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### **Federal work force's minority over-representation**

Shirley Wilcher, executive director of Americans for a Fair Chance, opines that "it's difficult to understand how white men have suffered systemic discrimination as a result of the government's affirmative employment program." ("Is the federal work roll skewed against minorities?" Letters, Aug. 26) Her reasoning is that racial minorities are represented in the government's Senior Executive Service (SES) in lower proportions than in the overall federal work force. That's true, but only because minorities are substantially overrepresented in the overall federal work force.

Minorities hold more than 30 percent of federal jobs, despite making up only 14 percent to 19 percent of the comparative civilian labor force, by the government's own reckoning. The preferential hiring goals that result in this overrepresentation are the subject of a lawsuit about which Ms. Wilcher complains. The suit was filed last month by the Center for Individual Rights against the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Had Ms. Wilcher compared minority employment in the SES to the comparative civilian labor force, she would have found that, overall, minorities are proportionately represented in the SES. So Ms. Wilcher's point essentially comes down to a complaint that the minority hiring preferences so prevalent throughout the federal government have had less effect in the SES. Given that these preferences are at odds with constitutional and federal civil rights law — to put it charitably — that's nothing to complain about.

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