

Is affirmative action effective?

Life



Is Affirmative Action Effective? The Declaration of Independence states “ all men are created equal” (Declaration of Independence) and have certain unalienable rights that among these are “ Life Liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (Declaration of Independence). Judging Americans by different standards does not honor this truth. In efforts to remedy the ills of segregation through Affirmative Action, the unintended consequences of this action have created another injustice. If men are created equal then they should be judged equally.

Affirmative action is outdated and unconstitutional and it is time for a level playing field. Giving people opportunities based solely on race without the qualifications to succeed in a competitive environment is a major problem in today’s society. The SAT, the Standard Aptitude Test, “...merely measures differences in academic preparation... [The] affirmative action policies [that they] seek to remedy are primarily produced by “ continuing disparities” in pre-collegiate academic achievements of blacks and white students.

On those measures of merit that selective colleges use to decide who gets in, not all groups perform equally” (D’souza 266). Standardized tests are excellent predictors of academic capability, but, even with comparable test scores, evidence shows there simply may be natural differences between the races, similar to the assumption that whites naturally are not as athletic as blacks. America cannot deny opportunities to the people who are the most qualified and give them to someone who is less qualified but of the “ right” skin color.

This practice diminishes not only the achievement of the individual, but makes this country less productive than it could be. America is slowing down

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its' competitiveness in the world and dumbing down the country. D'souza states that "... admitting Hispanic and African American students with grade point averages of 3.2 and SAT scores of 1100, while turning away White and Asian American applicants with GPAs of 4.0 and SAT scores of 1300" (D'souza 265). In the NBA, more than three fourths of the league is African American. Many believe as stated previously that blacks are more athletic than whites.

Demanding that the NBA draft more whites to achieve racial equality, even if they are much less athletic, is effectively the same as demanding that businesses hire less qualified workers based solely on race rather than their academic performance. Rewarding people based on race instead of hard work and intelligence encourages an entitlement mentality and creates a false sense of achievement. Granting people opportunities that they may not deserve creates a sense of entitlement and perpetuates stereotypes and the cycle of racism. Equal opportunity is essential to a healthy society.

Everyone should be held to the same standard regardless of individual characteristics that have nothing to do with intelligence, hard work, or creativity. The person most qualified deserves the opportunity. The original justification for affirmative action was to correct historical discrimination against blacks in the south. This justification has been exaggerated and expanded to apply to many classes of people who were never intended to be included. This wide application of affirmative action creates a form of reverse discrimination.

The original purpose was to provide government intervention where blatant racism was present. As presently applied, each class has a different standard

and set of remedies based on what ever injustice they believe they suffered. According to a 1991 commentary by Patrick Hall, an African American librarian, “ the irony in all of this is that affirmative action and equal opportunity originally intended people to be judged on their qualifications as individuals without regard to race, sex, or age” (Hall 311). Affirmative action now takes away from the key to success which is motivation.

Hall suggests that “ motivation, individual initiative, and perseverance can overcome the most the most abhorrent situations” (Hall 312). Instead of creating that motivation, affirmative action has discouraged the majority races that face the same adversity and has caused a tension between races because people who deserve an opportunity are being overlooked because they are white just to create a sense of diversity. Rather than a targeted corrective strategy, a case can be made that affirmative action has diminished some minorities’ drive to achieve prosperity in their lives.

The key to successful affirmative action is to create individual initiative regardless of their race. Without this motivation, affirmative action is unfair and can become as destructive as the evil it was intended to correct. The biggest example of affirmative action’s place in the world today is its effect and role in college admissions. These days, the main focus of universities and other educational institutions is to be or become as racially diverse as possible. However, with that being said “... dequate racial diversity can’t be achieved without rejecting a certain number of more academically qualified white applicants in favor of preferred minority applicants” (Parks 146). In trying to create more equality in opportunity for minorities, the white population’s opportunities are then diminished. Instead of race, the

privileges or assistance that comes along with affirmative action should be given to people based on factors that would actually affect their admissions. The policy should almost be used as bonus points for "... ruly deserving students whose lower grade point average and SAT scores, correlate to overcomingpoverty, a single-parent household, lack of English-language background, enrollment at an underperforming high school, a physical handicap or undiagnosed or untreated learning disability" (Parks 149). Growing up in or with a condition that is out of their control, affirmative action should be award to those who have problems that directly affect their education. Within the last century, African Americans have fought harsh battles for their civil rights.

Back during Jim Crow law days, segregated schools allowed for differences in educational standards. The few schools that were provided helped some, but for the most part did little for the majority of blacks. This oppression "... left a large gap in amount of wealth, educational attainment, and social status..." (Young 14). The more the gap in attainment increased, the greater the gap in economic opportunity. Some African Americans view affirmative action policies as a form of pity. Because of past struggles and their assumed continuance "... ffirmative action programs give blacks and other disadvantaged groups extra consideration when applying for admissions" (Young 14). Whites now feel " bad" about their past wrongdoings and are trying to make up for it by giving education as a handout. These policies anger many blacks because they want the same opportunity to show how far they have come and prove they are capable of being successful on their own without any special assistance. Even though most educational institutions

are trying to increase their racially diverse appeal, most still favor whites over other minority races. With that being said “... whites, whatever their status, can view themselves as entitled to privileges and priorities over blacks” (Bell 77). This in turn causes more tension between races because of the factor of competition. If schools based admissions solely on the information they are presented with, race and ethnicity aside, they could fairly base their rejection or acceptance and have it be justified. This would also help the competition tension because admissions would be based on their effort and achievements instead of something that is beyond their control. There are many different standards of education around the world.

