

# Affirmative action: executive order 11246

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The Webster's New World Dictionary defines affirmative action as " a policy or program for correcting the effects of discrimination in the employment or education of members of certain groups. " President Lyndon Johnson issued executive Order 11246. This required federal contractors to take " affirmative action" to increase the number of minorities that they employed. President Johnson's order he put in place has since been twisted and turned around to what it is today.

Such twists and turns include the hiring of unqualified workers, the causing of problems for groups it originally set out to help, and the reverse discrimination that results in unfair standards into higher education and the work force. Affirmative action creates an equal opportunity for people in the work force and for students seeking higher education. However, while affirmative action creates equal opportunity to for some individuals, it discriminates against others, primarily white males. Take for example some police forces.

If a member of a minority group is hired over a more qualified person and they are forced to be in a situation they cannot handle then that is a major problem of affirmative action. Therefore, affirmative action uses reverse discrimination to solve the problem of discrimination. In " Assessing Affirmative Action", an article by Harry Holtzer and David Neumark , says that " many firms were more likely to hire women and minorities with lesser qualifications, but also to give them remedial training, thus erasing the differences"(Holtzer1).

In many cases you see that affirmative action helps most minorities and women but has its obvious drawbacks. In another article by George Gurin, "Sizing Up Affirmative Action", he says that "To many colleges and businesses are being almost to open on who they let in and who they don't only because they are trying too hard"(Gurin3). In my opinion I think that affirmative action is a great thing to have in today's society, our nation's development is credited to many different cultures coming together to form one great one. We will forever have the fight of discrimination, but there is not in my opinion one-way to satisfy everyone.

As mentioned earlier affirmative action does hurt some of the people it set out to help. Consider an employer who hires a member of a certain minority group on the basis of skills alone. Many of the employees may automatically assume that the individual's appointment to that job is resulted from affirmative action. Therefore, an employee who does benefit from affirmative action may bear the brand of "not being the best pick, but the best pick of a limited group(Pasour). " Another part of affirmative action that is commonly brought up is women in the government.

In earlier times people wouldn't even consider having a woman in positions where they would be making decisions for men. In this day they were almost treated like the slaves that they owned. One of the only jobs that women did was to work in factories and low income jobs. Today women hold the top positions in some jobs. Companies are hiring and promoting women the same as they do men. Is this a result of affirmative action? When women were given their rights it was. Today it is easy to see that women are just as

qualified as men at what they do. The question of having a woman president is still up for grabs.

I think that it will still be a long time before society feels comfortable with a woman controlling their nation. That in itself would be another consideration. Would other countries take us seriously and treat us with the same respect they do now. In time affirmative action may be the winner in that a woman president is closer than everyone may think. Another heated issue with affirmative action is the issue of African Americans. America has been a racist country from the start. But as time has passed and people have accepted other races as their own.

This was not until recently when people thought like this. In the case of the Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978), a special admission program setting aside 16 places in the medical school class for disadvantaged students, chiefly racial minorities, violated the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment and title VI of the civil rights act of 1964 (Regents 2). All in all today's society is growing towards the acceptance of different races and minorities. And one stepping-stone to that acceptance is the issue of affirmative action.