

Description: A look at the effect of Affirmative Action programs on the advancement of the Hispanic Minority, the views of Hispanics toward the program, and specific Hispanic groups working alongside the cause.

Keywords: Affirmative Action, Hispanic, Latino, Underrepresentation

Key Points:

- Hispanics remain underrepresented in many areas
- There has been some progress made in the percentage of Hispanics in higher education
- Hispanics tend to support Affirmative Action though to a lesser extent than Blacks.
- Many Hispanic interest groups continue to fight for the cause and push back against legislation that would be detrimental to the program.

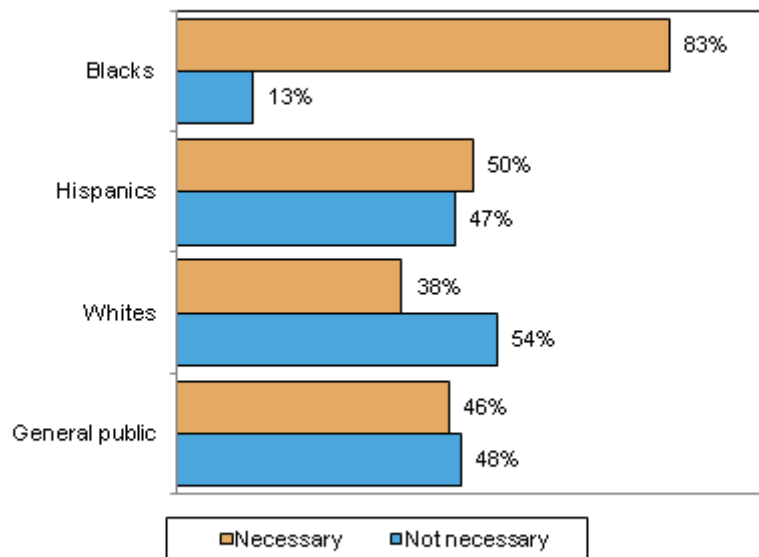
Affirmative Action had its roots in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. It was established for the purposes of preventing "discrimination, and to address stereotypical thinking and biases that still impede employment opportunity" (DOL Website.) It can be described as the positive steps taken towards the recruitment of qualified underrepresented individuals into the workplace and academic spheres. The original goal of the initiative was to "level the playing field" to encourage minorities into higher level positions.



Many point to the persistent underrepresentation of minorities in politics and education as reasons to continue the use of this program. Currently there are 29 Hispanic members of congress, equating to about 5.4% of total membership, despite the fact that Hispanics make up about 16.3% of the total population. Hispanics also continue to be underrepresented in higher education,

though the percentage of Hispanic people graduating from college is on the rise. For example, in 1990 only 4.7% of people earning Associate's degrees were Hispanic, however by 2006 about 12.6% of these graduates were Hispanic. Whites remain the majority of graduates, hovering at around 70% in all categories while Blacks continue to be the second highest amount of graduate. Hispanics are currently the third highest degree-receiving group (US Embassy.)

These days, do you think it is necessary to have affirmative action programs to make sure companies have racially diverse work forces, or don't you think it's necessary?

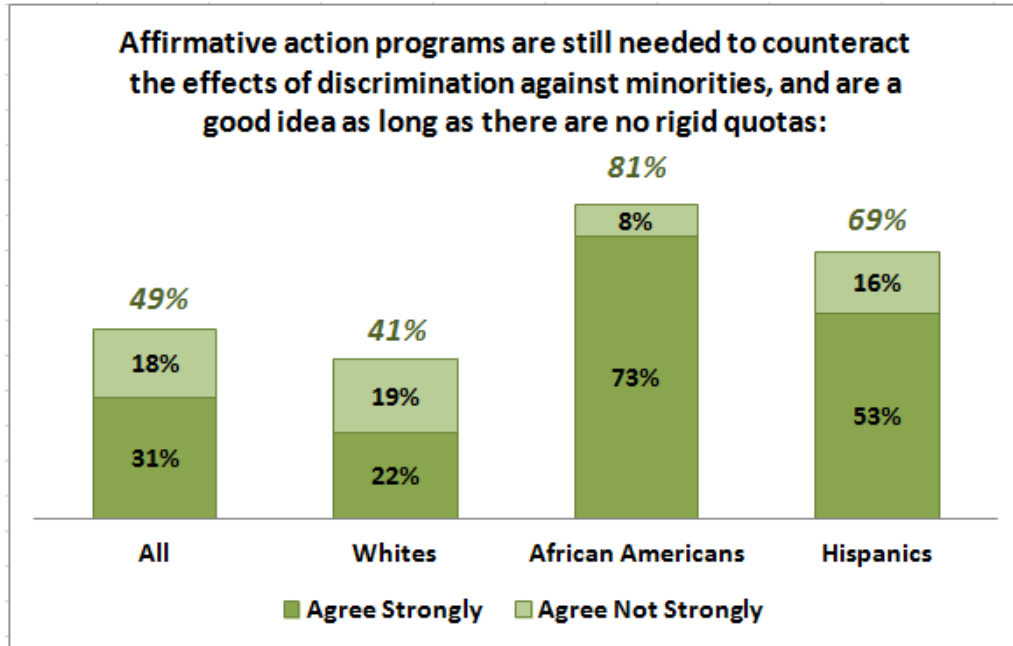


Source: CBS News 2/00

Source:<http://www.publicagenda.org/chart 1>

According to the Pew Research Group, 77% of Hispanics are in favor of the use of Affirmative Action Programs in college admissions. They later reported however that, while 88% of Hispanics are indifferent to the program, only 4% of Hispanics believed themselves to be directly helped by an affirmative action program, while 8% reported being directly hurt by an affirmative action program. Still

however, the majority of Hispanics continually support the use of Affirmative Action to counteract the effects of racism in the United States, though they see it as a much less pressing need than Blacks.



http://opportunityagenda.org/public_opin 1

Affirmative Action is still highly contested in the courts and culture of America. The program was upheld in a recent lawsuit, Grutter Vs. Bollinger, was filed against the University of Michigan Law School after a white prospective student was denied admission. She argued that this decision was made on the basis of race, violating the 14th amendment of the United States and that preferential treatment of minorities, namely Blacks and Hispanics, is discriminatory and unconstitutional. In response to the suit, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) issued a press release saying:

“The Latino student is at a disadvantage from the first day he or she enters the school system... The 2000 Census demonstrated an extraordinary growth of the Latino community, particularly in the school population; yet 70 percent of Latino students are concentrated in low-income, urban schools...This educational crisis affects not only Hispanics, but our nation's employers and retirees who will increasingly depend on the Hispanic population to be better prepared for employment, which means that they will be able to pay into the social security system. There are ample studies correlating the completion of university programs with higher income. It is therefore critical for Latinos

to continue having access to these programs, especially given the disadvantages they experience in K-12.”

There is continued support among the Hispanic community for Affirmative Action programs, though this can mainly be attributed to the continued underrepresentation of Hispanics in higher lever jobs. Around 33% of Hispanics are considered to live below the poverty line while only about 11% of Whites match this description. This disparity in income level and education are said to be the main factors in behind the continued need for Affirmative Action in the Latino community.

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Minorities and Affirmative Action: http://www.ethnicmajority.com/affirmative_action.htm