

Yes: It is time to end race-based affirmative action

We may have come here today to speak of race based affirmative action. But I feel that the issue we are addressing encompasses the scope of what it means to be American. Education has always been the great equalizer; the way for someone to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and become successful. Education allows our society to fight the entrenchment of the classes. And an effort to extend that opportunity to those who have not historically had access is commendable. However, the greatest need for reformation lies not in the gaps between race. As Taylor (has said/will say), these affirmative action processes lead to prejudice. Indeed, they are not helping, in the most effective way possible, to close the achievement gap. Stephen Hsu, a professor of theoretical physics at the university of Oregon, concludes in his research (quote) “the evidence is strong that students of weaker ability who are admitted via preference do not close the gap during college.” (unquote) His study showed that SAT scores can predict the probability of someone achieving a major in that field. Are minority students getting in with lower scores, because of their race? If minority students are getting in without the necessary qualifications, we are not helping them in the long run anyway. And for those that would argue that minorities can get in on merit alone, then why are we arguing? If minority students can stand on their merit without the crutch of race, this means there is no need for race based affirmative action. To presume otherwise is to make assumptions about the abilities of the minorities. Does this not simply entrench the harmful stereotypes of our society?

For these reasons, race-based affirmative action is not the right way to solve the issues of the achievement gap. Instead, affirmative action should be based on socioeconomic status. A study undertaken by researchers at Stanford has shown that while the achievement gap between minority races and whites has been decreasing, the gap between those in a lower income bracket and those in a higher income bracket has been steadily increasing. (Quote) “The achievement gap between children from high- and low-income families is roughly 30 to 40 percent larger among children born in 2001 than among those born twenty-five years earlier.” (end quote) With classes entrenched in their respective positions, the opportunity for reconciliation between races slips away. Change cannot be wrought with a stagnant populace. The only way to advance our nation is to better educate everyone, and also to allow people to fight for their own successes. I say, address the gap that is widening. Allow education to once again become the great equalizer. Don’t allow our education to become something only the rich can afford. Affirmative action does not serve us as well, nor is it as narrowly tailored, with minorities. Socioeconomic status based affirmative action reduces prejudice, and addresses the clear and advancing achievement gap between classes. Clearly that is a better fit for our Country.
