

# Prejudice





# Prejudice

Crystal McCage, *Book Editor*

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## INTRODUCTION

Prejudice is essentially any negative attitude held by a member of one group of people toward another group. Typically, people are subjected to prejudice because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. In the United States, people in these categories—with sexual orientation being the exception in many cases—are protected from discrimination in schools, the workplace, and elsewhere by the rights spelled out in laws and in the U.S. Constitution.

While institutional prejudice can be protected against, personal prejudices are more subtle and harder to combat. For example, research has shown that persons responsible for hiring decisions have unconscious prejudices that influence them. One study showed that employers made assumptions that people who spoke with a Southern accent were less intelligent than those who did not. Because such prejudices are often unconscious, they are difficult to change.

Many studies have attempted to determine the origins of prejudicial attitudes. Some such attitudes are definitely learned. Children raised in a household where parents dislike a particular minority, for example, grow up hearing disparaging comments about that minority. They may then find themselves believing what their parents believe. The same is true of the influence of peer groups: A young person may absorb the beliefs of an influential friend and begin expressing such beliefs as his or her own.

New research, however, is showing that prejudice may also be an innate part of the human brain. Essentially, humans may categorize other humans into groups without thinking about it. This response may have helped early humans survive by enabling them to determine quickly who was an enemy and who was a friend. Although this research sheds light on the origins of prejudice, it does not offer a justification for prejudicial behavior. People can clearly learn to overcome prejudice, whatever its origins.



*In a display of prejudice, the Ku Klux Klan burns a cross, showing their enmity toward African Americans.*

Most people agree that prejudice must be actively discouraged, but vigorous debate has arisen over the question of how best to do so. Some believe prejudice is best addressed through legislation, such as affirmative action programs that actively recruit minorities and women into the workplace, and educational institutions. Others believe that education and awareness can effectively combat prejudice. Many schools in the United States present multicultural curricula and diversity training programs to make students aware of prejudice and to discuss ways that prejudice can be minimized.

These combined efforts may be working. In a 2007 poll, the vast majority of Americans expressed a willingness to vote for either a woman or a minority presidential candidate. In 2008 Barack Obama made history as the first black major-party presi-

dential candidate in the United States. Then, on November 8, 2008, Obama broke long-standing political and social barriers by becoming the first black president in U.S. history. This development would have been unheard of even fifty years ago in the United States.

Understanding prejudice is essential to a pluralistic society, one in which people of varying cultures and beliefs coexist in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. The authors featured in *Issues That Concern You: Prejudice* explore many facts of the issue, examining various causes and examples of prejudice as well as potential solutions for reducing or eliminating prejudicial attitudes and actions.

In addition, the volume includes a bibliography, a list of organizations to contact for further information, and other useful appendixes. The appendix titled “What You Should Know About Prejudice” offers vital facts about prejudice and how it affects young people. The appendix “What You Should Do About Prejudice” discusses various solutions to the problem of discrimination. These many useful features make *Issues That Concern You: Prejudice* a valuable resource. Given the growing costs of prejudice to society, having a greater understanding of this issue is critical.



# Prejudice Is Real in the United States

Steve Coll

The roots of racial tension run deep in the South. In the following article Steve Coll uses a school in Jena, Louisiana, as a launching point for arguing that prejudice remains deeply rooted in the American South. Coll concludes that just being black places one at a disadvantage in many ways in the United States. Coll is a Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist and managing editor of *The Washington Post*.





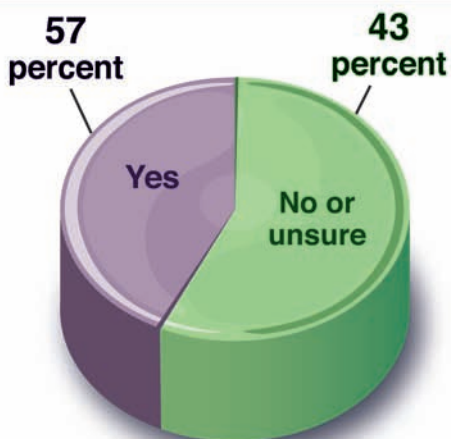
*Widespread protests against the Jena Six convictions in Jena, Louisiana, were sparked by the Internet and black radio.*



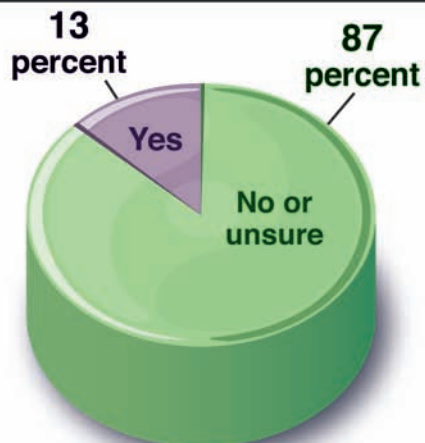
## Most Americans See Racism in Others

A recent CNN poll shows that most Americans have a hard time seeing racism in themselves yet can identify it in others. When asked if they knew someone whom they thought was racist, 43 percent of whites said yes. However, just 13 percent of whites considered themselves racially biased. Researchers stress that these numbers indicate that people are blind to their own biases.

**Do you know someone who is racist?**



**Are you racially biased?**







# Prejudice Is Often Unconscious

**Chris de Morsella**

Chris de Morsella is chief operating officer of the Multicultural Advantage, a Web site that provides resources on diversity in the workplace and diversity recruiting effectiveness for companies. In this viewpoint Morsella points out that subconscious prejudices can be harmful. He argues that awareness of prejudice is the important first step in doing something about it.

Even though implicit prejudice may arise from below our level of awareness it still has a very real impact on our behavior, on how we view others and act towards them. As long as it remains hidden within the unconscious and is ignored by society it will continue to act upon us in a negative manner. It is little comfort to the victims of prejudice that the prejudice was probably unconscious. It still means that they are unfairly passed over for promotions, refused interviews based on their names, denied bank loans, and refused opportunities to view homes they want to purchase.

Prejudice that is implicit still has the same harmful effect as prejudice which is consciously practiced to those who suffer because of it. It is a very real problem to the people it affects, even if those, whose attitudes and actions are influenced by it may be unaware themselves of the nature of their behavior and their attitudes.

Chris de Morsella, "Implicit Prejudice Unconsciously Colors Our World," The Multicultural Advantage, 2007. Reproduced by author's permission. [www.multiculturaladvantage.com](http://www.multiculturaladvantage.com).



## What Can Be Done to Combat Implicit Prejudice?

Some may be asking themselves: How can we know it exists or measure it if it arises from the unconscious? Unconscious attitudes and stereotypes can be teased out into the open by a technique that relies on measuring how test subjects respond to associations of value-laden words with visual images. Computer-based implicit association tests (IAT) can reveal the presence of this kind of unconscious prejudice within test subjects. These kinds of tests, first developed by University of Washington professor Anthony Greenwald, measure split-second differentials in reaction times to a series of associative memory questions that pair value laden word phrases with visual stimuli. For example, computer programs assess the degree to which people associate positive and negative words with different ethnic groups.

*Harvard's Project Implicit has found that ordinary people sometimes have negative associations toward particular groups even though they report having no such biases.*





Testing for implicit prejudice is a controversial subject with some critics maintaining that these types of tests do not really measure unconscious prejudice, but only harmless cultural knowledge. However a meta-analysis by Greenwald and [Mahzarin] Banaji across 61 studies has shown that IAT test results predicted judgments, opinions and behavior linked to stereotyping and prejudice better than expressed attitudes could. This conclusion is also backed up by other studies, including a University of Colorado study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* in 1997: “Evidence for Racial Prejudice at the Implicit Level and Its Relationship With Questionnaire Measures” by Bernd Wittenbrink, Charles M. Judd, and Bernadette Park.

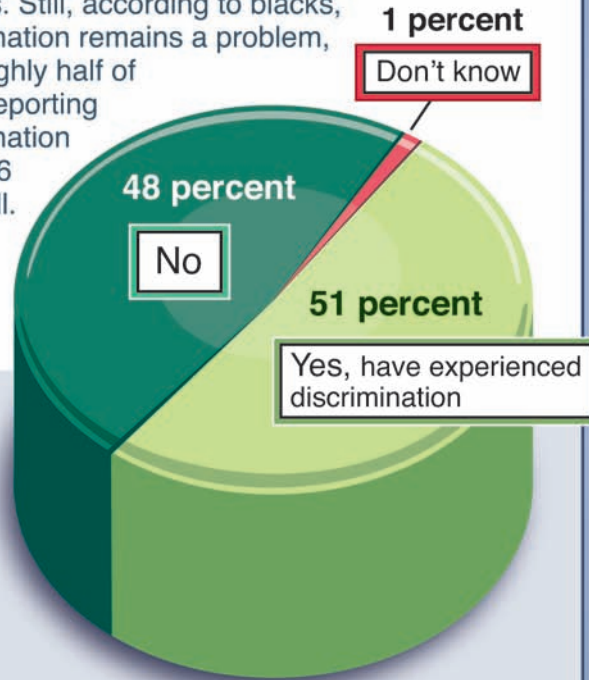
At Harvard’s Project Implicit web site you can test yourself on 14 different measures of implicit prejudice and find out if you automatically favor people with light skin over dark skin or young over old, for example. Even genuinely egalitarian people may find that the test results reveal a hidden prejudice that they are not aware of, a prejudice that arises from below the level of our awareness.

Discovering the existence of unconscious stereotypic attitudes within ourselves can be an unsettling experience especially for those of us who on a conscious level see themselves as being mostly free of prejudicial behavior. However it also has the potential to help us look into ourselves and begin the process of disentangling who we consciously choose to be from these hidden signaling systems that lie buried beneath our awareness. By becoming aware of our own implicit prejudices, we can help our conscious attitudes take charge.

As social psychologist Mahzarin Banaji of the Harvard faculty says in “Making case for concept of ‘implicit prejudice,’” “We’ve found that ordinary people, including ourselves, harbor negative associations toward particular social groups on ‘implicit’ measures of bias, even though they honestly report having no such bias at the conscious level,” says Banaji. And this bias is hardly inconsequential, she says: Implicit attitudes, they have found, predict behavior, from simple acts of friendliness and inclusion to judgments of “goodness” or evaluation of the quality of work.

## Roughly Half of Blacks Say They Have Been Discriminated Against

More people in the United States are beginning to understand the problems associated with prejudice and bias. Still, according to blacks, discrimination remains a problem, with roughly half of blacks reporting discrimination in a 2006 CNN poll.



Taken from: CNN poll, December 2006. [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com).

### Prejudice Can Be Overcome

It is fair to say that all of us form our conscious views based, at least partially, on unconscious processes of which we are consciously unaware. This is how our brains work and in many cases this rapid fire means of arriving at a judgment or adopting an attitude may be harmless or even very beneficial. Certainly it played an important role in our survival in our natural prehistorical habitat, much as the shadow of a hawk's wing causes a rabbit to run for cover. However, when the unexamined mind leads us to behave in a manner that is harmful to others we should shine

the light of self-examination onto the hidden processes that lie within and that generate the ill behavior.

There's no way to wipe out all the years of evolution during which humans and their ancestors learned to fear the unfamiliar, to be ready to flee from or fight at any threat. But fortunately our brains are flexible enough to be altered by experience. Much in the same way that we consciously can break a bad-eating habit, for example, by catching ourselves when we reach for the junk food without thinking and consciously habituating ourselves to eat healthier foods, we can also consciously address these hidden prejudices that color our worlds. The first step in doing so, is becoming aware that we may in fact have what Mahzarin Banaji has termed—using jargon borrowed from the world of computer programming—mind bug or mistakes in perception that give rise to unconscious forms of prejudice.

# Prejudice May Be Physiological

**Robert Burton**

Author Robert Burton is the former chief of neurology at Mount Zion University of California at San Francisco Hospital. Burton overviews new research on the brain that indicates prejudice is natural in human beings and explains how our brains group and classify. This research contradicts assertions that prejudice is learned. However, he asserts that, while we should not pretend we are free from bias, it is not acceptable to act on that bias. Burton argues that when we are aware of our prejudices we can still make moral decisions about how to treat others.

