

Will voters repeal affirmative action ban?

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Sep 03, 2020(Joanne Jacobs: <http://www.joannejacobs.com/> Delivered by Newstex) Who gets into college seems less important right now than who gets to attend the college they got into. So, Proposition 16 on California's November ballot is flying under the radar, at least not so far. Among other things, it would repeal the ban on racial preferences in public education, which voters passed in 1996 as Proposition 209. For the first time, this year, 'Latinos represent the largest ethnic group among freshmen admitted to the University of California system, reports Kim Bojórquez in the Sacramento Bee. But Proposition 16 advocates say affirmative action is needed[1] to provide equal access to opportunities. In national surveys, most Americans oppose affirmative action in college admissions, she notes.

In a 2019 Pew Research Center study, 78 percent of whites, 65 percent of Hispanics, 62 percent of blacks and 58 percent of Asians said colleges should not consider race, ethnicity or gender in admissions. The ban on preferences harmed black and Hispanic students by pushing them to less selective universities, concludes a new study[2] by Berkeley economist Zachary Bleemer. Black and Hispanic enrollment declined[3] at UC campuses, reports Kevin Carey in the New York Times. In addition, black and Hispanic students were less likely to complete a degree, enroll in graduate school and earn a high salary, the study found. The policy had little effect on the success of white and Asian-American students. Students who would have enrolled at the flagship campuses before the ban attended less selective universities in the system. This in turn pushed out other Black and Hispanic students, who moved down the ladder of selectivity. Those at the bottom enrolled in less-selective universities, such as the California State University system, where graduation rates are lower. Black and Hispanic students were less successful in math and science courses, 'less likely to earn bachelor's degrees in a science or engineering field, as well as less likely to graduate over all,' compared with pre-209 students, writes Carey. 'They were also less likely to earn graduate degrees.' Those with the weakest high school grades were affected the most. 2017 graduates at University of California Riverside. Photo: Michael J. Elderman Shifting from flagship (Berkeley, UCLA) schools to less-selective UC campuses increased Hispanic and black students' success[4], argues Gail Heriot in a commentary in the San Diego Union-Tribune. She is a law professor at the University of San Diego and a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. In 1997, the year before 209's implementation, only one black student at UC San Diego had a freshman-year GPA of 3.5 or better, compared to 20 percent of white students, Heriot writes. The next year, 20 percent of black freshmen earned a 3.5 GPA or higher. A UCSD report found 'no substantial GPA differences based on race/ethnicity.' Furthermore, the racial gaps in GPAs below 2.0, considered 'academic jeopardy,' nearly vanished. In addition to higher grades, under-represented minority students at UC were more likely to earn degrees and to major in science or engineering, Heriot concludes. Of course, she's not looking at success rates for Hispanic and black students who were not admitted to any UC because of the affirmative-action ban. [1]: <https://www.bakersfield.com/ap/national/race-does-matter-why-latino-advocates-are-pushing-for->

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[affirmative-action-in-california/article_53575291-77b1-5c36-a2ec-5ce3dd999784.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/21/upshot/00up-affirmative-action-california-study.html) [2]:
<https://cshe.berkeley.edu/publications/affirmative-action-mismatch-and-economic-mobility-after-california%E2%80%99s-proposition-209> [3]: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/21/upshot/00up-affirmative-action-california-study.html> [4]: <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/community-voices-project/story/2020-06-09/prop-209-california-commentary>

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