



IHEP and 70 National Civil Rights Organizations Write in Support of California Proposition 16

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Body

The Institute for Higher Education Policy issued the following opinion:

The Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) joined 70 national civil rights organizations in writing in support of California Proposition 16 (Prop. 16), which would overturn an existing state ban on affirmative action in college admissions. Prop. 16 will not only help disrupt inequities in college access and success for students of color in California, it will signal a renewed focus on promoting equal opportunity for all students nationwide.

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September 29, 2020

National Organization Joint Statement Endorsing California Proposition 16

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 220 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, and the 70 undersigned organizations representing civil rights and education, we write in support of California Proposition 16 (Prop. 16). By reinstating affirmative action in public higher education, Prop. 16 will afford all Californians equal opportunities to fully participate in society - combating discrimination and prejudice against women and people of color.

As national organizations, we have tracked the negative impact affirmative action bans have had on women, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, especially in California. Prop. 16 provides an opportunity to rectify that negative impact and ensure that all communities have equal access to opportunities in public higher education.

California's future as a state, and our future success as a nation, depends on educating and engaging all people - whether they are White, Black, Asian American, Native American, or Latino - to be prepared to participate in civic life. Prop. 16 would do this by ensuring equitable access to higher education.

Higher education still remains the surest path to social and economic mobility, which is why it is critically important for communities that have historically been excluded from these opportunities to be fully and affirmatively included. Without full inclusion in higher education opportunities, people of color are being locked out from fully participating in the economy. The 133 percent pay disparity between college graduates and non-college graduates in California

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demonstrates the significant benefits access to higher education confers.^{/1} Additionally, it is important for colleges to reflect the diversity of our society.

California, as one of the most diverse states in the country, has a natural advantage in ensuring a diverse student body. Public colleges and universities in California should reflect its residents on their campuses and not the 2 and 3 percent of Black students represented at University of California-Berkeley^{/2} and University of California-Los Angeles,^{/3} respectively - nor the representation of Latino students at less than half their percentage in California high schools.^{/4} In a recent study, researchers found that the ban on affirmative action in public university admissions led to a decline in systemwide underrepresented group enrollment by at least 12 percent.^{/5} This decline in enrollment did not only lead to fewer students from underrepresented groups being enrolled in selective public institutions, it also led to inequitable outcomes in degree attainment and salary stagnation. Proposition 209, which would be repealed by Prop. 16, caused a decline in the total number of high-earning early-30s African American and Latino Californians by at least 3-6 percent.^{/6} Moreover, not only does affirmative action promote equality in college admissions and lead to better wages for historically marginalized communities, it also benefits all the students who attend college and better prepares them for their future success in society by giving them an academic experience based in the diversity of our society.

Now, more than ever, it is important for California to lead the country in ensuring fair access to public higher education. Proposition 209, California's ban on affirmative action, ended up being unfortunately replicated in eight other states. Prop. 16 is the chance to reverse that trend. While we are a nation of states, California's influence on the rest of the country is difficult to overstate, and California must seize this opportunity to show how great the benefits can be when a state chooses to embrace its diversity and be inclusive of all its residents.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

A. Philip Randolph Institute

AAPI Women Lead

ACCEPT: Admissions Community Cultivating Equity & Peace Today

Agency for Humanity

American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)

American Federation of Teachers

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)

Asian Americans Advancing Justice

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Association for the Study of Higher Education

Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD)

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Autistic Reality

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Center for American Progress

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Center for Responsible Lending

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Coalition for a Diverse Harvard

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU)

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Complete College America

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)

EduColor

Equal Justice Society

Excelencia in Education

Feminist Majority Foundation

Girls Inc.

Hispanic Federation

IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association)

Impact Fund

Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)

Japanese American Citizens League

Justice in Aging

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)

MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)

NAACP

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

National Association for College Admission Counseling

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO)

National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest)

National Center for Lesbian Rights

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National Center for Youth Law

National Council of Jewish Women

National Education Association

National Equality Action Team (NEAT)

National Hispanic Media Coalition

National Immigration Law Center

National Organization for Women

National Urban League

National Women's Law Center

New America Higher Education Program

OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates

People For the American Way

People's Collective for Justice and Liberation

Self-Help Federal Credit Union

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

Teach For America

Teach Plus

The Advocacy Institute

The Education Trust

The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS)

The Princeton Review Foundation

UnidosUS

Union for Reform Judaism

Veterans Education Success

Young Invincibles

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Footnotes:

1/ Allana Akhtar & Kiersz, A. "College Grads Still Earn More Than Workers with No University Degree. This Map Shows the States with the Widest Salary Gaps." Business Insider. July 15, 2019.

2/ National Center for Education Statistics. "College Navigator - University of California-Berkeley." Fall 2018.

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3/ National Center for Education Statistics. "College Navigator - University of California-Los Angeles." Fall 2018.

4/ Based on calculations from California Department of Education and The University of California at a Glance.

5/ Zach Bleemer. "The impact of Proposition 209 and access-oriented UC admissions policies on underrepresented UC applications, enrollment, and long-run student outcomes." UC Office of the President. August 2020.

6/ Ibid.

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[Category: CaptureV]

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