I am stuck in rush-hour traffic. Maybe I can find a decent radio program to distract myself from the blasting horns, angry looks and cussing behind rolled-up windows. But the radio is worse than the traffic. On NPR, a Washington think tank guru is arguing that “my 30-plus years of studying the Middle East has convinced me that democracy is more appropriate for some cultures than others.” A second NPR station is airing a debate on the medical rights of “illegal aliens.” On Fox, Bill O’Reilly is talking about a recent dinner in Harlem, N.Y., with Al Sharpton: “I couldn’t get over the fact that there was no difference between Sylvia’s

Robert Burton, “We’re Prejudiced, Now What?” *Salon*, October 31, 2007. This article first appeared in *Salon* at [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com). An online version remains in the *Salon* archives. Reprinted with permission.

restaurant and any other restaurant in New York City. I mean, it was exactly the same, even though it's run by blacks."

## **Social Science Struggles to Explain Prejudice**

Everywhere I turn, someone is honking at the other guy. Once upon a time, when psychology was king of the behavioral hill, I thought that prejudice could be explained by upbringing, cultural influences, socioeconomic disparities and plain old wrong thinking. Despite any hard evidence from soft sciences, I nursed the vaguely optimistic belief that education and the teaching of tolerance might make a dent in the bigotry and racism of "others." And yet sitting in stalled traffic, I cannot shake the irrational feeling that "those in the other cars" are different from "us in our car." If my mind seems intent upon making such ludicrous and meaningless distinctions, is there more here than meets the purely psychological I?

Psychologists have long talked about our tendency to form "in groups" based upon skin color, accents (the Parisian vs. the "country French") and hairstyle (try to look at green spiked hair and a crew cut without drawing inferences of fundamental differences in personality). In his 1954 book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, psychologist Gordon Allport observed that many white Americans live in a "state of conflict." On one hand, they may be ideologically opposed to prejudice, but on the other, they possess underlying tendencies to think and act in racially biased ways.

## **Neuroscience Offers a New Explanation**

Neuroscience is now providing tantalizing hints as to how these tendencies might occur. In 2000, two fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) studies allowed the first visualizations of the underlying neuroanatomy of prejudice. In one study, Allan Hart, an Amherst social psychologist, found that when white and black subjects were given brief subliminal glimpses of faces of the other race, both showed increased activity in the amygdala, a small set of nuclei within the medial temporal lobes, believed to be responsible for processing the emotional significance of a stimulus.



*In his groundbreaking 1954 book, **The Nature of Prejudice**, Dr. Gordon Allport observed that people may be against prejudice, but they also possess underlying tendencies to think and act in racially biased ways.*

In a separate study, New York University neuroscientist Elizabeth Phelps found that the degree of increased amygdala activity directly correlated with both physiological and psychological testing evidence for prejudiced responses. Most important, these biased subjects were unaware of having seen the faces or of having any emotional response. Based upon these and subsequent confirming studies, the amygdala is now thought to be integral to the biology of unconscious discrimination.

Given that the amygdala has long been recognized to be instrumental in emotional processing, particularly in relationship to learning, perception and expression of fear, it has seemed reasonable to interpret such studies as showing that viewing different-colored skin might trigger fear or apprehension. However, Phelps and others have cautioned that the amygdala also responds more generally to the emotional intensity of a stimulus—not only fear but also ambiguity, vigilance and even some states of uncertainty that can have a positive outcome. So, given our present state of knowledge, fMRI activation of the amygdala should not be taken as unequivocal evidence that the fear and anxiety are the primary unconscious responses to racial or ethnic differences; the activation could represent a nonspecific state of heightened emotional arousal.

Naturally, evolutionary biologists are quick to point out the obvious adaptive benefits of immediate unconscious recognition of any difference that might indicate a potential enemy or predator. UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles] anthropologist Rob Boyd has written extensively that being attuned to ethnic differences allows individuals to identify others who share the same cultural norms; sharing similar expectations makes social interaction a lot easier than mixing it up with those with different expectations.

At an equally basic neural level, reflexive detection of differences is an essential aspect of how we learn through pattern recognition. For example, the brain contains primary modules for distinguishing colors. These neural systems operate outside of awareness. One cannot choose not to see a color difference. Even at a young age, such differences contribute to our worldview. According to studies by University of Michigan psychologist Lawrence Hirschfeld, 3-year-old children already attribute significance to skin color and appear to believe that race is the most important physical characteristic in determining what sort of person one is.

## **Innate Tendencies to Be Prejudiced**

The evidence is pouring in; at bottom, we seem programmed to seek out and create meaning out of perceived differences. The

question that continues to hound me: Is it possible to break this cycle of prejudice?

A relatively new and utterly intriguing approach to seeing how prejudice may have evolved and taken root in our brains is “agent-based computational modeling.” This imposing mouthful is nothing more than a clever description of using computers to study how complex systems arise out of basic elements. The technique is relatively straightforward. You create tiny computer programs (agents) with only a few sets of instructions. You then place them on a computer grid and watch their interactions over thousands of trial periods.

Such computer models are now commonly used to predict such disparate activities as consumer behavior, seasonal migration of birds, sexual reproduction, the transmission of diseases and even how culture spreads and becomes established. In evolutionary models, individual characteristics and behavioral strategies can be followed over multiple generations to see how successful behaviors gradually gain dominance. It is presumed that, over time, the optimal strategy for survival will emerge from initially random encounters.

Using this technique, University of Michigan political scientist Robert Axelrod and his colleague Ross Hammond of the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., have studied how ethnocentric behavior may have evolved even in the absence of any initial bias or prejudice. To make the model as simple as possible, they made each agent one of four possible colors. None of the colors was given any positive or negative ranking with respect to the other colors; in the beginning, all colors were created equal. The agents were then provided with instructions (simple algorithms) as to possible ways to respond when encountering another agent. One algorithm specified whether or not the agent cooperated when meeting someone of its own color. The other algorithm specified whether or not the agent cooperated with agents of a different color.

The scientists defined an ethnocentric strategy as one in which an agent cooperated only with other agents of its own color, and not with agents of other colors. The other strategies were to



cooperate with everyone, cooperate with no one and cooperate only with agents of a different color. Since only one of the four possible strategies is ethnocentric and all were equally likely, random interactions would result in a 25 percent rate of ethnocentric behavior. Yet their studies consistently demonstrated that greater than three-fourths of the agents eventually adopted an ethnocentric strategy. In short, although the agents weren't programmed to have any initial bias for or against any color, they gradually evolved an ethnocentric preference for one's own color at the expense of those of another color.

Axelrod and Hammond don't claim that their studies duplicate the real-world complexities of prejudice and discrimination. But it is hard to ignore that an initially meaningless trait morphed into a trigger for group bias. Contrary to how most of us see bigotry and prejudice as arising out of faulty education and early-childhood indoctrination, Axelrod's model doesn't begin with preconceived notions about the relative values of different colors, nor is it associated with any underlying negative emotional state such as envy, frustration or animosity. Detection of a difference, no matter how innocent, is enough to result in ethnocentric strategies.

Even more striking, there isn't any conventional "thought" associated with this prejudice; it emerges in the same way as ants build ant colonies, and cities and societies form without prior planning or specific intention. Nowhere in the agent's minuscule "mind" is there any line of code on how best to proceed; there is no built-in suggestion that discrimination might provide better rates of reproduction or survival.

In "The Selfish Gene," Richard Dawkins said in his characteristic blunt manner, "We are survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes." No matter how inflammatory Dawkins' rhetoric might sound, his observation is consistent with the conclusions of Axelrod's agent-modeling studies.

So is this powerful self-interest strategy truly in the genes, and even if it is, can it be modified by experience and education? It's clear that ethnocentricity is the optimal strategy when mutual distrust is the default position between different groups. But a variety

of game theory simulations, like the prisoner's dilemma, designed to study cooperation vs. noncooperation between two people or groups, suggest that under certain circumstances, mutual cooperation is the preferable strategy.

In a worldwide competition held by Axelrod, academics were asked to create a variety of programs for how agents might best interact for long-term survival. The winner was a simple program, tit for tat, which specified that an agent would always cooperate with another agent at their first encounter; after that, one agent would adopt whatever strategy the opponent demonstrated. If the other guy (agent) responds favorably to your initial offer, cooperation ensues. If the opponent rejects cooperation, you abandon niceness and revert to mutual mistrust. Tit for tat showed that a single attempt at cooperation, prior to knowing how the other agent would respond, resulted in a better long-term outcome for both agents. Trust, in other words, is good.

If such computer simulations are applicable to human behavior, the moral is transparently frustrating. In meeting someone perceived as being different, we must offer initial trust and cooperation without any guarantee that the other person will reciprocate. But anyone who has resolved to adopt the doctrine of unilateral compassion and “turn the other cheek” knows how difficult such self-sacrificing behavior is to initiate unilaterally.

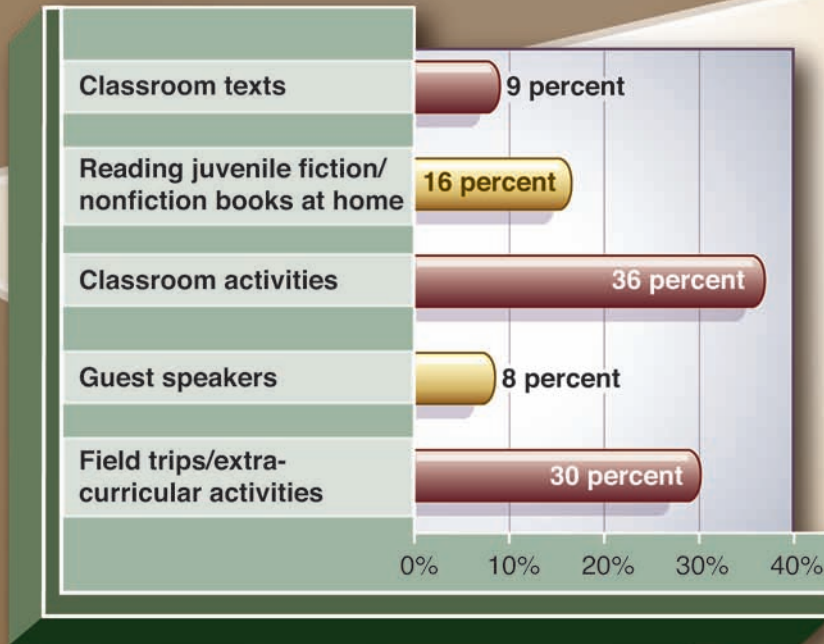
The encouraging news: Axelrod has used such studies to show how cooperative behavior can evolve from mechanisms that, by natural selection, are inherently selfish. The not-so-good news: It isn't at all clear how humans can overcome basic emotions such as fear, anger, the urge for retribution or just a heightened emotional arousal that make initial cooperation so antithetical to how we normally react to perceived differences.

## **Bias Must Be Acknowledged to Be Avoided**

Nevertheless, Elizabeth Phelps has repeatedly emphasized that the behavioral studies demonstrating unconscious bias “do not indicate that this behavior is ‘hard-wired,’ or unchangeable.” In her 2000 study, she demonstrated that our unconscious biased

## Parents Say Diversity Awareness Can Be Taught in a Variety of Ways

In a recent online poll of about one thousand parents, most said that classroom and extracurricular activities were the best ways for their children to learn about diversity issues.



Taken from: Family Education, "Diversity Education," August 2008.  
[www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com).

responses (amygdala activation) can be significantly reduced by experience and familiarity. In other words, emergent prejudiced behavior isn't an inescapable aspect of our biology.

Admittedly, one of the greatest obstacles to a frank discussion of bias is the repugnance of prejudice. As ugly traits go, racist and bigot are right up there with pedophile and cannibal. But somehow we need to get over our puritanical revulsion with aspects of our biology that we find morally unacceptable. Being politically correct and denying the presence of unconscious bias has been

shown to have its own downside. In a clever fMRI study, psychologist Jennifer Richeson has demonstrated that trying not to have inappropriate racial thoughts can actually tax brain activity and result in lesser performance on psychological tests that require maximal attention and concentration.

There's no doubt that ethnocentric philosophies can be deliberate attempts to justify everything from eugenics to xenophobia. But cognitive science is also showing how many of our thoughts begin outside of awareness. It isn't much of a leap to believe that conscious thoughts, including racist or ethnocentric beliefs, are after-the-fact rationalizations for unconscious behaviors that have survival benefits. (In fMRI studies, activation of the amygdala corresponded with the subjects making racially biased decisions, despite being unaware of feeling any bias.) If so, we shouldn't be surprised that the most cogent arguments against discrimination rarely shake biased beliefs.

