

Is Affirmative Action Still Needed?

Based on *The Racism Study Pack* from
TheThoughtfulChristian.com

Review: White Privilege

The expression *White privilege* is used to refer to the unearned advantages that are enjoyed by White people in the United States.

Examples:

- Whites are seen as the standard or norm.
- Whites have the majority of power.
- Whites have had a big head start in the race to succeed.

Tracing the History Behind Affirmative Action

1862 Emancipation Proclamation

- Effective January 1, 1863
- Affected the slaves in the states of the Confederacy – 3.5 of the 4 million U.S. slaves
- Also applied to the Executive branch of U.S. government and the Army and Navy
- Escaped slaves could no longer legally be recaptured and returned to their former owners

1865 13th Amendment

- **Outlawed chattel slavery** and involuntary servitude (except as punishment for a crime) and gave the U.S. Congress the power “to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”
- Approved in early 1864 by Senate
- Approved narrowly in January 1865 by 2/3 of Congress and finally approved by 3/4 of the 36 states in December 1865

1868 14th Amendment

- **Citizenship** - All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside.

1870 15th Amendment

- “The right of citizens of the United States to **vote** shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”
- Note: Voting was restricted to men, regardless of race
- Many southern states added requirements that prevented Black men from voting

1941 Roosevelt's Executive Order

- Executive Order 8802 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 25, 1941. It was the first federal action to promote equal opportunity and prohibit employment discrimination in the United States.
- Prohibited ethnic or racial discrimination in the nation's defense industry.
- Set up the Fair Employment Practice Committee.

1953 –Affirmative Action terminology

The Committee on Government Contract Compliance directed the Bureau of Employment Security

“to **act** positively and **affirmatively** to implement the policy of nondiscrimination.”

1961 JFK's Executive Order

- Executive Order 10925 mandated non-discrimination for federal employment and federal contractors.
- Established the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity
- Required **affirmative action** to ensure that hiring and treatment during employment was not influenced by race, creed, color, or national origin.

1964 Civil Rights Act

Created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

- Prohibits unequal application of voter registration requirements
- Prohibits racial segregation in schools and public accommodations
- Prohibits employment discrimination

How Affirmative Action Works

- Employers and schools are expected to establish plans, and act on them, to include people from groups that have historically been absent -- due to discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, age, or disability
- If a complaint is filed, the EEOC can require the company or school to show documentation of intent and results

Arguments For It

- More transparency in standards for recruitment and hiring
- More competition, broader field of applicants
- Fair to offset effects of Jim Crowism, e.g.
- Results in diversity, which improves learning and employer success through broader input

Arguments Against It

- Selection should be based on merit, not giving favor to people based on the group they are in
- It promotes reverse discrimination
- It results in resentment towards those selected, by others who were not selected
- Emphasis should go instead to better preparation in elementary and secondary schooling. Same results in the end.

Where do we go from here?

Closing Litany

- O God, you alone are good and holy.
All: Your love is everlasting.
- Come, let us praise God for the richness of creation.
All: Thank you, God.
- For rich cultures and creative spirits
All: Thank you, God.
- For the church into which we have been called
All: Thank you, God.
- Most of all for your love shown through Jesus Christ.
All: We thank and praise you for your goodness to us.
- Give thanks to the Lord, who is good.
All: God's love endures forever. Amen