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Federal Courts Are Becoming Reluctant to Take the Lead in Civil-Rights Reform

In two recent decisions, judges have served notice they are shifting the burden to other branches of government.

In recent years, the Supreme Court has taken the lead in establishing and enforcing civil rights policies. In the past, the court has been willing to hear cases involving civil rights violations and to grant relief to those injured by discrimination.

However, in recent years, the court has become more reluctant to take the lead in enforcing civil rights laws. This trend is evident in two recent decisions: Adams v. Bell, which dealt with the accessibility of public buildings, and Grove City College v. Bell, which addressed the question of whether federal courts have the authority to enforce civil rights laws.

In Adams v. Bell, the court held that the Department of Education lacked the authority to enforce Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in education. The court ruled that the Department of Education's enforcement of Title IX was not sufficiently strong to guarantee that schools were complying with the law.

In Grove City College v. Bell, the court held that the Department of Education had no authority to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination in programs receiving federal financial assistance.

These decisions have set a precedent for future civil rights cases, and it is likely that other federal courts will follow the Supreme Court's lead. This trend is concerning, as civil rights groups and individual plaintiffs are likely to suffer as a result.

It is important for Congress to take action to ensure that the federal courts continue to protect civil rights. Congress can do this by passing legislation that clarifies the role of federal courts in enforcing civil rights laws and by providing the Department of Education with the resources it needs to enforce these laws effectively.

Congressional action is necessary to ensure that civil rights laws are enforced and that those who are injured by discrimination are able to obtain relief. It is time for Congress to take a leadership role in protecting civil rights and ensuring that all citizens have equal access to the justice system.