For me, real bigotry begins with the hubris and arrogance of those like Bill O'Reilly who insist that their assessment of others is purely based upon reason and conscious deliberation, as opposed to being colored by involuntary and unrecognized elements of prejudice. For us to treat others with real trust, we must begin by acknowledging our biases and consciously doing the hard mental work to overcome them. We may not be able to prevent biased opinions from arising, but we do retain the veto power over whether to believe in and act on them.

We are left with two options. We can pretend we are free of bias, and avoid thinking about how to deal with our own deeply ingrained tendency to discriminate. Or we can take a lesson from neuroscience, and even from dumb computer agents, which can switch from noncooperation to cooperation if they learn that it is in their best interests.



# Women Still Face Prejudice in the Workplace

**Harriet Rubin**

In the following viewpoint author and journalist Harriet Rubin argues that sexism in the workplace continues in America, even though many believe that women and men are treated equally. Rubin cites recent research indicating a backslide in the progress women made in American businesses and points out that sexism is a real issue to be dealt with in American corporations.

Harriet Rubin, "Sexism," Portfolio.com, April 2008. Reproduced by permission of the author and Writers Representatives LLC.





*Despite the fact that many believe that women and men are treated equally in the workplace, recent research has shown that workplace sexism is still a pervasive issue.*





# America Is More Sexist than Racist

Drake Bennett

Drake Bennett is a journalist and staff writer for *The Boston Globe*. In the following article he reports on research suggesting that Americans struggle more with sexism than racism. According to the research, gender stereotypes seem to be strong among Americans, something that Bennett says did not help Senator Hillary Clinton in her 2008 presidential campaign. Bennett points out that research indicates that racial stereotyping is highly contextual and can be reversed more easily than gender stereotyping.

Since Barack Obama emerged as a serious challenger to Hillary Clinton for the Democratic presidential nomination, the primaries have become, in part, a referendum on whether Americans are more prepared for a woman or a black man in the White House. The voting has been parsed for signs that the candidates are drawing supporters beyond their particular “minority” demographic. Over the past month and a half [January to mid-February 2008], the feminist pioneers Gloria Steinem and Robin Morgan have both published widely talked-about essays arguing that Clinton would have long since sewn up the nomination if not for the stubbornness of our national sexism. And when Clinton’s primary victory in New Hampshire last month caught everyone

Drake Bennett, “Black Man vs. White Woman,” *boston.com*, February 17, 2008. Reproduced by permission.

by surprise, some analysts suggested that the polls had been so wrong beforehand in part because voters in the overwhelmingly white state had been reluctant to share their true, race-based reservations about Obama.

The discussion so far has been rather short on data. There have been surveys asking whether Americans would vote for a black or female candidate for President—according to a December 2007 Gallup poll, 93 percent and 86 percent, respectively, say they would. Those answers should be interpreted with some skepticism, however, because people are often unaware of their biases and don't tend to reveal them honestly in surveys.

But turn away from the campaign trail, and toward the laboratories where psychologists work, and a fascinating portrait of the primaries emerges. For decades, researchers have been probing bias—how it arises, how it changes, how it fades away. Their work suggests that bias plays a more powerful role in shaping opinions than most people are aware of. And they suggest that the American mind treats race and gender quite differently. Race can evoke more visceral, negative associations, the studies show, but attitudes toward women are more inflexible and—to judge by the current dynamics of the presidential race—ultimately more limiting.

“Gender stereotypes trump race stereotypes in every social science test,” says Alice Eagly, a psychology professor at Northwestern University.

## **Research Points to Difficulties for Hillary Clinton**

It would be a gross oversimplification to reduce the Democratic race to the white woman versus the black man. Factors like Obama's eloquence and inexperience and Clinton's policy mastery and her association with the ambivalent legacy of her husband have played a larger role in how the race has been talked about. And indeed, this presidential contest can be seen as the country's attempt to lurch beyond a blinkered, monolithic identity politics.

But in a campaign in which it's hard to find many substantive policy differences between the leading Democratic contenders, it's notable how well the psychological research on bias predicts



*The Democratic primary contest between now-president Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton is viewed as the country's attempt to go beyond the identity politics of race and sex.*

the race we've seen so far. Obama's ability to disarm the initial reservations of an increasing number of white voters as the race has progressed—especially over the past week [in February 2008], in his string of eight straight primary victories—fits with the findings of bias researchers that racial bias is strikingly mutable, and can be mitigated and even erased by everything from clothing and speech cadence to setting and skin tone.

As Clinton has discovered, gender stereotypes are stickier. Women can be seen as ambitious and capable, or they can be seen as likable, a host of studies have shown, but it's very hard for

them to be seen as both—hence the intense scrutiny and much-debated impact of Clinton’s moment of emotional vulnerability in a New Hampshire diner last month [January 2008].

As the race moves toward the possibly decisive March 4 [2008] primaries in Ohio and Texas, Clinton and Obama will have to continue to negotiate the complex demands of campaigning for an office that has been held by an unbroken string of 42 white men. But while this presidential campaign has proven a stage on which these issues can dramatically play out, they also run deeply through the rest of our society. And if the ample literature on bias shows anything, it is that, for all the difficulties Americans have with race, it may prove that attitudes about women are the hardest to change.

Race and gender are both traits that we cannot help but notice. One hundred milliseconds after we have first laid eyes on someone, we have made a determination about their race; 50 milliseconds later, we have determined their gender. But the reactions are not identical.

When psychologists talk about bias, they use three technical categories: stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Stereotyping is cognitive bias, the tendency to ascribe people a set of traits based on the group they belong to (e.g., “black people are good at sports,” “Jews are cheap”). Prejudice is an emotional bias, disliking someone because of their group identity. And discrimination is how we act on the first two.

Sexual prejudice isn’t terribly common—male chauvinists don’t dislike women, they just have particular ideas about their capabilities and how they should behave—but with race, stereotypes tend to go hand-in-hand with prejudice.

## **Racial Prejudice Can Be Reduced**

Many studies have shown the prevalence of negative associations among white Americans toward blacks. Mahzarin Banaji of Harvard and Anthony Greenwald of the University of Washington have done influential work showing that most whites, whatever their professed racial attitudes, are quicker to

associate positive words with images of whites, and quicker to associate negative words with blacks. The test they developed, the Implicit Association Test, or IAT, has become one of the most common tools for measuring bias.

Joshua Correll, a psychology professor at the University of Chicago, measures bias in a more dynamic way, looking at associations with danger. In one set of studies he had mostly white participants play a primitive video game in which they had to make split-second “shoot/no-shoot” decisions based on whether the figure on the screen was holding a gun. Most subjects, he found, were more trigger-happy when presented with an image of a black man.

But follow-up studies have also shown that these biases can be sharply reduced, and in some cases even erased. When participants, for example, are shown images of well-liked black public figures before taking the IAT, their anti-black biases disappear.

“We’re finding that racial stereotyping and prejudice are extremely contextual,” says Correll. “You can see real reductions in prejudice, and sometimes it actually reverses,” crossing over into a sort of stereotypic affinity.

And this, Correll argues, works to the advantage of someone like Obama. “You look at Obama, and he represents himself incredibly well,” Correll says. “There are a whole lot of contextual cues that tell us this is someone you don’t need to worry about.”

The pollster John Zogby sees some signs that white voters have grown more comfortable with black candidates. He offers the example of Harold Ford, the young, black Democratic congressman who narrowly lost his bid for one of Tennessee’s US Senate seats in 2006. Traditionally, Zogby points out, black candidates do worse on Election Day than in pre-election polling because people tell pollsters they’re more comfortable with black candidates than they actually are—this phenomenon, the so-called Bradley Effect, is what some analysts thought helped Clinton . . . in New Hampshire. But, Zogby points out, Ford actually did better in the final vote than in pre-election polling, suggesting a dissipation of the Bradley Effect.

Some of the most dramatic work in racial bias mitigation was published in 2001 by John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, a husband-and-wife team of evolutionary psychologists at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and their then-student Robert Kurzban. In their study, they presented participants with a series of images of people, each with a sentence that the person in the image had supposedly said. Later on, the test subject would be asked to recall who had said what.

What they were after were wrong answers. The ways in which test subjects misattributed quotes betrayed the categories by which they grouped people. Subjects, for example, were far more apt to misattribute something one black man had said to another black man, rather than to a white man or to a woman.

Surprisingly, though, the researchers found that they were able to get people to stop paying attention to race with a simple manipulation: they showed images of people wearing one of two colors of T-shirts, paired with quotes that gave the impression that the T-shirts correlated with membership on different “teams.” In response, test-takers started grouping people on the basis of the T-shirt color rather than their skin color, confusing T-shirt “team members” of different ethnicities with each other.

And while the study wasn’t looking at bias, the implications are clear. “If you’re going to discriminate on the basis of race you first have to notice it,” says Kurzban, now at the University of Pennsylvania. In an experimental setting, at least, he argues, you can get people to stop doing that.

The researchers didn’t see a similar effect for gender. According to Tooby, “People can cease to notice ethnicity as a factor in how they conceptualize somebody in a way that they don’t seem to be able to with gender.”

## **Gender Stereotyping Tends to Be Strong**

There is work suggesting that implicit gender stereotypes can also display a degree of mutability, at least among women. Studies conducted by Nilanjana Dasgupta, a psychology professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, have found that exposing



women to photos and biographical information about accomplished women like Meg Whitman, CEO [chief executive officer] of eBay, or the Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg did undermine the stereotypes the women taking the test held about the incompatibility of women and leadership.

Still, psychologists specializing in gender bias say that many studies have shown how strong a force gender stereotyping is. In one particularly telling strain of research, called the Goldberg paradigm, two sets of participants are asked to comment on something, perhaps a resume or a speech or a work scenario in which a boss speaks with an employee. To one audience, the person involved is described as a woman, in the other he is a man. Time and again, male participants (and, in some cases, women as well) judge the resume more harshly if it is a woman's, or say the speech was strident if given by a woman but assertive if given by a man, or that the female boss was pushy while the male boss was concerned.

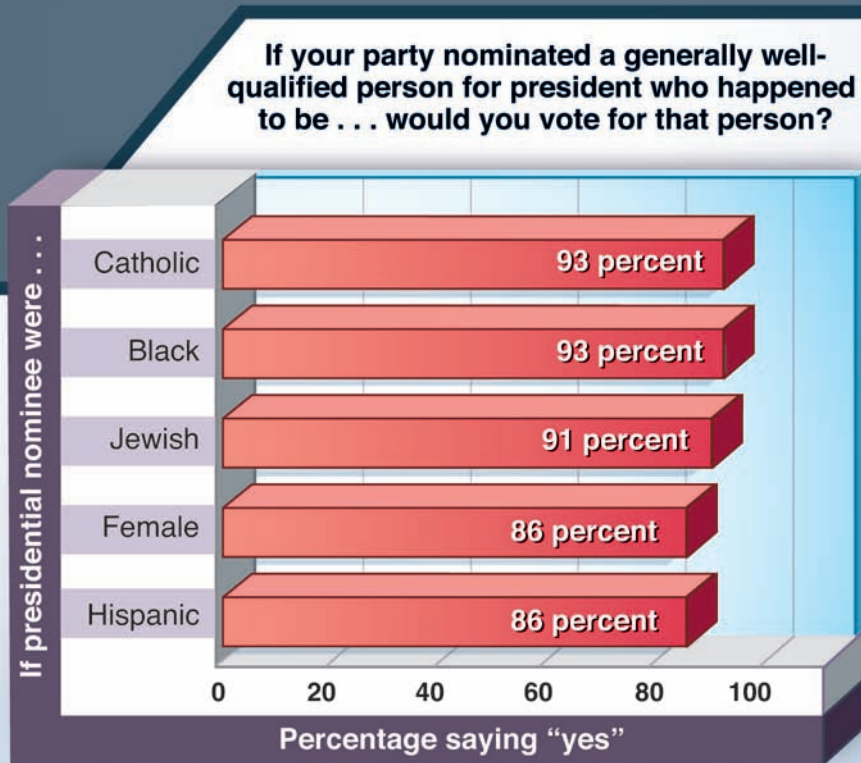
Women in these studies are typically judged to be less capable than men with identical qualifications, but it's not impossible for them to be seen as competent. The problem is that if they're understood to be capable, the majority or respondents also see them as less likable. "The deal is that women generally fall into two alternatives: they are either seen as nice but stupid or smart but mean," says Susan Fiske, a psychology professor at Princeton who specializes in stereotyping.

