

THE AMERICAN DREAM IS JUST A DREAM FOR MOST MINORITIES

America is the land of opportunity. If I work hard enough, I can be whatever I want to be. If I truly want something, I can get it.

These statements portray the American dream. We can all remember hearing these statements and maybe even believing them at some point in our childhood, but now they seem almost comical.

The American dream seems a little more difficult to attain when the American dreaming is a member of a minority group living in poverty. This is not to say that the dream of success and money is unattainable for certain people. It is just incredibly more difficult to achieve when one is faced with certain obstacles that others do not have to overcome.

The truth about American society is not pretty, and the facts prove it. According to the United States census Bureau, blacks are twice as likely to be poor compared to other races, and eight times as likely to be imprisoned. Blacks are also three times more likely to be convicted of drug violations than whites. Only 75 percent of blacks have received post-high school education, compared to 85 percent of whites. Not surprisingly, blacks on average also make less money than whites. Therefore, racially speaking, there must be something wrong with our society.

What are the racial problems that exist today? Well, racism is not as strikingly obvious as it was back in the good old days, but it is still very prevalent. Have you heard of parents who don't want, or even won't allow, their child to marry someone from another race? How about all those white families flocking from a suburban town once they find out that too many minorities are moving in? Or maybe you've walked into a restaurant and seen a woman clutch her purse for dear life with eyes intensely focused on you as you pass by, simply because your skin is dark. There are several examples of racism that go on everyday, whether it's in Congress, the White House, or the classroom.

In order to achieve racial justice in our society, we need to make some drastic changes starting with the individual citizens of this country. Most people on either side of the affirmative action argument agree that improvement of K-12 education is a major step in bringing about social equality. Racism stems from ignorance, and our greatest hope for an equal and tolerant society is continued education and racial integration starting at a young age.

Regardless, even if we had the solution today, it would take years to implement on a national scale, or even longer, to see the results of such a miraculous program. Until that day arrives, affirmative action is still the best way to make up for social injustices based on race, while maintaining culturally diverse college campuses across America. This diversity is especially crucial in institutions of higher education (Ivy leagues, MIT, Stanford, etc) where a large number of tomorrow's leaders and business executives will be in an environment with educated people from all backgrounds, helping to dispel stereotypes and racism. Recently, a hot topic in the news has been whether affirmative action has served its purpose in providing racial equality. Allow me to bring one more interesting fact to the table to reinforce why affirmative action is still needed.

A group of researchers from MIT and the University of Chicago School of Business carried out a test in order to determine whether applicants with black-sounding names received fair treatment while applying for jobs. The results were staggering. The researchers in the study submitted 5,000 resumes to 1,250 advertisers in Boston and Chicago looking for administrative and sales help. In both cities, applicants with "white sounding names"

received 50 percent more responses from companies than their black-sounding counterparts with equal credentials.

This directly relates to affirmative action in college admissions as a way to help counteract discrimination when entering the job market.../

Most importantly, affirmative action acts as a part of the solution to the ongoing problem of racial injustice in our society. It is by no means the answer. Affirmative action will never fully counteract the racism and stereotyping that exists in society. However, it does, and will continue to, produce culturally aware campuses, which in turn produce culturally aware people.

Philip M. Deutsch, The Tech-online edition, [Issue 3 : Tuesday, February 11, 2003](#)