

Affirmative action was originally designed to help minorities, but women-especially white women-have made the greatest gains as a result of these programs” (Gross, 1996). Affirmative action is a growing argument among our society. It is multifaceted and very often defined vaguely. Many people define affirmative action as the ability to strive for equality and inclusiveness. Others might see it as a quota-based system for different minority groups. I agree and support affirmative actions in that individual’s should be treated equally. I feel affirmative action as an assurance that the best qualified person will receive the job.

Is affirmative action fair? In 1974, a woman named Rose was truned down for a supervisory job in favor of a male. She was told that she was the most qualified person, but the position was going to be filled by a man, because he had a family to support. Five years before that, when Rose was about to fill an entry-level position in banking, a personnel officer outlined the woman’s pay scale, which was \$25 to \$50 month less than what men were being payed for the same position. Rose was furious because she felt this was descriminating to her. She confronted the personnel officer and he saw nothing wrong with it. Thanks to affirative action today things like these situations are becoming more rare and/or corrected more quickly. Affirmative action has definately helped women and minorities in their careers, but it has yet to succed in the goal of equality to the fullest for the business world to woment and minorities.

“Some observers argue that women have made huge strides! with the help of affirmative action. They now hold 40 percent of all corporate middle-management jobs, and the number of women-owned businesses has grown by 57 percent since 1982” (Blackwood, 1995). “Affirmative action was desinged to give qualified minorities a chance to compete on equal footing with Whites” (Chappell, 1995). Equal opportunities for the blacks, for the most part, has remained more wishful-thinking than fact. Black students are continuing to struggle to seek an education, black business owners are still competing against their White counterparts, and black workers are experienceing an unemployment rate twice that of Whites and hold dead-end, labor-intensive, low-paying jobs. “Few

can argue that racism is still rampant in awarding contracts, jobs, and educational opportunities, even though it's been proven beneficial to have people of different races with different ideas and different experiences working toward the same goal" (Chappell, 1995). The employment outlook for minorities is grim, but not hopeless. We definitely need affirmative action to overcome the disparities of employment that exist in this country. A recent Urban Benchmarks' study found that of 71 metro areas surveyed nationwide, Pittsburgh had the highest rate of employment-related problems among non-Hispanic whites between the ages of 25 and 54 and the sixth highest rate among African Americans in the same age group. We have a lot of problems with basic education here and if you don't have basic education, you have no chance of getting a good job because competition is increasing for everyone. We must make sure that we educate our potential work force, including minorities, or our competitive edge, if we have one, will continue to decline in global markets. Many jobs today are in the technician and technologist area. "Jobs require more than a high-school diploma, but less than a four-year degree--such as an associate degree or certificate from a vocational or trade school" (Kovatch, 1996). As more and more women faced discrimination in large firms, more decided to strike out on their own.

In conclusion, most Americans know that the deck is stacked against poor kids. They also realize that, because of past discrimination, an extraordinary number of those facing unequal opportunities are black. So, while 75 percent of Americans oppose racial preferences, according to a 1995 Washington Post/ABC poll, two-thirds with to "change" affirmative action programs rather than "do away with them entirely". But the public also realized that, in real life, the legacy of discrimination is not always so neat. It is diffuse, and it requires a broader remedy.

#### Bibliography

"A Question of Fairness" Ladies Home Journal, March 1996, p 17-20.  
Boston, Thomas. "Ready, Aim, Fire" Black Enterprise. March 1996, p 24.  
Chappell, Kevin. "What They Don't Tell You About Affirmative Action" Ebony

August 1995, p 6-12.

“Clinton’s Focus on Diversity” U.S. News and World Report. March 20, 1995, p. 42.

Cooper, Matthew. “Affirmative Action on Ever-Thinning Ice.” American Enterprise, January/February 1996, p. 27-33.

Dundul, Tom. “Affirmative Action.” Working Women, October 1995, p 39-43.

Lavery, Mark. “Down but Not Out.” Black Enterprise, September 1995, p15.

Lubman, Sarah “Campus Admissions” Wall Street Journal, May 16, p81.

Rilland, Ralph. “The Jobs of the Future”. Pittsburg Business Times, April 1996, p72-81.

“Women’s Answer to Special Preferences Not All Affirmative” Business Journal, May 1995, p6.xxx