And unlike racial bias, there's little evidence that these attitudes are softening. According to Eagly of Northwestern, the problem isn't that women aren't traditionally understood as smart, but that they traditionally aren't understood to be "assertive, competitive, take-charge" types. More than intelligence, she argues, this "agentic" quality is what we look for in leaders, and, as both surveys and experimental studies have shown, we find it deeply discomfiting in women. "That's what Hillary Clinton is up against," argues Eagly. "She's had to show her toughness, then people turn around and say she's too cold."

Amy Cuddy, a psychologist at Northwestern, suggests that the durability of gender stereotypes stems in part from the fact that

## Majority of Americans Would Vote for a Minority Presidential Candidate

Women still struggle to be elected to the highest office in the United States. Many Americans seem ready at least to consider a wide variety of minority candidates, but women candidates are at the bottom of the list.



Taken from: 2007 Gallup poll, "Race: People's Chief Concerns," [www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org).

most people have far more exposure to people of the opposite gender than to people of different races. As a result, they feel more entitled to their attitudes about gender. "Contact hasn't undermined these stereotypes, and it might even strengthen them," she says. "Many people don't believe seeing women as kind or soft is a stereotype. They're not even going to question it, because they think it's a good thing."



Tooby takes a more biological view. As he argues, in the pre-historic environment in which our brains evolved, race had no meaning—no one could travel far enough to meet anyone who didn't look like them. Gender, on the other hand, meant a lot. It predicted what someone's status would be, what their priorities were, whether they were a potential rival or a potential partner.

Indeed, the only other trait that we notice as strongly as gender, Tooby points out, is age. Clinton is 60 years old, Obama 46. And no matter who wins the Democratic nomination, the face-off against the 71-year-old John McCain may introduce a whole new aspect to the identity politics of the campaign.

# Ban on Gay Marriage Is Prejudice

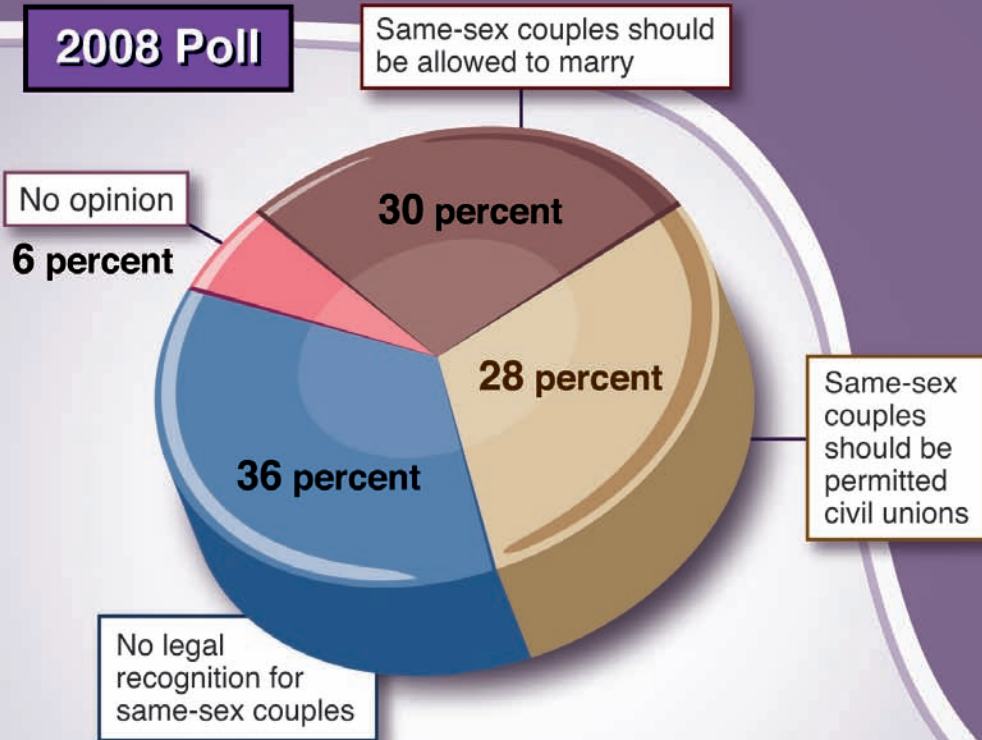
**Kenji Yoshino**

Kenji Yoshino is an author and professor at Yale Law School. In the following editorial originally published in *The New York Times*, Yoshino summarizes court rulings upholding state bans on same-sex marriages. Yoshino examines the courts' arguments and asserts that the judges are stereotyping gay relationships and discriminating against gays.

Kenji Yoshino, "Too Good for Marriage," *New York Times*, July 14, 2006. Reprinted with permission.

## American Views on Gay Marriage Are Changing

Although gays still struggle for equal rights in marriage and partnerships, a recent poll shows that the number of Americans who support same-sex marriage is increasing. In 2004 the same poll showed that just 21 percent of Americans were in support of same-sex marriage.



Taken from: CBS News.com, "CBS Poll: Changing Views on Gay Marriage," June 15, 2008. [www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com).



*Some people say that New York's ban on gay marriage is based on provisions enacted in a law in 1909, which are not relevant to today's society.*







# Opposition to Gay Marriage Is Not Prejudice

Aryeh Spero

Aryeh Spero is a rabbi, radio talk-show host, and president of Caucus for America, a conservative political organization. In the following article he argues that laws making same-sex marriages illegal are not due to prejudice. Instead, he asserts that they are about preserving the long-held tradition of marriage between a man and a woman. Spero makes the case that since gays can marry if they want to marry someone of the opposite sex, no real discrimination is taking place.

The claim made by advocates of gay marriage and its proponents such as the *New York Times* and Senator Teddy Kennedy is that a ban of gay marriage is simply about prejudice and bigotry. They are wrong. It is simply about the definition of marriage, regardless of sexual habit.

Furthermore, discrimination rooted in prejudice means we do not allow a person of a particular race, religion or sexual orientation to participate in our existing institutions or enjoy the same activities others do. But no one in America would deny an avowed gay man to get married, like all other men, to a woman. Marriage of gays is not problematic, rather same-sex marriage.

Aryeh Spero, "Opposition to Gay Marriage Is Not Discrimination," Human Events.com, June 8, 2006. Reproduced by permission.



## Gays Can Marry

Nor is the law prejudiced against any proclaimed lesbian wishing, like other women, to marry a man. Who they are does not enter the equation. Whatever their announced orientation, gays have the same right as everyone else to marriage as defined, across the board, by our laws and history: the union of one man (whatever his sexual orientation) to one woman (whatever her orientation). The existing institution of marriage is open to all.

Marriage is a contract, and as with all contracts there are elements that define it and superimpose on those committing to it. For the contract to be legal and binding, each party to it must abide by its inherent elements. In this case, the elements are one man, one woman.

*Supporters of banning same-sex marriage say that their concerns are about preserving the sanctity of marriage and not about prejudices toward gays and lesbians.*





The problem lies not in the “wannabes” because of who they are, but rather because what they want to do does not exist for anybody. Green is not red; and the rules of football do not extend to baseball simply because it is also a sport.

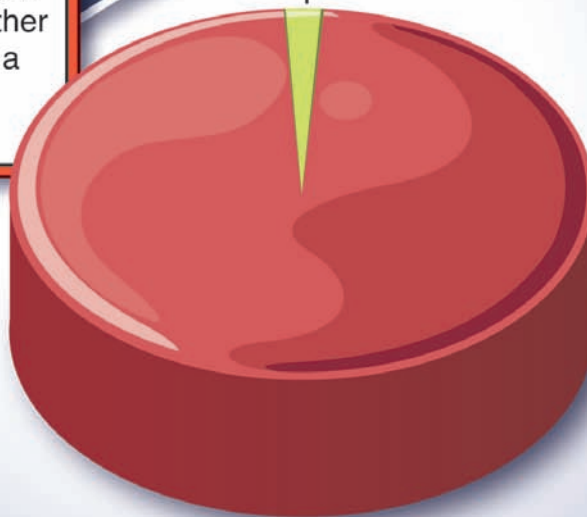
In times past when blacks were denied the right to vote, it was discrimination since others had that right. When in certain

### The Vast Majority of Americans Would Rather Live Near a Married Couple

When asked where they think most Americans would choose to buy a home, most Americans said next to a married couple. Only 2 percent of Americans polled said they would choose to live near a homosexual couple. Same-sex couples have sought rights for marriage and civil unions but struggle to gain acceptance with many Americans.

**98 percent**  
would rather  
live near a  
married  
couple.

Only **2 percent** would purchase  
a home near a gay couple.



locales in deep medieval Europe Jews were forbidden to marry it was discrimination since all others could marry. These were discriminations and exclusions born of prejudice based not on what but who. Once given the right to marry, it would have been preposterous for a Jew to claim discrimination if the state outlawed him from marrying, for example, an aunt. Nor could a black man cry discrimination if after being given the right to vote he demanded that he be allowed to vote while underage.

The *New York Times* sermonizes that denying gays marriage deprives them of equal protection. That argument is erroneous, for when we allow people of differing religion, race, gender or sexual orientation to participate and share in categories defined equally for all, discrimination does not exist.

### **Preserving Integrity of Marriage Is Important**

Certainly prejudice against gays is not at the root of those wishing to preserve the integrity of marriage. Those opposed to same-sex marriage do not advocate against gays the historic discriminations—such as denial of voting, housing, employment, etc.

That the issue revolves around a definition and not the people involved is clear when considering the following scenario: what if two straight guys decided to get married for the singular purpose of bypassing all sorts of business legalities and “lawyering” in order to create community property from their combined two businesses. Though they are not gay, the law would still deny them a license to marry, since the union of two men does not fall within the definition of marriage, even where homosexuality is not involved. It is not the homosexuality per se but the union of the same-gendered that is oxymoronic with marriage.

All things are not the same. However, through the unanswered assertions of moral relativism, all things are deemed the same, and thus meaningless. The problem bedeviling society over the last 40 years is more than having been asked to tolerate and accept modes of conduct heretofore outside the respectable pale. It is that those engaged in those activities demand that society redefine its institutions and overturn cherished and wise traditions in order not

only to accommodate but also affirm as equally legitimate and desirable such activities.

### **Special Privileges for Gays Is Not the Answer**

Most often, they are accorded special privileges, with the government zealously targeting employers to meet quotas and, first, prove their innocence in hiring and rental practices if they are to be free from penalization. What begins as a person's or group's desire for private, individual expression always ends up with that activity being given public sanctification, with regular citizens bearing the financial costs.

These redefinitions result in the banalization and degradation of the previously accepted standards and practices. Worse, language is reconfigured so that, for example, husbands are simply partners, wives are simply spouses. Sex education will be forced to teach about the alternatively valid same-sex marriage, and woe to those parents and students who balk: the power of the government will come down upon them harshly.

Will churches and synagogues that cite Scripture forbidding such marriage be indicted for hate speech? They will be! We hear about gay rights, never first realizing that what ultimately will be taken from most everyone else will be freedom of speech and religion; our privacy itself. Our tolerance for the unconventional will result in federal intolerance for the conventional, the necessary.

The upshot, as we have seen with other causes, is the diminution, marginalization and even disempowerment of those too mainstream to be counted among the exotic or preferential minorities. Quite often that is precisely the underlying, ulterior motive of the iconoclast and gatecrasher.



# Prejudice Can Be Understood and Reduced

**Graham Wagstaff**

Graham Wagstaff is a professor of psychology at the University of Liverpool, where he has taught primarily social and forensic psychology since 1973. He has published extensively on a variety of topics, including the social psychology of justice and eyewitness testimony. In the following viewpoint Wagstaff defines prejudice and explains different theories about what causes discrimination and prejudice, describing both cultural and cognitive theories on why people are prejudiced. He contends that understanding prejudice can help us reduce it. Wagstaff concludes by offering suggestions for ways we can reduce prejudice and discrimination. He argues that both education and legislation are important.

Graham Wagstaff, "Understanding Prejudice," *Psychology Review*, vol. 11, April 2005, pp. 20–23. Reproduced by permission.