In order to make sure every student has the same chance of success, every school needs to if not at the same level, at least offer the same or similar courses. Many “... recommend that courts should concentrate on enforcing genuine equality in education by requiring schools to conform to uniform standards “(Bell 76). This way every student has the access to these resources if need be. So students are judged on what they bring to the table, not on race or unchangeable characteristics. Most races are hurt by some of the practices or effects of affirmative action policies.

Getting rid of race-based pickings, would help increase educational equality across the board and also increase economic opportunity. Unfair cruelty and underestimation is also presented upon Hispanics. The stereotypical view that many Americans have on Hispanics is that their lack of education means that they have no worth to this country and that they should be given a job with just as poor worth as their stereotype gives the individual. “ The preponderance of recent immigrants in unskilled and low-paying jobs as de

facto proof that Americans refuse to do what is traditionally considered menial labor.

As an result, some of the business community, supported by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, clamor for a liberal guest-worker program based upon the assumption that without one, America will face a long-term labor shortage and economic ruin” (Haugen 24). This shows how Americans actually refuse to do these types of jobs because they are viewed as unfavorable low-paying jobs. With the assumption that they are jobs well suited for these immigrants who do not have a proper educated background, when really, these are some of the most important and beneficial jobs to the country.

This menial labor may not be the ideal job, but without these jobs, or the Hipics that occupy them, America would face a tremendous labor and economic downfall. Americans have not only underestimated the importance and power of menial labor, but also of Hipics. Although these people may be unskilled and uneducated, they have been put in tougher situations where they must work harder than other Americans in order to survive. The severity of discrimination has been taken to a whole different level. “ The prejudice, intimidation, and hatred of the... riots were directed at Hipics who had done nothing wrong” (Haugen 27).

Hipics have taken the role of America’s scapegoats and the reason for their problems when they have done nothing but come into the country looking for a better life for themselves. This view that Hipics are worthless and incapable of succeeding in anything in spite of their race is unfair and insensible. Affirmative action was created to be a positive and beneficial way

of improving and enhancing the employment and educational opportunities of members in a minority, but quickly turned into an ongoing controversy filled with detriments from all point of views. This action has gone from helping the minorities, to denying races.

There have been cases where students have been denied from colleges merely because of their race. “ The court has ruled that a system of strict racial quotas, like denying someone because of their race, is unconstitutional, but that schools are allowed to use race as one of several factors when determining an applicant’s acceptance” (“ Expanding Access to College for Disadvantaged Students” paragraph 3). Colleges aim for those certain percentages of each race in their school, but that does not mean that they should be able to turn hard working and deserving students away because of the color of their skin.

Colleges have lost the true meaning of affirmative action, which is to give a boost to the minorities, not push them away. Members of both majorities and minorities see this action as an unfair advantage. Many Whites view affirmative action “ as giving an unfair advantage to racial minorities...” (“ Expanding Access to College for Disadvantaged Students” paragraph 4) and many Blacks view the affirmative boosts as a gesture of pity towards them and take it offensively because they feel like they can pave a way for themselves without Whites doing it for them.

On the other hand, many Hipics see affirmative action as one more racial barrier that puts, yet, another stereotype on them that they are incapable of being a real benefit to a college, or the country in general (Marcovitz 27). Affirmative action needs to make its way back to its original purpose which is

to give Hipics a helping hand because of their lack of a proper education. Over the years, more and more people have witnessed affirmative action's misfortunes and have worked towards a resolution to this controversy.

Instead of viewing Hipic immigrants as a burden to public welfare, Americans need to desire a growing workforce and welcome them with the belief that America is a beacon for all diversities of races (Haugen 21). Many have come to the conclusion that Hipics are just another group of people who are here to overpopulate and do not bring anything to the table to benefit our country, but the truth is, they benefit this country a great amount.

By helping these immigrants have a better and new life in America, they can achieve great things for our country and introduce America into many new cultural aspects which can raise the nation to a whole new level. Throughout the revision process of affirmative action, critics have hypothesized new ways that will make more of a beneficial impact. " Critics also say they doubt that racial or economic diversity will really benefit colleges. Ideological differences are more helpful in achieving that goal than differences in race or income..." (" Critics See Problems" paragraph 5).

It has been predicted that ideological differences would be far more helpful in achieving the action's goals rather than segregating by race. Diversity by race in colleges will do nothing but cause more controversies in this issue, which is already a heated topic. By seeking out the differences of ideology rather than race, it will give colleges a background look at the persons' political and economic beliefs and ideas instead of their race. Being able to see these ideological beliefs would be much more beneficial not only for the colleges, but for the country.

Affirmative action violates the natural rights that have been given to Americans since the beginning of this great country. Judging students based off skin color takes away from the pursuit of happiness and creates an idea of inequality among races. Instead of just focusing on the person's race, but on the qualities and knowledge a person actually attains, this country will move ahead faster socially, but economically as well. Works Cited “ Affirmative Action. ” Issues and Controversies on File: n. pag.

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