

Affirmative Action, Is It Good Or Bad?

This article does not discuss the legalities of affirmative action, I leave that to the courts. This article is solely about the philosophy of affirmative action.

According to Wikipedia, affirmative action "is a policy or a program promoting the representation in various systems of people of a group who have traditionally been discriminated against, with the aim of creating a more egalitarian society". In my opinion, affirmative action, at least as it has been instituted in this country, is wrong, harmful, racist and prejudicial. Affirmative action, at least in this country, seems to be based, solely, on race or gender.

In example, take two male high school students, both attend the same low income area high school, one is 'black' and one is 'white'. The 'black' student's family, immigrated to this country from Canada fourteen years ago, his father works full time and his mother is a 'stay at home mom'. The 'white' student's ancestors immigrated to this country eighty years ago, his father was killed, in a home invasion robbery, when he was six years old and his mother works part time as a waitress in a diner. The 'black' student has a grade point average of 3.05 with an S.A.T. score of 1085. The 'white' student has a grade point average of 3.55 and a S.A.T. score of 1270. Both students are polite and well mannered. Neither belongs to a gang or has any criminal record. Both want to go to a good university so both apply to U.C.L.A.. Under affirmative action, which student would be accepted? The 'white' student would not be covered under affirmative action, as 'whites' have not traditionally been discriminated against, and no duty is owed him for being poor and fatherless (being poor and fatherless is not considered disadvantaged and the fact that he attended the same low income school as the 'black' student is also not considered a disadvantage for a 'white'). The 'black' student, however, is considered disadvantaged and is considered to come from a race that has traditionally been discriminated against (The fact that his family recently came here from Canada, the fact that he has a parent that works full time and the fact that he has not suffered racial discrimination does not matter.). Under affirmative action, the 'black' student would not only be accepted, he would be eligible for financial aid. The 'black' student would go to U.C.L.A. and the 'white' student would probably end up at a community college.

Change the above example to a 'black' student and a 'hispanic' student and the 'black' student would be accepted because 'blacks' rank higher on the disadvantaged charts. Between a 'hispanic' and a 'white' the hispanic would be accepted because 'whites' don't rank on the chart, neither do 'orientals', South East Asians or Jews. The fact that Orientals, South East Asians and Jews have been discriminated against in this country doesn't matter as the 'political correctness' police in this country do not consider them, to have traditionally been discriminated against enough, to be disadvantaged. The only student that would be ranked higher on the disadvantaged chart would be a 'black' female student. Furthermore, a rich 'black' student who attended the best schools would rank the same as a poor 'black' student who attended a low income school.

Some universities are no longer allowed to use affirmative action as a criteria so they now use 'cultural diversity' as their criteria. To me affirmative action and cultural diversity are the same thing. Both use racial and gender profiling in order to decide who is accepted. This is America and everyone is supposed to be equal and receive equal treatment. Racial and gender profiling tells people that some races and females are less capable than others and therefore need special help in reaching their potential. Profiling harms this country by telling people that they are not all equal under the eyes of the law. Profiling tells some people that they are not as intelligent or as capable as other people and that they can't make it without help. It tells other people that because they are 'white', they don't deserve help. It rewards some people while punishing other people. This divides the country and causes, in effect, class warfare. America is a land of immigrants who should have been melded into one great class of people, Americans. To tell them that 'blacks', whites', 'hispanics', 'orientals', etc. are all different and have different abilities keeps this country from being united. To grant advantages to one group over another is discriminatory and divisive. To tell 'blacks', 'hispanics' and others that they can't make it without outside help is to tell them that they are not as capable as 'whites', 'orientals' and others.

Some of you may be wondering why I keep placing single quotation marks around certain words like 'black', 'white', etc.. It is because I do not like using labels like 'black' and 'white' to describe people. Other words like 'hispanic' are, in my opinion, used improperly as they tend to categorize people from many different countries or

groups into one group. All 'blacks' are not the color of black, all 'whites' are not the color of white and all 'hispanics' are not necessarily of Spain or Spanish speaking (Brazilians, for example, are classified 'hispanic' even though they speak Portuguese and most are descended from Portugal or some African country.). As far as I am concerned all people that are American citizens (naturalized or other) or live permanently in the United State Of America are either American citizens or American residents. To label them otherwise is to denigrate, isolate and seperate them from each other. Discussing concepts, like affirmative action and cultural diversity, force the use of such labels.

The people of this country need to be brought together, not seperated. Being proud of your ancestors and your heritage is one thing, being rewarded, punished or seperated because of your ancestors or heritage is something else entirely. Being rewarded because others of your race or gender were mistreated in the past is wrong and being punished for what others of your race or gender did in the past is equally wrong. How would you like to be fined for horse stealing because you are a 'white' male and some other 'white' male stole a horse over fifty years ago or even last week? Untill all people in this country are treated equally, and with the same respect, and are given the same chances, we will never be "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all". Discrimination is wrong, no matter who is being discriminated against.

Note: For any of you that object to my keeping the phrase "under God" in that last quote, tough. That is the way I say it. If you don't want to say it that way, then don't. Just don't try to tell me that I can't say it that way. To those of you that object to my using the word 'black' instead of the words 'African-American', again I say tough. To me 'African-American' is just as much a misnomer as 'Hispanic'. I believe that the word 'black' is improper, however, I hate to use the word American when there is a hyphen before it. To me an American is an American. I didn't write this article to be 'politically correct', I wrote this article in order to say what I think. If you want 'political correctness', go elsewhere.

Short note about the author

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