*According to conflict theory, prejudices arise when people are placed in conflict with others as they compete for jobs, money, and status.*











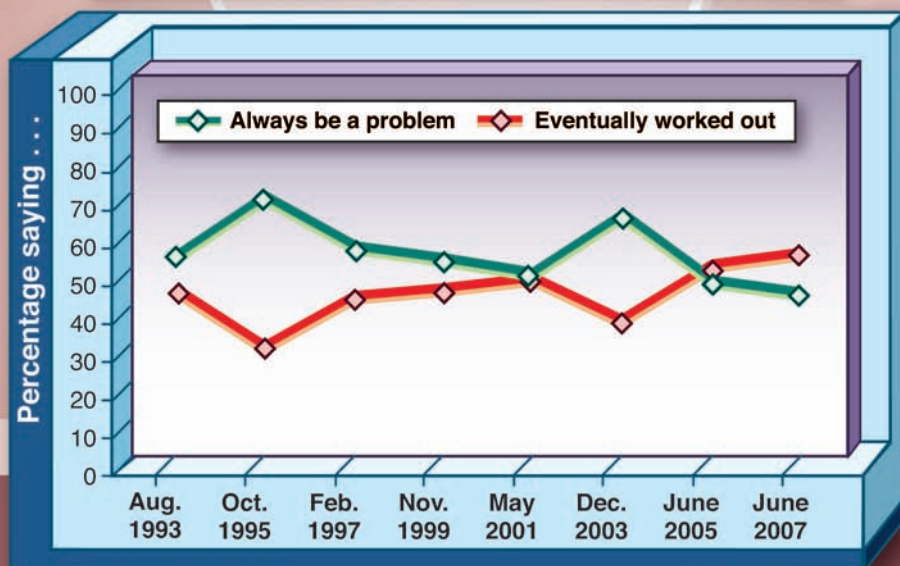




## Americans Are Optimistic About Race Relations

Educators and activists assert that prejudice can be reduced, and polls show that Americans are beginning to feel optimistic about race relations in the United States.

**In a 2007 Gallup poll, people were asked: “Do you think that race relations between blacks and whites will always be a problem for the United States or that a solution will eventually be worked out?”**









# Diversity Curriculum Can Help Reduce Prejudice

**Judith Gaston Fisher**

Judith Gaston Fisher is a teaching specialist at Community School in Missouri. In this article she discusses the importance of teaching diversity to both students and educators. Her students were willing, able, and even eager to discuss differences related to race and culture. Fisher emphasizes the importance of open communication in the classroom, as well as the benefits of using a variety of materials related to the topic of diversity.

For some 20 years, while working at various independent schools, I have observed a new, but undefined, curriculum emerging—one that has centered on educating children to tolerate, accept, appreciate, and learn from others different from themselves. We file these initiatives under the catch-all category of diversity and recognize both the need and the desirability of building institutions and communities in which different backgrounds, races, and cultures are fully represented and valued. But I've also observed that, at many of these schools, such initiatives have not been as successful as their creators intended. Often, they have been trial-and-error endeavors whose outcomes were not measured and whose results, therefore, were uncertain. All this is not due to a lack

Judith Gaston Fisher, "Let's Talk About It!" *Independent School*, vol. 67, Fall 2007, pp. 14–17. Reproduced by permission.



of commitment, nor is it a question of believing in the importance of diversity work, nor is it from an absence of academic study and research. As I see it, the problem in teaching our children to develop positive attitudes toward culture, race, and ethnicity has not been in the “what” or the “why,” but largely in the “how.” How exactly do we help students navigate the inclusive classroom and community?

Call it multicultural education, diversity, or cultural sensitivity training, each initiative I’ve been involved with has comprised important concepts of race, culture, religion, and socioeconomic status. But where was a school to start in developing an elementary child’s sensitivity and understanding regarding these topics?

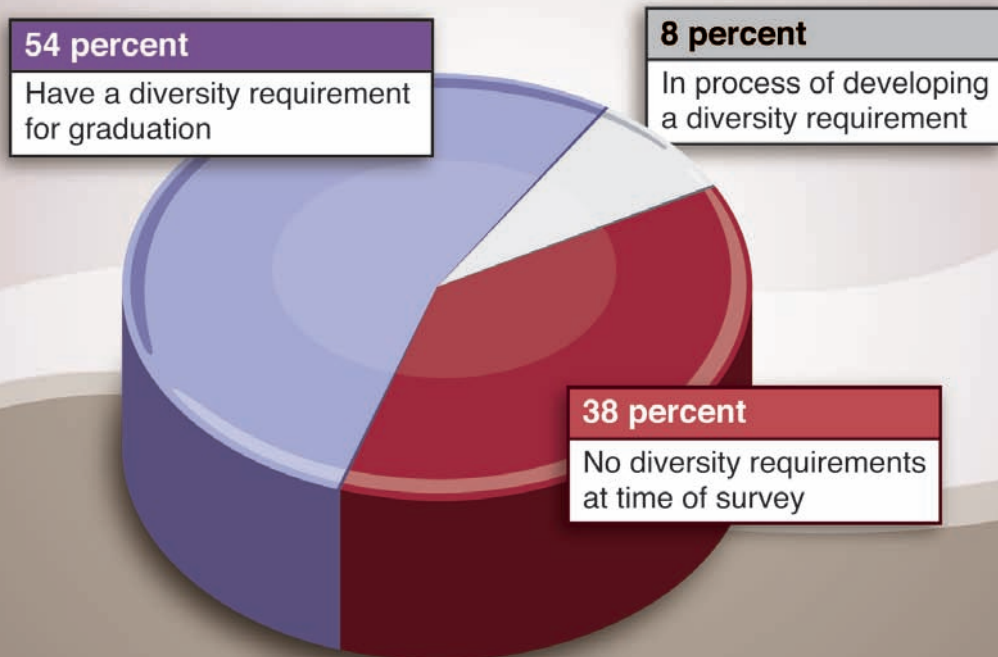
### **What Should Diversity Education Look Like?**

Often the process of program development began with roundtable discussions among administrators in which questions predominated. Should teachers be educated first? What about parents? Should we mail informational fliers to them? Should teachers conduct curriculum nights? Should parents be required to attend school-supported race and equity workshops? And what about the children? Were there any “best practices” we could adopt? Should it be a separate curriculum or integrated into academic subject areas or the character education program?

At Community School (Missouri), where I work, educating the faculty of pre-kindergarten-through-sixth-grade students became the first line of attack. Seminars and in-service training focused on identifying, addressing, and role-playing stereotypes. The entire staff watched movies (e.g., *Brown Eyes*, *Blue Eyes*) and read books (e.g., *Race Manners*) and discussed their meaning and application to our community. Teachers attended multicultural conferences and summer workshops. And various committees were formed—the committee on holidays and celebrations; one uniting the board, teachers, and parents; and one for designing international potlucks and gatherings.

## Diversity Requirements in American Colleges

A survey of 543 American colleges shows that most colleges require some kind of diversity course as a requirement to graduate with a bachelor's degree.



Taken from: Carol Geary-Schneider, "Diversity Requirements: Part of a Renewed Civic Education," *Diversity Digest*, Winter 2001. [www.diversityweb.org/digest/w01/civic.html](http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/w01/civic.html).

### Translating Diversity Education into Real Interactions

Even so, it was still not clear how all this translated into the daily interactions between teacher and students.

Last September [2006], I found myself leaving the world of administration to re-enter the classroom. Classified as a learning specialist, I now sought to squarely face the issues I had addressed in a more indirect fashion, usually from the safe remove of a committee member engaged in interminable planning sessions. I was now alone with students, in my own class-

room behind closed doors, facing the necessity of developing a realistic approach to a persistent challenge. How would I apply the tools and techniques of education to increase appreciation of cultural and racial diversity and to address the powerful cluster of harmful attitudes and practices we commonly associate with stereotyping and racism?

It was time, I believed, to roll up my sleeves and jump in feet first, to practice what I preached. I sought to go beyond class meetings and literature studies where issues were caged in the safety of fictional characters. Instead, I desired to hit these issues head-on, using reliable data and real-life stories as a vehicle for discussion. I admit to second thoughts when I thought about engaging students in sensitive racial discussions. I feared parent and administrative reaction. I feared perceiving the influence of stereotypes where none existed. I feared my lack of expertise. But a persistent and honest desire to raise awareness drove me forward, a desire to uncover the veil of fear surrounding the issue of race.

A small group of sixth graders became my target group. My initial materials: stories from current newspapers and journals, as well as the perspectives presented in Bruce Jacobs' *Race Manners*, a book previously studied and discussed by the faculty. We blended literature and social studies material: Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, and Mildred Taylor's *The Land* complemented the students' study of the Civil War and ancient cultures. The material gave psychological depth and emotional resonance to issues that provide an important key to understanding the foundations of societies and the conflicts that can wrench them apart. I often asked students to extrapolate to the current state of racial affairs in the United States. A connection could be made from the past to the present to the future. It was a beginning.

That first day when I sat down with my class—not exactly a cross-section of America, but diverse in its own distinctive way (i.e., white, African American, Jewish, and Christian)—I was scared. I had sought advice from several teachers, had spent considerable time planning my introduction, and had chosen the particular themes I wanted to discuss. Still, I was hesitant.

Attempting to be confident and to project an air of assurance, I began by having the students design guidelines for these “important discussions.” We defined respect, honesty, and confidentiality. We even implemented a sort of fail-safe measure. Anyone could invoke the “ouch” rule—that is, just say “ouch” whenever anyone uses a word or broached a topic that made others fearful or have hurt feelings.

## **Starting a Conversation on Stereotypes and Prejudice**

And then I threw out the question: “If you were getting on a bus by yourself and the only open seats were next to a black man wearing baggy, low slung jeans, a Hispanic, or an Asian, what seat would you choose?”

There was dead silence, eyes darting sideways, heads down trying to hide in the pages of a notebook. “What is the first thought that jumped into your head?” I asked, my gaze moving from one individual to another. Finally, a hand shot up. “Well, I have a Mexican gardener so I am comfortable around Hispanics.” That comment seemed to open the door for further exploration.

“I am really afraid of anyone speaking another language,” offered a quiet, rather reticent young man. “It makes me nervous.”

“I think it’s the baggy pants that bothers me. When I’m in the mall, seeing someone dressed like that makes me uncomfortable. But I remember last year there was a black—I mean, an African American—sixth grader here who wore baggy pants and a large earring. His pants were always neat and clean. And boy, was he ever a good football player,” commented another.

“What race usually dresses like that?” I asked.

“Blacks, or African Americans. What term should we use anyway?” questioned the boy who had spoken about the baggy pants. “I never know what is correct so I just don’t use anything!”

And so the conversation that ensued attempted to explore and discuss racial terminology, stereotypes and racism, accepted preconceptions, and “you have a problem” indicators. As the students left that first day, I felt a mixture of success and pride as I looked forward to what our next day together might bring.



*As part of diversity education, students are asked to discuss their views on prejudice.*

Weeks later, I had become accustomed to hearing, “Hey, Mrs. Fisher, is this a ‘Talk Day’? All right!”—a frequent question tossed out as these sixth graders entered the door. Talk Day was a term coined by the students to indicate class time devoted to the exploration of these issues of race and identity. Topics of discussion were as varied as my students. We learned about

identifying real fear and fear that bubbles up just because of skin color or dress. We studied statistics regarding the separation and differential treatment of minorities in our own community. Who was more likely to get pulled over by traffic police? We talked about affirmative action and the apparent re-segregation of our public schools. Topics from the news media had a way of making it onto our conversational agenda: charges against three members of the Duke lacrosse team and reports of genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan.

### **Students Apply What They Learn**

While I believed that my students were beginning to understand past and present day stereotypes, I needed more than just excitement to confirm that Talk Day was making a difference. I began to watch and note the students' mannerisms: Rachel,<sup>1</sup> herself Jewish, was confident and verbal and ready to argue a wide range of issues; Hunter, who was white, was a sensitive boy whose head often remained resting on an arm as he saved his stories and comments until the end of class; Yolanda, the lone black girl, whose eyes gave not a glimpse of anger, acceptance, or even surprise at various accounts we considered that vividly portrayed acts of racial and social injustice against African Americans. And then there was Tom, the jokester whose indiscreet, often rash, comments betrayed a privileged and perhaps somewhat pampered life; Bob, a nonstop talker who could scarcely contain his enthusiasm for each topic; and, finally, Jim, the quiet thinker.

One non-Talk Day, I was surprised at the following conversation. Slipping into my mother's distinctive, presumably Ozark, dialect, I instructed, "Let's clean up, y'all." My vocabulary included curiosities such as anti gogglin, dad gummit, and picayune, all phrases I assumed were indicative of my parent's southwest Missouri roots.

"Mrs. Fisher. Use proper English! You sound like a Texan," concluded Bob as he shut down his laptop.

1. The names of all students have been changed for confidentiality.



“Hey, that’s a stereotype . . . isn’t it?” remarked Yolanda trying to apply what had earlier been discussed in class. She eyed me cautiously waiting for my remark.

“Is it?” I countered.

