

Affirmative Action Goes Down in Flames in Deep Blue California

Even in the deepest of deep blue progressive states, it appears racial preferences are unpopular once voters go into the voting booth.

On Tuesday, Californians rejected Proposition 16, a ballot measure that would have essentially ended California's decadeslong ban on racial preferences for government and public institutions.

This ban was enacted by Proposition 209, which was passed in 1996. It mandated, according to [Ballotpedia](#), that the state of California "cannot discriminate against or grant preferential treatment on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, and public contracting."

Proposition 16 would have officially allowed state institutions to return to the policies of affirmative action.

But despite the seeming headwinds in a year of protests, riots, and the 1619 Project—which essentially posits that America was founded on slavery and racism—Proposition 16 went down in defeat.

Its proponents say the issue was defeated because of [unclear ballot language and messaging](#). Even if that was even a little bit true, it's hard to see the double-digit defeat in one of the bluest states in the union as anything less than a rebuke and a landslide.

As I [highlighted](#) in my roundup of ballot initiatives around the country, affirmative action undermines the concept of

equal rights.

There is also little evidence it provides a real boon to struggling minorities, and in many cases makes things worse.

There was certainly evidence of this following the passage of Proposition 209, as a Heritage Foundation paper [noted](#) of college admissions in 2015:

While minority students did drop from 58.6 percent of the student body to 48.7 percent, white students made up a bare majority, and Asian-Americans came in second at 38 percent. What happened to the other minorities?

They went to institutions like UC-San Diego, UC-Riverside, and UC-Santa Cruz. These schools are all part of the prestigious University of California System, attended by only the top 12.5 percent of California high school graduates.

At UC-Riverside, the results were impressive: African-American and Hispanic student admissions skyrocketed by 42 percent and 31 percent, respectively. Failure rates collapsed, and grades improved.

When affirmative action became a popular issue in the 1960s and 1970s, it was billed as a way to give black Americans a leg up following the passage of the Civil Rights Act. But over time, many Americans concluded that swapping out racial discrimination with more racial discrimination was the wrong way to go about things.

But with the left moving away from equality to “equity,” which switches out equal rights for the concept of equal outcomes, it seems that issues like affirmative action may be back on the table.

It certainly works well with the ideology of so-called anti-racists like Ibram X. Kendi, who has received an enormous amount of press and money in the last year to preach his ideas

to the American people.

Kendi has been quite open about the fact that he thinks [racial discrimination is a good thing](#) if, in his judgment, it levels modern and historic inequities between races.

Proposition 16 was a perfect example of a convergence between the so-called anti-racist social justice warriors and “woke” corporations.

It makes perfect sense that in a year of nonstop sermonizing by the media that America is a structurally racist country that affirmative action would be back on the menu for state policy.

The proposition received backing from a slew of corporate entities. This list includes Facebook, Uber, Lyft, United Airlines, Wells Fargo, Kaiser Permanente, and many more.

Twitter was also on this list. No surprise since Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has given [millions](#) to Kendi’s center of anti-racism at Boston University.

Proposition 16 even got endorsements from most of the San Francisco Bay Area’s professional sports teams, like the San Francisco 49ers, San Francisco Giants, Golden State Warriors, and Oakland Athletics.

Believe me, as a native of Oakland, it pains me to see my beloved A’s on this list.

But even with all that backing and support, Prop 16 went down by a pretty wide margin. It was deeply [unpopular outside](#) of only the most far left-wing bastions.

There can certainly be many reasons for this rebuke. Perhaps even many left-leaning Californians worry that a law allowing racial discrimination will ultimately hurt themselves and their children.

But as we've seen in [many parts of the country](#), despite the nonstop drum beat [from the press](#), and protests and riots around the country, a huge number of Americans still reject the poisonous ideologies of critical race theory and anti-racism.

They still cling, even if tenuously, to the principles of 1776.

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