

Loyalty to What?

Position One: Be Loyal to Your Boss

As the assistant to an inspector for the Department of Agriculture, you routinely travel throughout the south central region of the United States. You enjoy your work and enjoy working for this inspector. You worked for him in a previous position and are indebted to him for offering you this position at a much higher salary and much better working conditions. When you travel, your boss usually puts the expenses for meals and lodging on his credit card. This works well because then you don't have to get reimbursed.

One day when he is away, you are in his office checking a reference manual. In the process, you notice the expense reports for your last trip on his desk. There is a report there for each of you, with the maximum allowable expense filled in, and the request for payment made out to him. The problem is that you know very well that your costs were only about one-third of the amount he has requested and that he is requesting reimbursement for two more meals than were necessary on the trip.

After agonizing about what to do, you decide not to say anything or tell anyone about it.

Defend your position.

Position Two: Report the Fraud

As the assistant to an inspector for the Department of Agriculture, you routinely travel throughout the south central region of the United States. You enjoy your work and enjoy working for this inspector. You worked for him in a previous position and are indebted to him for offering you this position at a much higher salary and much better working conditions. When you travel, your boss usually puts the expenses for meals and lodging on his credit card. This works well because then you don't have to get reimbursed.

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You decide to report him to his supervisor. Defend your position.

Jury Duty

Position One: Get Yourself Excused

You have been summoned for jury duty in your county. One of the cases on the docket is the well-publicized prosecution of a man for a series of rapes and assaults that occurred within a five-mile radius of your house. These were especially brutal crimes that occurred over several months. The assailant entered the open windows of the homes of the victims, assaulted them, and robbed them.

Because you live in the area where the attacks occurred and where the defendant lives, you are concerned about your safety during and after the trial. To avoid any possibility of revenge or of intimidation, you ask to be excused from participation on the jury.

Defend your position.

Position Two: Do Your Duty

You have been summoned for jury duty in your county. One of the cases on the docket is the well-publicized prosecution of a man for a series of rapes and assaults that occurred within a five-mile radius of your house. These were especially brutal crimes that occurred over several months. The assailant entered the open windows of the homes of the victims, assaulted them, and robbed them.

Because you live in the area where the attacks occurred and where the defendant lives, you are concerned about your safety during and after the trial. However, you believe it is your civic and moral obligation to serve on the jury and that attempting to avoid jury duty would be shirking your responsibility.

Defend your position.

Animal Research

Position One: Animal Research Is Immoral

The use of animals in medical research is unnecessary and immoral. It is unnecessary because Britain, which hasn't used animals in medical research for a hundred years, has demonstrated that it is possible to live without it. It is immoral because inflicting suffering on another species for our own benefit cannot be justified. It is no different than believing that it is justified to exploit another race or gender of human beings.

The three primary killers of humans—cancer, heart disease, and diabetes—are often lifestyle problems and can be prevented. We don't need animal research on these problems. There is no way to justify testing frivolous products like cosmetics on animals.

Animals are so different from humans that testing drugs on them to see if there are harmful effects is a waste of time. Several drugs, including thalidomide, have been tested on animals and mistakenly judged to be safe.

Defend your position.

Position Two: Animal Research Is Justified

Animal research is an acceptable way to test medical knowledge, surgical ability, and drug safety. Surgeons are trained on animals before they work on humans. We don't want them practicing on humans. Drugs have to be tested on living beings before we try them on humans, even if animals are different.

All species of animals live at the expense of other species. Humans have always eaten meat and used the resources of other species to improve their lives. Animal research is no different.

We do have an obligation to minimize suffering, but that doesn't mean we should not use animals at all. Animals do not have the same moral status as humans. They do not have "rights" in the same sense that people do.

Defend your position.

Quotas

Position One: No to Quotas

As the admissions director of a large public university, you have been asked by the legislature of your state to initiate a voluntary effort to recruit minority students and to guarantee that a certain percentage of your freshman admissions will come from minority groups. This request has been protested by some student groups on campus and by several conservative groups in the community.

You believe that this kind of program, even though it has good intentions, is inherently unfair because it discriminates against innocent individuals on behalf of groups. While we have a moral obligation to help people who have been oppressed on the basis of race or class, helping them shouldn't mean discriminating against someone else on the basis of race and class.

Once we start helping people on the basis of class, you wonder, where will it end? There are several classes of people with legitimate claims of being oppressed—Appalachian whites, Jews, Asians, etc.

We also have a problem with defining what exactly they are owed. Do we owe them a minimum-wage job, admission to a public university, admission to the finest private institutions, or a high-paying job? What criteria should be used to determine the right number of positions or admissions?

Defend your position.

Position Two: Yes to Quotas

As the admissions director of a large public university you have been asked by the legislature of your state to initiate a voluntary effort to recruit minority students, and to guarantee that a certain percentage of your freshman admissions will come from minority groups. This request has been protested by some student groups on campus and by several conservative groups in the community.

You believe that the request is reasonable. There is evidence that minority groups have been unfairly denied admission to your university in the past and that there are fewer minorities at the university than in the community. It is only fair that the university redress these problems by helping members of those minority groups succeed.

These programs are not discriminatory because they are not taking from other groups anything that belongs to them. The admission positions don't belong to anyone else. There is no reason that we can't give them to people based on their race, as long as they are qualified. Even if you argue that there are people more qualified, it has never been proven that more "qualified" people necessarily do better in school or in careers after they get out.

In most professions and educational institutions people are chosen on the basis of many factors other than qualification. People are selected because of their influence, the amount of power and money they have, or because they "know someone." In this case, we are simply helping people who don't have access to that power. Even some "qualifications" are often the result of factors beyond the individual's control, such as family income and access to good education.

Defend your position.