“Well, Bob implied that all Texans speak like you just did. That is a stereotype.” The conversation among the children continued as they filed out the classroom for their next subject.

As the year drew to a close, the students completed a written survey regarding Talk Day. Did I find that authentic discussions based on factual information promoted a personal awareness of stereotypes and racial issues? Definitely. Each student enjoyed Talk Days, identified personal stereotypes and those used by others, and became aware of actions stemming from stereotypes. Yolanda wrote, “[Understanding stereotypes] makes me move forward and get to really know other people better, instead of being put off by ‘weird’ dress or behavior. Who knows, they could turn out to be my best friend.”

One of the deepest lessons I believe my students have learned has to do with the power of conversation. My students were able to talk about difficult and sometimes uncomfortable realities. Inequalities built around race, religion, gender, and other distinctions are often pervasive, but typically obscure, and students can benefit from seeking to take their measure. These steps can help:

- Talk with students, don’t lecture them. Help them find their voice.
- Work across the curriculum. Diversity is a big topic that can reach across various subject areas and ties them together in powerful ways.
- Connect outside the classroom. The relevance of race, ethnicity, and gender can be witnessed daily, whether the perspective is global, local, or personal.

If conversations are both honest and respectful, we can deepen our understanding of both self and others. But if the toughest or most sensitive topics are “off-limits” or given shallow treatment, students will have little faith in the power of open inquiry and clear thinking to chip away at our intractable problems. I haven’t created global harmony, but my students’ eyes have been opened.





# Educators Should Use Real-Life Examples to Teach About Prejudice

**Mara Sapon-Shevin**

Mara Sapon-Shevin is a professor of inclusive education at Syracuse University. In this viewpoint she discusses the importance of recognizing opportunities to turn negative situations related to discrimination and prejudice into teachable moments. She brings forth the idea that prejudice is an inevitable component of the classroom due to the diversity of students. Sapon-Shevin believes instructors must take advantage of classroom occurrences involving prejudice and use those incidents to teach against discrimination.

*A teacher approaches me in tears; there have been repeated racial incidents on her school's playground and she feels an urgent need to engage students in discussion and action related to creating safe schools and accepting communities. But when she brings this imperative to the school administrators, she is reminded that the statewide standardized tests are coming up soon and there simply isn't time to address these issues with students. She is told that she must concentrate exclusively on academic achievement so that the school will look good on the tests and not risk funding cuts or negative publicity. Her attempts to explain*

Mara Sapon-Shevin, "Teachable Moments for Social Justice," in *Holding Values: What We Mean by Progressive Education*, ed. Brenda S. Engel with Anne C. Martin. Oxford: Heinemann, 2005. Copyright © 2005 by Brenda S. Engel with Anne C. Martin. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.

*the relationship between students' sense of safety and belonging and achievement scores are dismissed as interesting but not compelling.*

The diversity of students in today's schools and the ways in which poverty, racism and violence creep—and sometimes stomp—into our classrooms presents a host of challenges for teachers. How do we create classroom climates that embody equity, social justice, inclusion and diversity while still achieving high “academic” standards? If the pressures of multiple agendas were not enough to leave us depleted and overwhelmed, the growing focus (one might say manic emphasis) on high stakes standardized testing has left many progressive educators even more frustrated. How do we maintain our focus on democratic, child-centered education in the face of a system that tells us that test scores are all that matters, and that there isn't enough time to pursue what are often labeled “soft” or secondary educational goals like classroom community or a commitment to ending racism and other oppressions?

### **“Teachable Moments” Are Everywhere**

To some, making a commitment to social justice means that we must add a whole new “program” to an already overcrowded curriculum. In reality, however, there are “teachable moments” for social justice *everywhere* and a teacher who is primed and committed to noticing and responding to such moments can infuse values about belonging, right treatment and justice throughout the day. Consider, for example, what teaching opportunities are provided by the following situations:

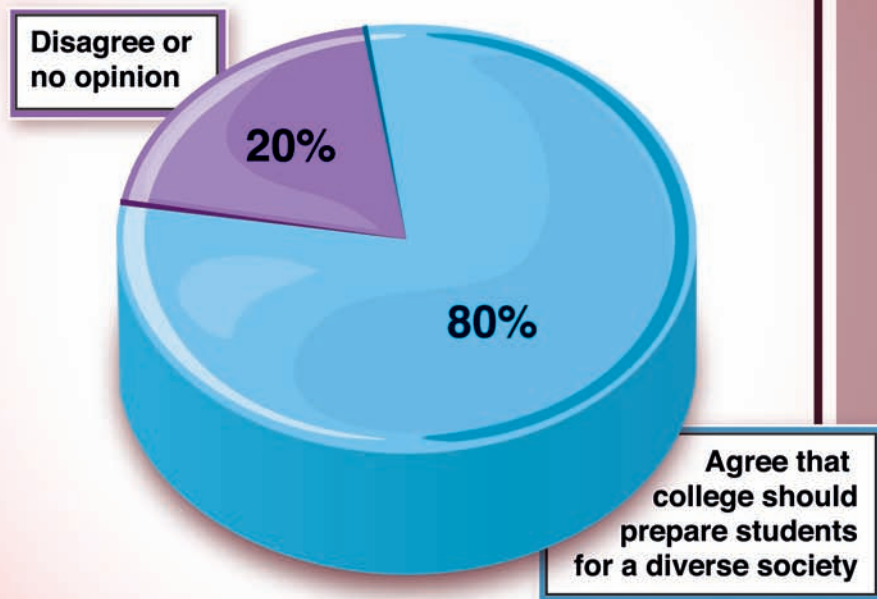
- A fifth-grade boy draws swastikas on the paper of the only Jewish girl in the class.
- As they do their seatwork, students are pulling up the sides of their eyes to look “Asian” and chanting a rhyme about Japanese and Chinese people.
- A ninth-grader is slammed against the locker in the hallway and told he is a “stupid little faggot” and he better watch where he walks.

- As a teacher constructs her birthday chart and discusses how they will celebrate birthdays in her class, a young boy raises his hand and explains that he's not allowed to celebrate birthdays and another girl says that she heard that people from Africa sometimes don't know when their birthdays are and wonders how they celebrate.

All of the above are real incidents, and no doubt teachers can think of many more within their own classrooms and schools. The

## Education Should Prepare Students for a Diverse World

A recent survey of 2,011 Americans showed support for diversity curriculum in higher education, despite some recent negative media attention on the issue. The survey found that "80 percent of those polled agreed that 'it is just as important for colleges to prepare people to succeed in a diverse world as it is to prepare people with technical or academic skills.'"



Taken from: *Diversity Digest*, "National Poll Reveals Strong Public Support for Diversity in Higher Education," 2008. [www.diversityweb.org/digest/F98/publicsupport.html](http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/F98/publicsupport.html).

challenge is to respond to these in productive, educative ways that help all of us move towards a more inclusive and diverse society rather than letting them go by, either because we don't notice them or because we feel inadequate to respond or too rushed to prioritize such efforts. I have categorized teachable moments for social justice into two groups: *seized* and *lost*. For the last five years I have asked my pre-service teacher education students to document teachable moments for social justice they have seen in their own classrooms, heightening their awareness of both good teaching and encouraging them to observe the conditions of schools and classrooms that make responding productively more or less likely.

## **Teachers Can Make a Difference by Being Open and Ready**

Being able to respond requires both noticing that the moment “happened” and having some responses ready. For example, after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, a boy in one teacher's fifth grade class announced, “I think all Muslims should be sent back to their countries because they're all terrorists.” The teacher, rather than criticizing the boy, engaged the class in a discussion. “Hmmm,” she said, “I wonder how many of you remember the Oklahoma City bombing?” Many of the students raised their hands. “And who did it turn out was responsible for that?” she asked. “Timothy McVeigh” the students responded. “And what religion was he?” she persisted. “Catholic,” they answered. “And how many of you are Catholic?” she asked her class, knowing the demographics already. Many hands went up. “Then I wonder if we should send all the Catholics in our class away because they might be dangerous terrorists.” The students were shocked and protested, “Of course not, that was about him, not about being Catholic, that's not what they teach us at church” and on and on.

This teacher was able to challenge the dangerously problematic statement of a student by converting it to a powerful teachable moment about prejudice, stereotypes and over-generalization. Such lessons are precious and need to be actively encouraged.

We all need better repertoires of responding to oppressive behavior and language.

Sometimes our responses are inadequate because although we *noticed* the moment, we are unsure about how to respond. In one first grade classroom, students were drawing at their tables. One student looked over at another and said derisively, “You’re Puerto Rican.” The teacher, alert to the negative tone in the statement, responded quickly. “Don’t say that!” and ended the conversation. Although she was, no doubt, responding to the pejorative tone with which the girl’s ethnicity was mentioned, I worry that the message the students got was, “Don’t talk about it”—don’t notice or discuss people’s differences in skin color, language or ethnicity. What would have had to be in place for the teacher to make another response? Perhaps to ask the “name calling” girl what she knows about Puerto Rico, or how she knows someone is Puerto Rican. Maybe the girl singled out, who was in fact Puerto Rican, might have been asked to share something of her own story at an appropriate moment.

### **How Can Teachers Be Prepared to Teach Against Stereotyping and Prejudice?**

Our ability to respond constructively when teachable moments come up is not a simple matter. First, we must improve our sensitivity to the occurrence of the teaching occasion, our ability to “notice.” This requires having a store of relevant information. We must know enough about Islam to be alert to other students’ remarks about “starving” during Ramadan, or to students’ confusion between religion, ethnicity, skin color and citizenship. Similarly, it will be hard to respond to the student who says that gay people caused AIDS if we don’t [know] anything about the history of the disease or the ways in which it’s spread. Simply put, we must learn more about different groups, about the ways in which oppression manifests itself, and about the occasions which might be problematic or occasion teasing, exclusion or mistreatment. Reading widely, talking to those outside our own group, pushing our own comfort level, asking respectful questions—these can all

help us to get smarter about oppression. Maintaining an attitude of alertness is also critical: What are students saying to one another during work time? Who has no one to sit with at lunch? What was the fight on the playground about and how was it resolved? Although it is painful to notice things we feel powerless to change, *not* noticing gives students the message that oppression is inevitable and countering mistreatment hopeless. Even if we can do no more than notice and name the oppression, we model for students the powerful message that injustice is not invisible or acceptable.

Second, we must have structures and policies in place in our classrooms that make productive responses possible. After September 11, 2001, for example, teachers who had already established a strong classroom community found themselves better able to respond to the devastating tragedy and all the feelings and responses it provoked. Teachers who already had established a morning meeting and guidelines for community discussion, those who had started having their students keep journals, and schools that had a strong school-parent relationship were able to rally and respond more quickly. One elementary teacher who already had a word wall that included the words “prejudice,” “discrimination,” and “acceptance,” was able to refer to those words when discussing the targeting of Arabs in the community and the importance of learning about others before jumping to conclusions. In classrooms that begin with an individual check-in for each student, teachers are more likely to be able to take the temperature of their class’s social climate and have ways to respond.

Third, teachers need to develop repertoires for responding to social justice moments. Some of these responses are invariably reactive—we don’t know that something will happen until it does. But sometimes sensitive teachers can predict that various experiences or processes will demand social justice teaching and do so proactively. For example, when one teacher’s class was about to visit an old age home to interact with the residents, she engaged them in lengthy lessons on how to introduce themselves, how people’s abilities to speak and hear may be impaired with age and how to respond respectfully and thoughtfully, and what it means to treat *all* people with dignity. The teacher’s ability to prevent





*The challenge for teachers in teaching diversity is to create a climate that promotes equity, social justice, and diversity, while maintaining high academic standards.*

certain kinds of negative behavior was a function of her careful preparation of her students for the experience they were about to have. Teachers whose classrooms include students with a wide range of skills and abilities have unique opportunities to teach about individual differences, how and when to help one another, and what it means to be a community. This kind of preparation is far preferable to saying nothing and then needing to respond to comments like “You’re stupid ’cause you read baby books,” or “People who drool are disgusting!”

When our responses are commonly reactive, we need to know other ways that are age-appropriate and educative rather than punitive. The teacher responding to the statement about expelling all the Muslims was able to connect her students to their own

experience in a way that was immediately transparent to them. In a second grade classroom, students started laughing about a story in which a child's letter to her grandma ended with X's and O's (symbolizing kisses and hugs). The teacher was able to move beyond the students' negative reaction to the idea of two women expressing that kind of affection to one another, and connect their discomfort to experiences in their own lives in which affection or physical contact was constrained or ridiculed. One might predict that her discussion about all the ways people show love, and differences between various families, cultures and situations, laid important, early groundwork for future discussions about how people are often teased or harassed for their sexual orientation or the way in which they express their sexuality.

