

After the United States Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964, it became apparent that certain business traditions, such as seniority status and aptitude tests, prevented total equality in employment. Then President, Lyndon B. Johnson, decided something needed to be done to remedy these flaws. On September 24, 1965, he issued Executive Order #11246 at Howard University that required federal contractors "to take Affirmative Action to ensure that applicants are employed . . . without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin (Civil Rights)." With the signing of that order, and without knowing it, President Johnson created reverse discrimination.

Affirmative Action was created in an effort to help minorities leap the discriminative barriers that were ever so present when the bill was first enacted, in 1965. At this time, the country was in the wake of nationwide civil-rights demonstrations, and racial tension was at an all time high. Most of the corporate executive and managerial positions were occupied by White Males, who controlled the hiring and firing of employees. The U.S. government, in 1965, believed that these employers were discriminating against Minorities and believed that there was no better time than the present to bring about change. This action, that started with good intentions, would later lead to a different and more complex form of discrimination.

When the Civil Rights Law passed, Minorities, especially African-Americans, believed that they should receive retribution for the earlier years of discrimination they endured. The government responded by passing laws to aide them in attaining better employment as reprieve for the previous two hundred years of suffering their race endured at the hands of the White Man. To many people the passing of these laws was an effort in the right direction. Supporters of Affirmative Action asked, "why not let the government help them get better jobs?" After all, the White Man was responsible for their suffering. While this may all be true, there is another question to be asked. Are we truly responsible for the years of persecution that the African Americans and other Minorities were submitted to? I am not so sure.

It is true that past generations of White Men are partly responsible for the suppression of the African-American race. However, the modern White Male is not responsible for the past. It is just as unfair and suppressive to hold White Males responsible for past persecution now, as it was to discriminate against many African-Americans in the generations before. Why should an honest, hard-working, open minded, White Male be suppressed, today, for past injustice? Affirmative Action, in it's current

function seems to accept and condone the idea of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.
Do two wrongs really make a right? Definitely not, in my opinion. If Affirmative Action accomplished strictly what it was set out to do, that would be fine, but all it seems to be doing is turning around the tables, instead of alleviating the problem at hand.

Affirmative Action supporters make one large assumption when defending the policy. They assume that Minority groups want help. This, however, may not always be the case. My experience with Minorities has led me to believe that they fought to attain equality, not special treatment. To them, the acceptance of special treatment might be an admittance of inferiority. They ask, "Why can't I become successful on my own? Why do I need laws to help me get a job?" These African Americans want to be treated as equals, not as incompetents. In my Idealistic world neither Black, White, Mexican, Asian, Woman or Man should need nothing, except their skills.

In a statement released in 1981 by the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Jack P. Hartog, who directed the Affirmative Action Project, said: "Only if discrimination were nothing more than the misguided acts of a few prejudiced individuals, would Affirmative Actions plans be "reverse discrimination." If today's society were operating fairly toward Minorities and Women, would measures that take race, sex, and national origin into account be "preferential treatment?" Only if discrimination were securely placed in a well-distant past, would Affirmative Action be an unneeded and drastic remedy". What the commission failed to realize was that there are hundreds of thousands of White Males who are not discriminating, yet are being punished because of those who do.

The Northern Natural Gas Company of Omaha, Nebraska, was forced by the government to release sixty-five White Male workers to make room for Minority employees in 1977 (Nebraska Advisory Committee 40). Five major Omaha corporations reported that the number of White managers fell 25% in 1969 due to restrictions put on them when Affirmative Action was adopted (Nebraska Advisory Committee 27). You ask, "What did these individuals do to bring about their termination?" The only crime that they were guilty of was being White.

The injustice toward the White Male does not end there. After the White Male has been fired, he has to go out and find a new job to support his family, that depended on the company, to provide health care and a retirement plan, in return for years of hard work. Now, because of Affirmative Action, this White Male, and the thousands like him, require more skills to get the same job that a lesser qualified African-American Male needs. This

is, for all intents and purposes, discrimination, and it is a law that our government strictly enforces.

Affirmative Action is not only unfair for the working man, it is extremely discriminatory toward the executive, as well. The average business executive has one goal in mind, and that is to maximize profits. To reach his goal, this executive would naturally hire the most competent Man or Woman for the job, whether they be African-American or White or any other race. Why would a business man intentionally cause his business to lose money by hiring a poorly qualified worker? Most businesses would not. With this in mind, it seems unnecessary to employ any policy that would cause him to do otherwise. But, that is exactly what Affirmative Action does in today's society. It forces an employer, who needs to meet a quota established by the government, to hire a Minority, no matter who is more qualified.

Another way that Affirmative Action deducts from a company's profits is by forcing them to create jobs for Minorities. This occurs when a company does not meet its quota with existing employees and has to find places to put minorities. These jobs are often unnecessary, and force a company to pay for workers that they do not need.

Affirmative Action is not only present in the work place. It is also very powerful in education. Just as a White Male employee needs more credentials to get a job than his minority opponent, a White Male student needs more or better skills to get accepted at a prestigious university than a Minority student. There are complete sections on college applications dedicated to race and ethnic background. Colleges must now have a completely diverse student body, even if that means some, more qualified students, must be turned away. A perfect example of this can be found at the University of California at Berkeley. A 1995 report released by the university said that 9.7% of all accepted applicants were African American. Only 0.8% of these African American students were accepted by academic criteria alone. 36.8% of the accepted applicants were White. Of these accepted white students, 47.9% were accepted on academic criteria alone. That means that approximately sixty times more African American students were accepted due to non-academic influences than White students. It seems hard to believe that Affirmative Action wasn't one of outside influence.

Another interesting fact included in the 1995 report said that the average grade point average for a rejected White student was 3.66 with an average SAT score of

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The average grade point average for an accepted African American student was 3.66 with a 1030 average SAT score. These stunning facts shows just how many competent, if not gifted students fall between the cracks as a direct result of Affirmative Action.

If it has been unclear up to this point I would like to make it clear. My problem is strictly with Affirmative Action. If the true goal is to end discrimination and suppression of people as a whole, then the way Affirmative Action is currently being implemented needs to change. At present it only seems to be giving some an easy way out and others a firewall that can be difficult to get through. I don't think that is healthy for either party involved. Affirmative Action has truly become a form of reverse discrimination. I really believe that there are other ways to conquer these problems. Society needs to work towards broad based economic policies like public investment, national health reform, an enlarged income tax credit, child support assurance, and other policies benefiting families with young children. Widely supported programs that promote the interests of both lower and middle class Americans that deliver benefits to Minorities and Whites on the basis of their economic status, and not their race or ethnicity, will do more to reduce Minority poverty than the current, narrowly based, poorly supported policies that single out Minority groups. However, if this, or another remedy is not taken sometime in the near future, and Affirmative Action continues to separate Minority groups from Whites, we can be sure to see racial tension reach points that our history has never seen.

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