

## **Affirmative action helps more than it hurts**

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In 2006, Proposal 2 was voted into Michigan law, which placed a ban on the use of race in the college admissions process. According to David Jesse in *USA Today*, the percentage of black undergraduates from 2006 to 2012 at the University of Michigan dropped from 7 percent to 4.7 percent. This percentage was enough to question if affirmative action should still be at play in admissions.

Affirmative action was designed to create more diversity in universities throughout the United States. Without affirmative action in place, minority and racially diverse students are being enrolled even less, and universities are decreasing their diversity.

Seven states aside from Michigan have similar bans to Proposal 2. Previously, the Supreme Court heard *Fisher v. University of Texas*, another affirmative action suit and decided that, "...colleges' use of preferences must be "narrowly tailored" and that colleges must prove that considering race is absolutely necessary to maintaining diversity," according to Greg Toppo in *USA Today*.

According to studies from *The New York Times*, after researching several universities from five of the seven states with bans, enrollment of minorities has dropped in all universities except Florida, which maintained a steady percentage. In California, the study showed a sharp drop in Hispanic students even though California's Hispanic population has grown. Affirmative action has clearly played a large role in admitting more students of color and different backgrounds as the universities are actually becoming less diverse with the ban.

California banned affirmative action in 1998, and now according to a 2013 study conducted by Orfield's Civil Rights Project, black Californian high-school graduates admitted to UCLA has dropped from 47.6 percent of applicants to 13.9 percent, and Latino students have dropped from 54.9 percent of applicants to 14.8 percent. These numbers are immense.

Different races and minorities are considered a hindrance on society because they are unemployed or living off government assistance, but without affirmative action, they face an inequality that prohibits them from getting the education necessary to obtain a job in an already competitive job market.

In the Supreme Court decision on Proposal 2, the judges were split, 6-2, but upheld Michigan's law claiming that it is Michigan voters' right to make their own decisions regarding affirmative action. This decision does not endanger the use of race consideration in admissions for the 42 states without a ban, according to Richard Wolf from *USA Today*.

Race remains a prominent issue in the United States, and these conflicts will surely grow in complexity if affirmative action is banned in all states. Minorities will no longer face equal opportunity, and they will be discriminated against because they will be asking for government support.

"Some experts see a race-neutral approach to admissions — relying more on geography and family income to sort applicants — as an effective way to help colleges maintain diversity," according to Nick Anderson of *The Washington Post*. Unfortunately, sorting students like this

provides a disadvantage to lower income students because they will need more outside support for funding. University of California has tried several different methods and found them ineffective at allowing diversity, according to Anderson.

Dave Boyer with *The Washington Times* says President Obama believes, “courts should allow affirmative action for the foreseeable future,” and I agree. The ban on race consideration in admissions for higher education is not allowing more diversity and is creating less equal opportunity for minority students. Ultimately, affirmative action helps many more students than it hurts.

Below: Students protest affirmative action ban Proposal 2, taken from michigandaily.com