Lastly, we must continually renew our own personal commitment to counteracting racism, homophobia, classism, and other forms of oppression and work hard to encourage one another—that is, to give one another courage—to act decisively even when we feel inadequate to the task.

The struggle to create and nurture democratic, inclusive schools and classrooms requires great fortitude and resilience. Many current educational initiatives are directly incompatible with fostering children's individual differences and the formation of cohesive, supportive learning communities. We need to share with one another our successes and our failures in working for social justice and learn how to support each other as we work to create schools and communities of justice and peace.





# Affirmative Action Programs Harm Minorities

**Garin Hovannisian**

Garin Hovannisian is a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. His writing has appeared in *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Christian Science Monitor*. In the following article he argues that affirmative action programs do not provide equality and actually hurt minorities by assuming that minorities cannot compete equally with whites.

As the lights change in front of me, I start to walk across Sunset Boulevard where I begin my daily journey to class. But instead of staring at the ground, thinking deep thoughts—a habit that I have most unfortunately developed over time—I look to my left, where I see in clear view a living incarnation of justice.

The cars that have stopped at the red light are as follows: a beautiful Rolls Royce, an exhausted Honda and a BMW. And their drivers, respectively: a middle-aged blonde woman, a white college student and an elderly black man. I see them stopped—the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the man and the woman. The light doesn't care. At that moment, the law is clear and everyone is equal under it.

Garin Hovannisian, "Affirmative Action Hurts Minorities," *Daily Bruin*, November 5, 2003. Reproduced by permission.

On the other side of the street, at UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles], reality gets a hold of me. It is “National Take Affirmative Action Day” and, in anachronistic fashion, a group of students denies what I have just seen: an equal, objective view of the world.

### **Affirmative Action Is Ineffective**

Indeed, for most advocates of affirmative action, facts have little to do with convictions. After all, the effects of affirmative action on minority communities have been unhealthy at best. Thomas

*Students at the University of California at Berkeley protest the passing of Proposition 209, which caused admission rates for minorities to fall.*



Sowell, a scholar and economist at the Hoover Institution, writes, “What of the idea that affirmative action has helped blacks rise out of poverty and is needed to continue that rise? A far higher proportion of blacks in poverty rose out of poverty in the 20 years between 1940 and 1960—that is, before any major federal civil rights legislation—than in the more than 40 years since then.” Similarly, in their book “America in Black and White,” Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom confirm this. They write, “The growth of the black middle class long predates the adoption of race-conscious social policies.”

When the use of affirmative action in the California college admissions process was blocked by Proposition 209, minority admission rates to the prominent University of California, Berkeley campus fell. But what is often neglected is that minority admission rates at less prominent UC [University of California] campuses actually went up even more. According to the UC Office of the President, the UC system admitted roughly 2,000 more minorities in 2002 than it did in 1997.

Do note, furthermore, that the “minorities” in question are artificially defined by the university. Armenians and Egyptians—indeed all Middle Easterners—fall under “white” and Chinese, Japanese and Korean students all fall under “Asian.” But is the same courtesy extended to the diverse nationalities of black and Latino people? No. The foul fact is that, by politicizing the English language, university statistics undermine the true diversity of our campuses.

Linguistics aside, Proposition 209 has had a positive impact on minorities. By matching their abilities with the standards of their college, it has allowed minorities to compete and thrive. According to *Capitalism Magazine*, “At UC San Diego, in the year before Proposition 209’s implementation, only one black freshman had a GPA [grade point average] of 3.5 or better.” Compare this to 20 percent of white students. The reason is that the black students who could compete at San Diego were foolishly accepted by UCLA and Berkeley.



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In 1998, as soon as affirmative action was derailed, 20 percent of black freshmen at UCSD [University of San Diego] had a 3.5 GPA. Yet we frequently hear that affirmative action is simply a program that levels the playing field between minorities and non-minorities.

## Affirmative Action Is Harmful for Many Minorities

But to arrive at this conclusion is to accept its necessary prerequisite: that minorities are incapable of competing with non-minorities; that they are intellectually inferior to them. The rebuttal that affirmative action tries to help those from poorer or disadvantaged backgrounds doesn't fly either. It is understandable why a university might pick a financially troubled student over a financially advantaged student of equal merit. It is harder to achieve a level of academic success if you had to work three jobs to pay the rent. But affirmative action has nothing to do with promoting based on needs and everything to do with promoting based on race.

In allowing advocates of affirmative action to shape the structure of the debate, we have lost sight of what the argument is

all about. It isn't about the results of or the need for affirmative action. It isn't even about "white privilege" (I'm still waiting for mine to kick in) or racism. It is about whether affirmative action is right.

Close to 150 years ago, Frederick Douglass proclaimed to a group of abolitionists: "What I ask for the negro is not benevolence, not pity, not sympathy, but simply justice. The American people have always been anxious to know what they shall do with us. . . . I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us!"

Affirmative action is not only ineffective, outdated, insulting, and racist but it is also wrong. Frederick Douglass, then Booker T. Washington, then Martin Luther King Jr. understood this. Justice isn't about preferences or condescension. It is about human liberty, equality and a struggle for success—not for the white race or the black race, but for the human race.

# Affirmative Action Programs Result in Better Schools

Lee C. Bollinger

Lee C. Bollinger is the president of Columbia University. In the following article he argues that affirmative action is a valuable and necessary tool to ensure diversity in higher education. Bollinger notes affirmative action is under attack, and some states have banned it entirely.

The admissions process has less to do with rewarding each student's past performance—although high performance is clearly essential—than it does with building a community of diverse learners who will thrive together and teach one another.

## Racial Prejudice Is Still an Issue

When it comes to creating the kinds of diversity we sorely need in this country, however, disturbing trends and setbacks are making it difficult for many public schools and universities to succeed. The reality is that as much as we may want to believe that racial prejudice is a relic of history, conscience and experience tell us better. . . .

According to the 2000 census, only 14 percent of white students attend multiracial schools, while nearly 40 percent of both black and Latino students attend intensely segregated schools where 90 percent to 100 percent are from minority groups. Further, almost

Lee C. Bollinger, "Why Diversity Matters," *Education Digest*, vol. 73, October 2007, pp. 26–29. Reproduced by permission.



half of all black and Latino students attend schools where three-quarters or more students are poor, compared with only 5 percent of white students; in extremely poor schools, 80 percent of the students are black and Latino.

Beyond elementary and secondary schools, higher education continues to face its own challenges, including statewide bans on affirmative action. Recent news reports have noted how hard some of our leading public universities are working to revise recruitment and admissions policies to comply with those bans without jeopardizing the diversity of the students who attend their campuses. What's important, however, is why those universities are trying so hard to maximize diversity—even though no law requires it, and in several states affirmative action is explicitly forbidden.

I have been deeply involved in two U.S. Supreme Court cases—*Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003)—that ultimately upheld the constitutionality of affirmative-action policies at public universities. Let me suggest why, having vindicated the legality of affirmative action, higher education must not lose the practical and political battles to maintain racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse student bodies.

## **Obligation to All Students**

Universities understand that to remain competitive, their most important obligation is to determine—and then deliver—what future graduates will need to know about their world and how to gain that knowledge. While the last century witnessed a new demand for specialized research, prizing the expert's vertical mastery of a single field, the emerging global reality calls for new specialists who can synthesize a diversity of fields and draw quick connections among them.

The experience of arriving on a campus to live and study with classmates from a diverse range of backgrounds is essential to students' training for this new world, nurturing in them an instinct to reach out instead of clinging to the comforts of what seems natural or familiar.

## Segregation Still Exists in Public Schools

Schools all over the country remain highly segregated. Many educators support affirmative action programs that help create more diversity in education.

State	Percentage of black students in 90–100 percent of minority schools	State	Percentage of black students in majority white schools
Michigan	62.5%	New York	13.6%
New York	60.8%	California	14.1%
Illinois	60.1%	Michigan	17.6%
New Jersey	50.0%	Illinois	18.2%
Maryland	50.0%	Maryland	21.3%
Pennsylvania	48.3%	Mississippi	22.6%
Alabama	43.1%	Louisiana	23.1%
Wisconsin	42.9%	New Jersey	24.3%
Louisiana	42.2%	Texas	24.3%
Mississippi	41.3%	Wisconsin	27.1%
California	37.1%	Georgia	27.7%
Texas	37.0%	Connecticut	28.2%
Missouri	36.2%	Pennsylvania	28.9%
Georgia	35.4%	Ohio	29.4%
Ohio	35.1%	Alabama	29.6%
Connecticut	32.2%	Missouri	32.5%
Florida	30.6%	Massachusetts	32.5%
Massachusetts	24.6%	Arkansas	32.7%
Indiana	21.3%	Rhode Island	35.4%
Colorado	20.0%	Florida	35.6%





*The college experience of living and studying with classmates of diverse backgrounds is essential in preparing students to function in a diverse world without prejudices.*

Affirmative-action programs help achieve that larger goal. And the universities that create and carry them out do so not only because overcoming longstanding obstacles to people of color and women in higher education is the right thing to do, but also because policies that encourage a comprehensive diversity help

universities achieve their mission. Specifically, they are indispensable in training future leaders how to lead all of society, and by attracting a diverse cadre of students and faculty, they increase our universities' chances of filling in gaps in our knowledge with research and teaching on a wider—and often uncovered—array of subjects.

## **Choosing the Best Applicants Is Complicated**

Opponents of affirmative action forget that broader purpose in their demand for what they see as a “pure” admissions meritocracy based on how students perform in high school and on standardized tests. But it is far less important to reward past performance—and impossible to isolate a candidate's objective talent from the contextual realities shaping that performance—than to make the best judgment about which applicants can contribute to help form the strongest class that will study and live together.

For graduate schools and employment recruiters, that potential is the only “merit” that matters, because in an increasingly global world, it is impossible to compete without already knowing how to imagine, understand, and collaborate with a diverse and fluid set of colleagues, partners, customers, and government leaders.

## **Affirmative Action Increases Diversity**

By abolishing all public affirmative-action programs, voters in California and Michigan (and other states if affirmative-action opponents are successful) have not only toppled a ladder of equal opportunity in higher education that so many of us fought to build and the Supreme Court upheld in 2003. They will almost assuredly make their great public universities less diverse—and have, in fact, done so in California, where the impact has become clear—and therefore less attractive options to potential students and, ultimately, less valuable contributors to our globalized society.

As the president of a private university, I am glad that independent institutions retain the autonomy to support diversity

efforts that make our graduates more competitive candidates for employers and graduate schools, as well as better informed citizens in our democracy and the world. But as an alumnus of one public university and a former president of another, I worry about a future in which one of America's great success stories slides backward from the mission of providing generations of young Americans with access to an affordable higher education.

From the establishment of the land-grant colleges in the 1860s to the GI Bill [that provided education benefits for veterans] after World War II to the Higher Education Act of 1965, our public universities have advanced the notion that in educating college students for the world they will inhabit, it is necessary to bring people together from diverse parts of society and to educate them in that context. Far from being optional or merely enriching, it is the very essence of what we mean by a liberal or humanistic education.

It is also vital for establishing a cohesive, truly national society—one in which rising generations learn to overcome the biases they absorb as children while also appreciating the unique talents their colleagues bring to any equation. Only education can get us there.

As Justice Thurgood Marshall knew so well: "The legal system can open doors and sometimes even knock down walls. But it cannot build bridges. . . . We will only attain freedom if we learn to appreciate what is different and muster the courage to discover what is fundamentally the same." Cutting affirmative action short now only betrays that history of social progress. And, in the process, it threatens the core value of academically renowned public universities at a time when many Americans list rising tuition costs as one of their gravest economic concerns.

All of this leads to the conclusion that diversity—one of the great strengths of American education—is under siege today. At the elementary- and secondary-school levels, resegregation is making it exceedingly difficult for minority students to get the resources that inspire rising generations to apply to and then

attend college. At the same time, the elimination of affirmative-action programs at our public universities is keeping admissions officials from lifting those same students up to offset the structural inequalities they had to face in getting there.

As we honor the parents, students, lawyers, and nine justices who spoke with one voice in *Brown [v. the Board of Education of Topeka]*, which overturned segregation laws] on that May day 53 years ago, we would all do well to remember that when it comes to responsible diversity programs—those that help our public schools and our great public universities fulfill their historic roles as avenues of economic and cultural mobility—what is wise is also what is just.

