

# Pros and Cons of Affirmative Action

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Affirmative action is a policy in which the previously disadvantaged due to discrimination receive priority. It came to existence as a remedy toward discrimination and then became a problem all by itself according to some theorists, who are opponents to it. Supporters believe affirmative action should be adopted to provide equal employment opportunity, but facts show that it does not. Affirmative action is a very controversial issue, which has been debated for more than thirty years. Unlike discrimination, there are not so many laws against affirmative action, but opponents are indeed working on banning it wherever it is possible for them to do so.

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## Pros and Cons of Affirmative Action

### Brief Overview of Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action is usually defined as an active effort to improve employment or educational opportunities for members of minority groups and women or one to promote the rights or progress of other disadvantaged people. (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. Merriam-Webster, 2002)

In practice, affirmative action is taken by giving women and people from a minority group priority. For instance, a company has an opening for a bookkeeper. On determining who should be hired, the company gives women and people from a minority group priority. This could also happen with promotion: only women and people from a minority group are likely to be promoted, and with education: women and people from a minority group have better chances of obtaining grants and scholarships that would enable them to attend college.

Another way of illustrating how affirmative action is taken would be with a classroom in which some students receive a great deal of unfair punishments. One day it is brought to the teacher's attention that she will be dismissed unless unfair practices are stopped. In an attempt to correct the past unacceptable behavior, the teacher starts treating those students with some kind of preference. In the beginning this will be certainly appropriate, as those students will need to feel that they are not ill-treated anymore.

### Origin of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is believed to have come about as a remedy to the awful discrimination that regrettably used to take place. As a matter of fact, according to T.H. Anderson, (2004) in 1940 discrimination was tradition and in some states it was even law. Sad though it might now sound to us, the most educated and refined African-American did not have the rights the most illiterate and indecent white individual did (p. 2). Therefore, when discrimination became illegal in the United States, affirmative action started to take place.

By the mid-1970's minorities and women were winning significant victories, which could be seen on construction sites, exemplified by the Metro in Washington D.C. Mayor Walter...

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Commerce Business Daily ,2001-07      *Newsweek* ,2005      *Affirmative Action* Richard F. Tomasson,Faye J. Crosby,Sharon D. Herzberger,2001 Hailed at the time of its original publication as a thorough and balanced debate of one of America s most vexing political issues Affirmative Action employs a pro and con format to provide a concise introduction to this divisive debate In a new substantive introduction Richard F Tomasson offers a short history of the affirmative action debate and addresses new developments since the book s original appearance In Part One authors Crosby and Herzberger draw on state and federal court decisions federal decrees and university practices to support affirmative action to counter racial and gender bias In Part Two Tomasson cites the same kinds of evidence to argue against affirmative action programs

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