

## **Issue Brief: Latinos and Affirmative Action**

### **Key Words**

Affirmative Action, Latinos, Education, Wealth, Immigrants

### **Description**

This issue brief will discuss Latinos and their involvement with affirmative action. This issue brief will also highlight the positive correlation of wealth and education and subsequently show that Latinos are disproportionately disadvantaged.

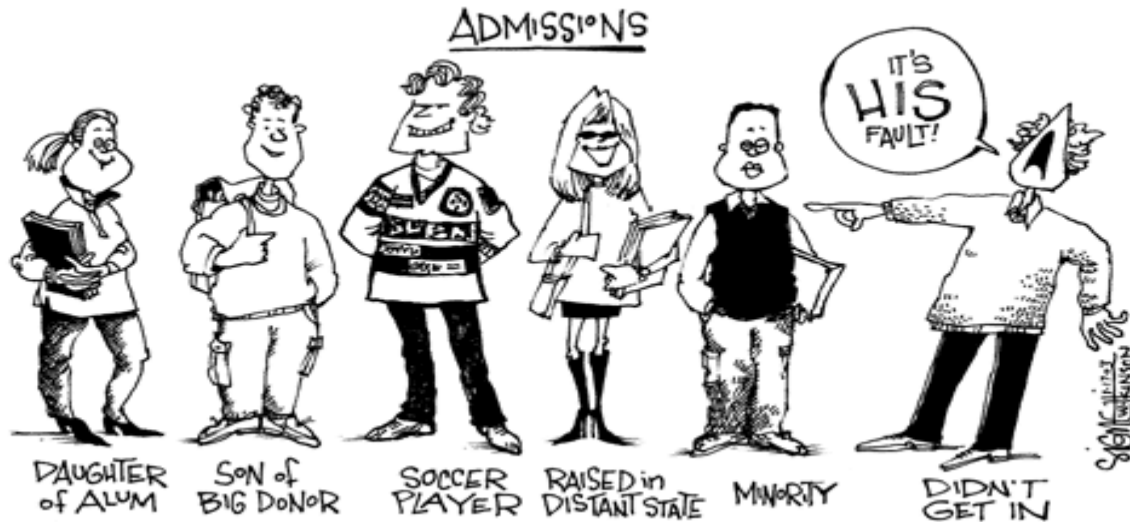
### **Key Points**

- Definition of affirmative action
- The positive correlation between money and education
- Is affirmative action helpful? Affirmative action only applies to students entering college but a disproportionate amount of Latinos do not even make it to college.
- Many Latinos are not eligible for affirmative action because of immigration status.

### **Issue Brief**

Affirmative action stems from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, and gender. If discrimination occurs, according to Title VII of the Act, a judge is allowed use affirmative action to rectify these occurrences. Title VII did not originally specify what kind of affirmative action should be taken. In the late 1960s, Title VII manifested itself into President Nixon's Philadelphia Plan which set racial quotas for federally funded construction projects. Since then, the boundaries of Title VII have expanded to the college admission process. Affirmative action in the college admissions realm has remained a hotly debated subject, however, those for and against affirmative action both agree that there is a positive correlation between money and education and that affirmative action is just a temporary

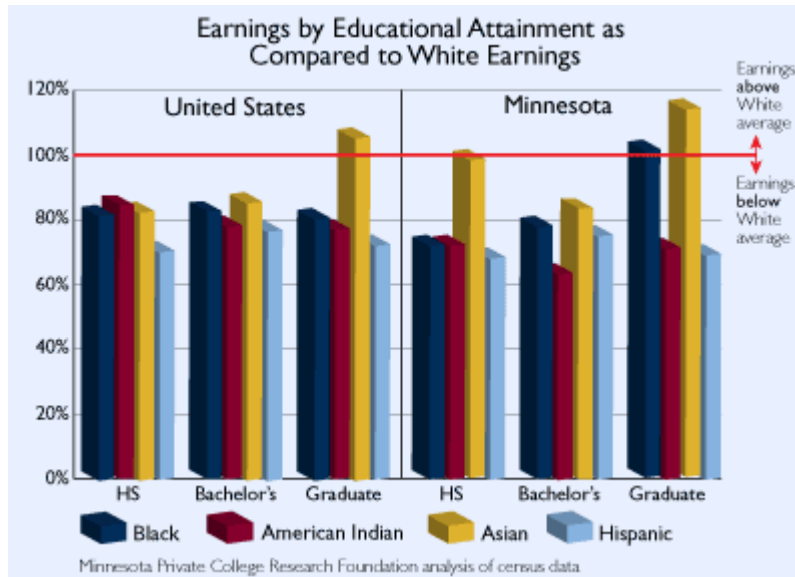
fix in lieu of extensive primary school reformation. Latinos are a group that are and have been as a whole disadvantaged and affirmative action tries to rectify this reality.



The positive correlation between money earned and schooling achieved therefore implies a negative correlation between being poor and uneducated. According to the US Census, in 2007 21.5 percent of Latinos lived below the official poverty line compared to only 8.2 percent of white people. 17 percent of white households have a six figure household income compared to only 7 percent of Latinos. Census statistics of the population who have at least a high school diploma reports that only 58.4 percent of Latinos fit in to this statistic compared to 90 percent of whites. About 88 percent of all households in the top 5 percent earning bracket are white compared to only 5 percent that are Latino.

If only 58.4 percent of all Latinos have at least a high school diploma, that means that 41.6 percent of all Latinos have not even graduated high school. Even if you do not take into account those Latinos who have graduated high school and do not go on to college, at least 41.6 percent of Latinos are not even eligible to receive affirmative action benefits. Latinos make up 15.4 percent of the US population while whites make up about 70 percent. Combining these

statistics, that means that 189 million whites are eligible to attend college compared to only 19.2 million Latinos.



The relative amount of Latinos who go on to college is even smaller when taking into account the number of undocumented Latino immigrants. As of now, students are not protected from deportation if they are found to be illegally residing in the United States. The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM) would have allowed for those under 30 to qualify for permanent resident status if they completed high school and at least two years of college. This act did not pass Congress and therefore students classified as illegal aliens still risk deportation. However, even if DREAM did pass, the act does not allow for illegal immigrants to receive federally funded scholarships.

There is a higher correlation between being poor and uneducated than being rich and uneducated but there is also a higher correlation between being Latino and poor than being white and poor. While debate about whether or not affirmative action based on race is fair is heated,

most both sides agree that students who are economically disadvantaged should receive extra benefits.

### **General References**

*Issues in Race and Ethnicity*. Washington D.C.: CQ, 2009. Print.

United States Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/>

<http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/>

### **Websites**

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/hsgec.pdf>

[http://latinostories.com/Latino Facts and Statistics/Census Stats Latinos/Education Statistics.  
htm](http://latinostories.com/Latino_Facts_and_Statistics/Census_Stats_Latinos/Education_Statistics.htm)

<http://latino.sscnet.ucla.edu/research/iup/aa.html>