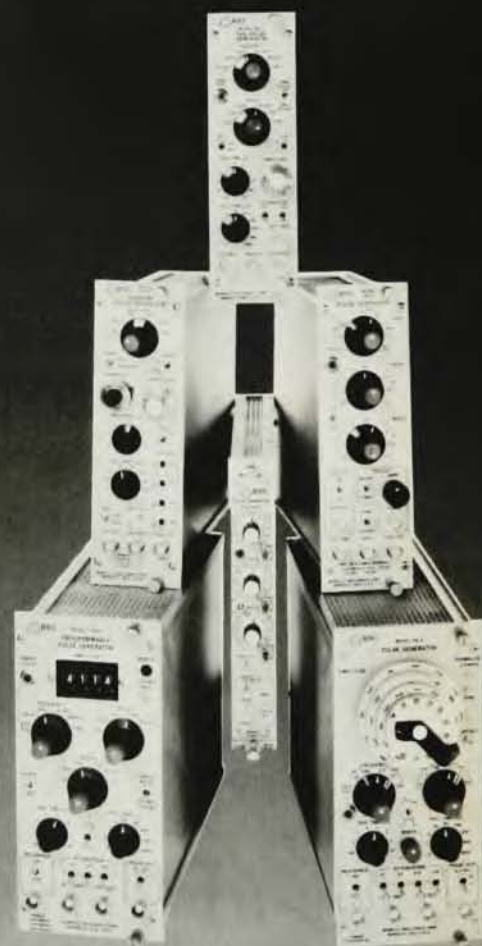
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Women in physics

It is immoral for anyone to allow an individual's sex to influence the granting of a research fellowship or admission to an educational program. It should be illegal for the government to do so. I therefore find your support of Senate Bill 568 reprehensible. [According to your September editorial (page 144) S. 568 "allows NSF to fund ... programs" for individuals of one particular sex.]

Your statement that people of the same sex are "required as both examples and mentors to foster the careers" of some people is an insult to these people and the entire profession. "Examples and mentors" should exhibit the characteristics of good physicists. The particular individual's sex is not one of those characteristics. If someone thinks otherwise, the proper course of action is to explain their error. To initiate sexually biased or restrictive programs is to compound the error.

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