

# What is wrong with affirmative action (and how to fix it)

[Business](#)



To improve minorities' college education, we must get rid of a program that intends to benefit them.

This program, affirmative action, has been seen by many as a tool of ensuring diversity and exposing people to many different cultures and ideas. Affirmative action was necessary in the twilight years after segregation's end, but currently, it is doing more harm than good. Affirmative action is a program that is meant to bring diversity to college campuses; it became what it is today primarily from one of Lyndon B. Johnson's executive orders in 1965, which, as the National Conference of State Legislators explains, "required government contractors to use affirmative action policies in their hiring to increase the number of minority employees." When this was expanded to the collegiate level, it meant that a certain quota of "historically excluded or underrepresented" students had to be accepted by each college, utilizing race as a factor in determining a student's admission. Should race be considered when determining whether or not a student should be admitted? No; all people, no matter their skin color, gender, or creed, are guaranteed equal protections under the law by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

According to Cornell Law School, this amendment, which was created primarily to protect former slaves and recognize them as citizens of the United States, enforces the idea that "a state must treat an individual in the same manner as others in similar conditions and circumstances." To favor a minority group of people does not treat the individuals in such a group the same way as a member of the majority, which is not treating an individual in the same manner as others. Preferential treatment brings preference in <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-wrong-with-affirmative-action-and-how-to-fix-it/>

choice to these minority members to admit these students to the college, which opposes the Equal Protection Clause. By law, this does not resolve discrimination; it only creates it. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, who attended Harvard Law School and joined the Court in 1986, summarizes this struggle in defeating discrimination perfectly: “ the difficulty of overcoming the effects of past discrimination is as nothing compared with the difficulty of eradicating from our society the source of those effects, which is the tendency—fatal to a Nation such as ours—to classify and judge men and women on the basis of their country of origin or the color of their skin. A solution to the first problem that aggravates the second is no solution at all.” David Sacks and Peter Thiel, two alumni of Stanford University, echo this explanation, elaborating that “ a racist past cannot be undone through more racism. Race-conscious programs betray Martin Luther King’s dream of a color-blind community, and the heightened racial sensitivity they cause is a source of acrimony and tension instead of healing.” The primary goal behind this, on a college campus, is to design a diverse environment that allows for the “ marketplace of ideas” to sell more interesting wares. To do this, Stanford confers a boost to minority applicants, which is made clear in the boost they gain.

Sacks and Thiel discuss an observation from *The Bell Curve*, written by psychologist Richard J. Herrnstein and political scientist Charles Murray, which portrays this, pointing out that “ the average SAT disparity between Stanford’s African-American and white admittees reached 171 points in 1992.” This does not guarantee diversity. The duo continues in stating that “ if ‘ diversity’ were really the goal, then preferences would be given on the

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basis of unusual characteristics, not on the basis of race. The underlying assumption — that only minorities can add certain ideas or perspectives — is offensive not merely because it is untrue but also because it implies that all minorities think a certain way.

” This idea that certain minorities add certain ideas is actually stereotyping them as a group of people. If affirmative action’s goal is to break down stereotypes, then why is it creating them? One of the most problematic aspects of affirmative action is that it sets up the opportunity for mismatch in a college admission. Gail Herot, a member of the U. S. Commission on Human Rights, explains that “ as a result of affirmative action, black students in particular, Hispanic students as well, are likely to go to a school where their entering credentials put them towards the bottom of the entering class,” with the result being, as she explains, “ lower grades and possibly giving up on their goals.” Imagine applying to Harvard College as a minority.

Your standardized test scores and grade point average are lower than the average score and average of a Harvard student, but despite this, you get accepted. It becomes apparent, however, that the workload and pace in the classes is too fast for you to understand. You stay after to get help, but still you have piles and piles of papers to carry from door to door. Despite your studying, you cannot seem to get your grades up to a score you like.

Frustrated at the institution’s blinding speed, your lack of preparation for this workload, and other students progressing further than you, you drop out of

Harvard and give up on your ambitions. This is the terrifying truth of mismatch.

Acceptance into a prestigious university does not mean that one is guaranteed success. Richard H. Sander, a professor of law at the University of California, Los Angeles, corroborates this by stating that “ the current large preferences used by law schools nearly double the bar failure rate among African American law graduates. The most recent estimates suggest that only one in three blacks who enter law school eventually graduate and pass the bar on their first attempt.” Those students could have attained much more success by attending a university that was geared toward their skills and preparation, but they went to a university that had a workload they were not prepared for and were stressed because of it.

Employers are not going to care about how fast one learns something; they care about whether or not one can apply such knowledge to the job.

Affirmative action was made to benefit minorities, but it actually sets them up for failure. It can be understood that the intent is to benefit minorities by granting them a fine education, but that which occurs is the exact opposite of what was intended. What, then, can be done to resolve affirmative action’s faults? Yale law professor Stephen Carter may have the answer.

Being “ a beneficiary and a victim of racial preferences,” his suggestion is to have race-conscious remedies for a student start at an early age and then decrease as the student gets older. Slate writer Tanner Colby portrays the idea as this: “ if a 5-year-old from a disadvantaged background is given a leg-up to get into a good elementary school, that is not likely to be a stigma

he will carry around as an adult—and you really have to try hard to begrudge helping out a 5-year-old.

” Allowing children from a minority background to join such an elementary school would give them the skill set that they need in order to work as well as other people; instead of giving a false representation of one’s ability by inflating scores and point averages, the better schools would teach them the study habits, values, and responsibility that will allow one of these minority members to unlock their true potential and go to Harvard not to fall behind, but to excel. All people are created equally and have the same rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. There was, however, a time where this was a lie. Minorities were once slaves, coach-class citizens, and scapegoats, but now they are now friends, family, and equal citizens. The steps taken to end this discrimination are proven through several amendments, acts, and administrations that were vital to repairing the damage that was caused by the past. There was a time when affirmative action was needed to integrate minorities with the majority, but now, it has the potential to damage people and race relations.

Affirmative action does not guarantee diversity, success, or happiness; it instead has a flaw that has the ability to harm minorities. It will bring success when it is canned at the collegiate level and incorporated in the elementary level. Works Cited Hultin, Brenda Bautsch Suzanne. Affirmative Action | Overview. N. p.

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