

# Example by StudyDriver

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## Affirmative Action in the US Example

Just as numerous policies adopted in the United States, affirmative action is one that has incessantly adapted to the country's changing needs because of its flexibility. The first concrete reference to the term appeared in Kennedy's Executive Order 10925 which pushed to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed without regard to race (Sowell 124). This order's intents were furthered by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination more effectively and in a larger scope. In both these instances, affirmative action is seen as a means to abolish discriminatory hiring and primarily benefit African Americans in the workplace. The affirmative action that society is familiar with nowadays is a result of the Nixon administration's established "result-oriented procedures" to incorporate larger amounts minorities and women into the workplace through target ranges rather than quotas. Over time, affirmative action has evolved from preferential hiring by race in the workplace to prevail in higher education admissions and governmental contracting and expanding to benefits additional groups such as females and disabled persons. As a result, preferential selection has gathered much attention and been tested in Supreme Court cases across the nation, such as University of California v. Bakke and Grutter v. Bollinger, both in which it was not declared unconstitutional (Sander and Taylor). Regardless of court decisions, affirmative action remains a controversial topic that is constantly debated by the American public. Due to its success in ameliorating the situations of numerous Americans, there is a large amount of support for

affirmative action that has taken form across the nation. The predominant political parties associated with this view are the Democratic and Liberal Parties. Prominent democratic politicians in concurrence with affirmative action plans include Bill Clinton and Jesse Jackson, both who believe the drawing back of affirmative action will result in a higher number of institutions no longer considering minorities in the application process, resulting in the re-segregation of the public and reduction of opportunities. One of the main arguments for preferential selection is that it ensures the inclusion of minorities that have been left behind in the past due to their systemic exclusion from opportunities, a belief greatly supported by African American Congressman Charles Rangel (Sowell 120). Likewise, factions supporting affirmative action state that the advantages given to minorities motivate them to become successful. Female enrollment in the workforce and in educational institutions has surpassed that of males since the extension of affirmative action programs towards their gender. The League of Women Voters and National Organization for Women have continually pushed to keep preferential hiring and acceptance for the aforementioned reasons, working to help women realize their potential and inspire them to pursue higher education and a secure job in their respective fields of preference. To add to the implements of affirmative action creating a better society, interest groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons take the stance that preferential hiring promotes diversity, which in turn yields a country more tolerant of variety through assimilation. With this in mind, supporters see affirmative action as an integral part of reforming the U.S. society to one free of segregation and plentiful in tolerance. Conversely, there is an opposing viewpoint which believes that affirmative action has perpetuated more harm than benefit to the American public. The Conservative and Republican parties ideologically uphold such a belief, abiding by the orthodox view that equality of results should not overwhelm the equality of opportunity as well as hold a strong belief on the protestant work ethic. Republican politicians that have established themselves opponents of affirmative action include George W. Bush and Ward Connerly. Bush extends his views against affirmative action to the belief that quota systems are unjust as well as unconstitutional, but believes in the promotion of diversity in modern America. According to Ayres, Republican Ward Connerly expresses his belief that extending preferences on the basis of race and gender goes against Martin Luther King Jr.'s prospect of a color-blind America. Connerly is the leader of the American Civil Rights Institute, an interest group that aims to demote the effects of affirmative action in the United States (Ayres). However, there is a plurality of Liberal Democrats that take stances against

affirmative actions as well, such as John Kerry and Leland Yee. They believe that affirmative action makes it so that those of a minority are equally or more likely to be accepted into institutions than individuals of a majority who are of higher caliber. California Senator Yee took an anti-affirmative action approach after receiving a letter from Asian Americans emphasizing the negative impact that California's Constitutional Amendment 5, one that negates the anti-affirmative Proposition 209, would yield upon them. Conservative interest groups against preferential hiring or acceptance such as the Central for Equal Opportunity claim that minorities hired with preferential treatment are more likely to be treated in a derogatory fashion in workplaces and universities (Clegg). Criticism given by their competitive colleagues causes preferentially accepted workers or students to doubt their confidence and negatively affects their performance and efforts, ultimately harming both themselves and the institutions they perform under. Individuals who choose to pursue their dreams should independently strive to accomplish what they set out to do and feel as though they were the ones who accomplished that goal through hard work, not through being part of a desirable minority accepted to fulfill an establishment's quotas. Another argument proposed against affirmative action is that it essentially promotes the consideration of race and gender in a society that is aiming for equality. Although there are traces of racism lingering in the modern U.S., opponents of preferential acceptance believe that its society is no longer collectively racist and does not need affirmative action to pull the minorities back into the competition for success. IMO One of the main arguments from this point of view is that some individuals accepted into prestigious universities under the quota system receive opportunities that they are unprepared for, and thus, cause them to be inherently disadvantaged in programs with high demands. Affirmative action, in its attempts to decrease discrimination, has harmed other individuals as well as those affected by such policies, resulting in its widely debated controversy. One divisive view of affirmative action is the need for augmentation of diversity in order to expose individuals to a heterogeneous public. To promote diversity to appeal to those who desire to end discrimination as well as appeal to those who dislike racial preference and seek to group individuals by their abilities, prestigious schools should seek partnership with those that contain higher percentages of minorities so that both groups of students in their respective schools intermingle and influence one another. With this compromise, unprepared minorities are no longer ushered into high-status environments which they are not prepared to enroll in, yet diversity is achieved through the partnership of differently composed institutions. Another possible alteration of affirmative action to

minimize the political rift and find middle ground to assist those who are truly deprived is the adoption of class and background-based consideration in addition to that of race and gender. By promoting preferential hiring solely by race, gender, and minority status in order to reduce segregation, institutions unintentionally promote stereotypes that no longer hold true in modern times. Certain genders and races are not as exclusively disadvantaged as they are grouped to be—for example, there are ambitious well-off daughters of successful Hispanic doctors and lawyers that may apply to the same school as more academically able yet deprived sons of Asian refugee fishermen. In such a compromise, the target ranges for minorities deter the effects of segregation while increased consideration for class shifts the sole focus on race and gender to a society that is not simply divided by color, but one that believes in creating equal opportunity for its public's well-being. Works Cited Ayres, B. Drummond, Jr. "Foes of Affirmative Action Form a National Group." *New York Times*. Arthur Sulzberger Jr., 16 Jan. 1997. Web. 28 Sept. 2014. Clegg, Roger. "Affirmative Action." Center for Equal Opportunity. Center for Equal Opportunity. Web. 28 Sept. 2014. Hutchinson, Earl Oraf. "State Senator Helps Set Dangerous Precedent for Affirmative Action." *Huffington Post*. *Huffington Post*, 24 April. 2014. Web. 28 Sept. 2014. Sander, Richard, and Stuart Taylor, Jr. *Mismatch*. Basic Books, 2012. Print. Sowell, Thomas. *Affirmative Action Around the World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. Print.