“We will only attain freedom if we learn to appreciate what is different and muster the courage to discover what is fundamentally the same.”



# Legislation Is Needed to Help Fight Violence Based on Prejudice

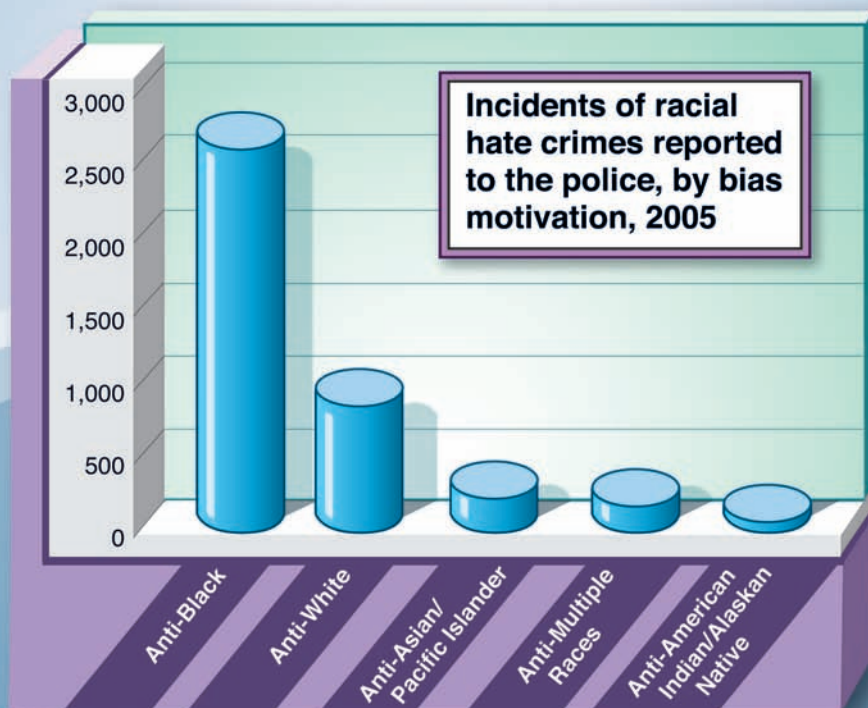
**Julian Bond and Wade Henderson**

Julian Bond is the chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Wade Henderson is the president of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. In the following article they point to a recent rise in the number of hate crimes and argue for national legislation to help prevent this violent discrimination.

Julian Bond and Wade Henderson, "The Need for a Law Against Hate Crimes," *The Hill*, December 6, 2007. Reproduced by permission.

## Racial Hate Crimes by Motivation

Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation show that racial hate crimes are a serious problem in the United States.



Taken from: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Hate Crimes Statistics, 2005," Uniform Crime Reports.





*Longtime civil rights advocate and viewpoint coauthor Julian Bond argues that national hate crimes legislation is needed to prevent violent discrimination against minorities.*





# What You Should Know About Prejudice

Discrimination and intolerance stem from a variety of motivations: racial prejudice, gender prejudice, religious prejudice, prejudice against certain sexual orientations, prejudice against people with disabilities, and prejudice against certain family structures, among others.

## Prejudice Based on Gender

The Equal Pay Act of 1963 requires that men and women be given equal pay for equal work in the same establishment:

- Employers may not pay unequal wages to men and women who perform jobs that require substantially equal skill, effort, and responsibility and that are performed under similar working conditions within the same establishment.
- Pay differentials are permitted when they are based on seniority, merit, quantity or quality of production, or a factor other than sex.

Still, in 2005, women earned only seventy-seven cents for every dollar earned by men. This wage gap was more significant for minority groups, with African American women earning seventy-one cents per dollar earned by men and Latinas earning fifty-eight cents for every dollar earned by men.

## Prejudice Based on Race

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects individuals against employment discrimination on the basis of race,

skin color, and national origin, among other things. The legislation:

- Prohibits discrimination against any employee or job applicant in regard to hiring, termination, promotion, compensation, job training, or any other term, condition, or privilege of employment.
- Prohibits employment decisions based on stereotypes and assumptions about abilities, traits, qualities, or performance.
- Prohibits harassment on the basis of race and color. Ethnic slurs, racial “jokes,” offensive or derogatory comments, or other verbal or physical conduct based on an individual’s race or color constitutes unlawful harassment, especially if the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment, or interferes with the individual’s work performance.
- Prohibits segregation and classification of employees.

However, in fiscal year 2007, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission received 30,510 charges of race discrimination. From 2003 to 2007, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee received about ten reports of employment discrimination against Arab Americans each week.

## **Prejudice Based on Sexual Orientation**

Executive order 13087 of 1998 prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation within the federal civilian workforce. But no federal laws protect citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation in the larger workforce. Some state and local governments have laws in place to protect against this type of discrimination.

As with prejudice in general, sexual orientation discrimination is prevalent in schools and a factor in many incidents of bullying.

- In U.S. schools, 75 percent of students are not protected by laws against harassment or discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

- Ninety-seven percent of students in the U.S. report regularly hearing homophobic remarks in school.

## **Hate Crimes**

Crimes that are motivated by prejudice may be considered in the context of hate crime laws:

- The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 requires the United States Sentencing Commission (USSC) to increase the penalties for federal crimes committed on the basis of perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Title 18 makes it unlawful to injure, intimidate, or interfere with any person's attempt to engage in certain federal activities—such as attending public school, serving on a jury, voting, engaging in employment, or traveling across state lines—based on that person's race, color, religion, or national origin. Persons violating this statute may be federally prosecuted and subject to civil and/or criminal penalties.

In 2006, the Federal Bureau of Investigation identified 9,652 victims of hate crimes. Fifty-two percent of those were victims of racial prejudice, 15 percent were victims of sexual orientation prejudice, and 14 percent were victims of prejudice against their ethnicity or national origin.

# What You Should Do About Prejudice

Whether prejudice is innate or learned or some combination of both, most people agree that it can and should be reduced. Be aware of prejudice and stereotyping in your family or among your friends. Talk about these issues with your parents and peers. Most likely, you will have exposure to some kind of diversity education at school. Ask questions of your teachers, and think about your own conscious and even subconscious prejudices. If you do have a diversity program at your school, ask about computer programs that can help you become aware of subconscious prejudices you might hold.

## Talk to Your Parents and Friends

Because talking about prejudices can increase awareness, address prejudice directly when you hear it or see it. Many times, people are not even aware that they are discriminating against someone. Talking about prejudice with your parents and peers can help them and you.

If, however, you witness violent prejudiced behavior, do not try to confront the violent person. Talk to your parents or teachers who can help you report the behavior to the proper authorities. Laws protect people from these kinds of behaviors. For example, people can be prosecuted for hate crimes or bias-motivated crimes.

## Do Your Research

Prejudice can often stem from unfamiliarity; if we are not exposed to certain groups of people, it is easy to make assumptions and develop stereotypes about those groups. Reading about

prejudice and discrimination can help you understand your biases. Novels and short stories written by and about groups you are unfamiliar with can help you begin to understand what the experiences of others are like. Talk to your teachers to see if they can recommend readings to you. Finally, visit the Web. Many organizations work to reduce prejudice and discrimination in the United States, and they provide helpful information on their Web sites.

### **Examine Your Own Views**

Once you have exposed yourself to these issues, it might be helpful to ask yourself some questions. These questions can help you eliminate both conscious and subconscious prejudice. What is your background? Which groups do you identify with? Do your parents talk to you about prejudice and discrimination? Have you ever hurt someone's feelings or avoided someone because he or she belonged to a particular group? Have you seen your friends discriminate against someone because of his or her race or social class? How did that make you feel? How did that person feel? Do you feel comfortable standing up to your friends about prejudice and discrimination?

### **Take a Stand**

As you read the viewpoints in this book, think about the issues being raised. The readings in this volume are designed to make you think about prejudice and raise your awareness. As you come to know more about prejudice, you can make a difference by working to reduce prejudice in your own life.

Think about where you fit in and how you define yourself. Then, think about how you relate to others. If you are unhappy with the way you interact with people from different groups, do something about it. Try to talk to someone outside of your usual circle of friends. Try to think about what you can learn from the experiences of others.

Finally, stand up for what you think is right. As long as you are in a safe environment, respectfully address incidences of prejudice and discrimination that you witness. And of course, report any violent behavior to a trusted adult.

Anyone can make a difference when it comes to eliminating prejudice, whether it's changing one's own views or raising the awareness of others.

## ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTACT

The editors have compiled the following list of organizations concerned with the issues debated in this book. The descriptions are derived from materials provided by the organizations. All have publications or information available for interested readers. The list was compiled on the date of publication of the present volume; the information provided here may change. Be aware that many organizations take several weeks or longer to respond to inquiries, so allow as much time as possible.

### **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)**

823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017  
(212) 885-7755 • Web site: [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org)

The ADL was founded in 1913 “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Now it is the nation’s premier civil rights/human relations agency. The ADL today fights anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defends democratic ideals, and protects civil rights for all people. The league publishes annual reports and online newsletters to inform the public of the status of hate in America and the league’s efforts to fight it.

### **Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR)**

PO Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302  
(404) 221-0025 • Web site: [www.publiceye.org/cdr/cdr.html](http://www.publiceye.org/cdr/cdr.html)  
e-mail: [cdr@igc.apc.org](mailto:cdr@igc.apc.org)

The CDR is a multiracial organization working to advance the vision for a democratic and diverse society free of racism and bigotry. This community-based coalition fights hate group activity. The center’s publications include *When Hate Groups Come to Town*, which is intended to guide individuals and communities to respond safely and effectively to resulting violence.



### **Center for Equal Opportunity**

815 Fifteenth St. NW, Ste. 928, Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 639-0803 • Web site: [www.ceousa.org](http://www.ceousa.org)

The Center for Equal Opportunity is a nonprofit organization that supports research and publishes policy briefs on issues related to race, ethnicity, and public policy. The center's particular areas of focus include affirmative action, immigration and assimilation, and bilingual education. The center's Web site gives access to the Anti-Discrimination Hotline, which exists to monitor cases of "affirmative action" and "diversity" programs and to bring an end to these unequal opportunities.

### **Diversity Web**

Web site: [www.diversityweb.org](http://www.diversityweb.org)

Diversity Web is a World Wide Web organization that focuses on diversity in higher education. Its Web site highlights three hundred schools in the United States that are working to make an institutional commitment to diversity on campuses. Selected publications are available on the Web site that highlight diversity plans and guides for American colleges and universities.

### **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

4805 Mt. Hope Dr., Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 358-8900 • Web site: [www.naACP.org](http://www.naACP.org)

The NAACP is one of the most prominent civil rights organizations in the country. The organization works to ensure the political, social, educational, and economic equality of all minority citizens in the United States. The NAACP's strategic plan is available for download on its Web site, along with education resources and advocacy tools.

### **National Council of La Raza (NCLR)**

1111 Nineteenth St. NW, Ste. 1000, Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 785-1670 • Web site: [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)

NCLR is an organization that works for the civil rights and economic opportunities of Hispanic Americans. The NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy through community-based organizations. The council publishes reports that examine disaster management for immigrants, educational support for children, and election opportunities and results, among other things.

### **National Organization for Women (NOW)**

1100 H St. NW, Third Fl., Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 628-8669 • Web site: [www.now.org](http://www.now.org)

NOW is the largest, most comprehensive feminist advocacy group in the United States. Its purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in society—sharing equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities with men, while living free from discrimination. Among its many efforts, NOW works to secure reproductive and abortion rights for women and to end all forms of violence against women. The *National NOW Times* covers a range of women's issues and is available on the Web site.

### **National Urban League**

120 Wall St., New York, NY 10005  
(212) 558-5300 • Web site: [www.nul.org](http://www.nul.org)

The National Urban League is a social service and civil rights organization. It works to assist African Americans in the achievement of social and economic equality. The league promotes empowerment through education, economic self-sufficiency, health, leadership, and racial justice. *Opportunity Journal* and *Urban Influence Magazine* examine and inform the continuing civil rights movement.

### **The United States Gay and Lesbian United Front**

13377 Wardlow Rd., Sardinia, OH 45171  
Web site: <http://timlonaker.com>

The United States Gay and Lesbian United Front is a nonprofit organization that works to make sure that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons are elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate and included in their chosen communities of faith. The organization also works to disseminate the latest news on marriage equality.

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