

& Asian Americans Pacific Islanders (AAPI) AFFIRMATIVE ACTION



Asian Americans Support Affirmative Action

- In 1996, 61% of AAPI voters in California voted against Proposition 209, an initiative that banned affirmative action programs in the state.
- In 2006, 75% of AAPI voters in Michigan voted against Proposition 2, a measure similar to Prop. 209 that banned affirmative action programs in Michigan.
- 63.1% of AAPIs indicated that affirmative action “is a good thing” when surveyed by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

BEWARE THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH

The stereotype that AAPIs are superminorities who have succeeded through hard work and education, ignores the diversity within the AAPI community, denies that AAPIs have suffered and still suffer racial discrimination (Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese American Internment, glass ceilings, hate crimes, post- 9/11 backlash, etc.) and pits AAPIs against other communities of color. This myth is divisive, misleading and harmful!

Asian Americans Face Disparities in Education and Employment

- Only 12% of Laotian Americans and 14% of Hmong and Cambodian Americans hold bachelor’s degrees or higher compared with 31% of Caucasians.
- 10.7% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders do not have high school diplomas, only 14.4% have Bachelor’s degrees and only 4% have advanced degrees.
- 6.26% of the federal workforce is of AAPI descent but only 4.52% of employees in senior pay grades in the federal workforce are AAPI, compared to 83.14% of Caucasians in senior pay grades.
- In the private sector, although AAPIs make up 5.5% of the professional workforce, only 4.2% hold management positions and only 2.8% hold professional positions, compared to Caucasians who make up 88.1% of management positions and 79.9% of professional positions.
- AAPI women hold 0.3% of Fortune 500 board seats compared to the 12.7% held by Caucasian women; and AAPI men hold 1.8% of board seats compared to the 74.5% held by Caucasian men.
- 31% of the AAPI workforce has faced employment discrimination, the largest percentage of any racial or ethnic group.
- Less than 2% of American college presidents are AAPI (and AAPI women are only 20% of this small group).

How Do Affirmative Action Programs Benefit AAPIs?

Affirmative action programs help level the playing field for AAPIs in sectors such as employment and contracting, and help AAPIs break through glass ceilings that prevent them from being promoted to leadership positions in government and corporate sectors. For example, AAPIs benefit from affirmative action in federal contracting through Executive Order 11246.

How Have AAPIs Benefitted from Affirmative Action?

- Thanks to **affirmative action programs**, minority-owned businesses among AAPIs increased.
 - In the 1980’s, AAPI construction firms in San Francisco received less than 1% of the city’s construction contracts, even though AAPI firms made up 20% of the available pool. Only after an affirmative action plan was instituted did AAPI participation increase.

How AAPIs Benefitted from Affirmative Action continued...

- Thanks to affirmative action employment programs, the presence of AAPIs in police and fire departments, government offices, the mass media, law firms, management and university and social science and humanities departments increased.
 - In the 1970's there were only a handful of AAPI officers on the San Francisco Police Department. Because of affirmative action there were nearly three hundred AAPI officers in 1996.
 - After California adopted its civil service affirmative action programs in 1977, AAPIs achieved labor force parity in 11 of 19 state job categories.
 - In 1992, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center represented AAPI police officers in a suit against the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for failing to employ a diverse workforce. The suit resulted in a settlement that lasted until 2003 and led to a greatly diversified work force.

Doesn't Affirmative Action for Other Minorities Result in Discrimination against AAPIs in University Admissions? No! Studies have shown that AAPIs are harmed by "negative action," which is not the same as affirmative action. Negative action is when AAPIs are held to a higher standard than Caucasians, without any legitimate rationale. Negative action against AAPIs does not result from affirmative action for other minorities. "In fact, in cases of proven racial disparities between APA and White admission rates, the causes have been either stereotypical treatment of APA applicants or other preferences, such as that for alumni children, who tend to be predominantly White." (*Beyond Self Interest: Asian Pacific Americans toward a Community of Justice*, Professors Gabriel Chin, Sumi Cho, Jerry Kang and Frank Wu). We can simultaneously reject negative action and embrace affirmative action!

Filipinos and Affirmative Action

Before Prop. 209 banned affirmative action in California, Filipinos were given consideration under Berkeley Law School's (Boalt) affirmative action program, as were some other AAPI sub-groups. Between 1994 and 1996, thirteen Filipinos were enrolled at Boalt. **After the passage of Proposition 209, Filipino Americans (like African Americans) were "zeroed out" at Boalt.**

AAPIs have yet to achieve parity...

It was only in 2009 that the first Chinese American woman was appointed as a federal judge.

Since the late 1990's, there have been no tenured or tenure-track AAPI professors at USC Law School.

AAPI college faculty have some of the lowest tenure rates of all racial and ethnic groups. The highest ratio of non-tenure track appointments- more than 30%- belongs to AAPIs.

“When Asian-Americans manage to do well, their success is used against others. Internally, it is used to erase the continuing poverty and social dislocation within Asian-American communities...External to our communities, our successes are used to deny racism and to put down other groups. African-Americans and Latinos and poor Whites are told, 'look at those Asians--anyone can make it in this country if they really try.'”

- Mari Matsuda, "We Will Not Be Used,"
Law Professor, University of Hawaii Law School

“It is possible, of course, for reasonable people to have different opinions about the fairness and effectiveness of affirmative action. It would not be productive, however, for us to believe that Asian Americans must oppose Blacks and Latinos, as the face of the nation changes profoundly and irrevocably. We can and must do better, by building bridges among all of us who share a vision of a diverse democracy.”

- Frank H. Wu, Chancellor and Dean of UC Hastings School of Law, and William Kidder, University of California, Riverside

Please Support Our Affirmative Action Efforts!

To sign onto our amicus brief and position statement contact **Meredith Higashi** by email at mhigashi@advancingequality.org