

Good evening.

Affirmative action is something I have opinions about, like I do with many other issues. It's not an issue that I am super-duper passionate about, but I have thought about it. Tonight, I'd like to share with you some of the perspectives I have.

These are some of the reasons I now have opposed affirmative action. One book *Created Equal* by Ward Connerly is very persuasive. I haven't found any writing that is equally persuasive from the other side. His style is excellent. He's not like Rush Limbaugh in the least. He's not inflammatory. He talks from the heart. He also has plenty of logical arguments to back up what he's saying. He tells his story, and he tries to get us to sympathize with his plight. He says, "He has more credibility, or perhaps so, because he is a minority himself." He talks about getting called lots of mean names because he's a minority who opposes affirmative action. He says he goes to some campuses and gets treated horribly. He tells of some good people who may not agree with his position, but respect him. That book of his is one of those books which could totally persuade someone

who's sitting on the fence. Even if you were on the other side, it might be that persuasive.

I think he has the cause of right. And a lot of other issues, conservatives don't. But on this issue, I think conservatives are right. At least people who come from a perspective similar to his. I hear people say "one of the problems with an issue like affirmative action is just deciding what we're talking about since there's different definitions for it." Some say "it's quotas", some , "it's not quotas", some say it's this, some say it's that. Quotas are a subset of affirmative action. Some say "that's all affirmative action is." I do think it tends to be more than just quotas.

Quotas are policies that say you have to have so many blacks, women, whatever, for a given class, a job, recruitment, whatever. Apollos says "this is unfair because you're denying people opportunities and you're not letting the best people come in, regardless of race." When I was in student government, one of the senators who was on the liberal side, also consequently she said, "she disagreed with just about everything I did", so what does that tell you, said to the speaker, one night,

“what are you doing to recruit more women?” And she may have said “people of color”, but whatever she specifically said, the point was, “what is student government doing to advance affirmative action?” The Speaker of the Senate, who was on the conservative side, said that “he wants to get good people regardless of gender.” I think that is a good perspective. If he sincerely believes it, it's a good perspective.

Mad Magazine has made fun of affirmative action on more than one occasion. I remember one *Lighter Side* strip which was written by the late Dave Burr. In the strip there was a white man who had all this education, but the interviewer told him he couldn't have the job. Instead, someone who was black, who had no education, would get the job just because the person was black. This is, quotas, at its worst. It prevents qualified people from getting the position just because they happen to be in a non-minority group.

Some people know how offensive quotas can be, thus rush out and say “affirmative action is not quotas, it's not quotas, it's not quotas”. Some say affirmative

action “is just proactive policies to prevent discrimination.”

Discrimination itself is something most of us, even conservative people, can't oppose. Discrimination per se is an outright... adverse action taken against a minority or a woman just because the person is in that group, whether it's hiring, firing, admittance, promotion, or whatever else. For example, if a workplace didn't hire blacks, whether it was blunt about it, and these days few are, or not, that would be discrimination. That is something that's not necessarily a part of affirmative action [say the experts]. Affirmative action is proactive [say the experts]. This is something that you do after the fact [say the experts].

If a place discriminates, you take legal action against the place. You go to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or you go to your lawyer. I think you have to go to the EEOC first before you get permission to sue. Since I said affirmative action is proactive, that may make it sound good. Generally, the term proactive is a positive term. Certainly it's good to take proactive measures to fight something

as evil as discrimination. The problem is the way affirmative action does it may not be great. Some say affirmative action thus causes us to get our eyes off of real discrimination and instead focus our energy on affirmative action type policies.

A lot of energy these days is indeed put into affirmative action programs. Universities do it. Employers all over the place do it. They make sure that they hire the correct number, they have the correct number in the pool or whatever else. But to me, that's not nearly as important as fighting real discrimination. It's not as important as fighting outright discrimination.

In philosophy, one technique in making an argument is the technique of analogy. What philosophers do is have one example and try to get people to agree with that. Often it's an example that someone will agree with right away. Then what philosophers do is take that very specific example and pull out certain principles They are very inductive, moving from a specific to the general. Then, these general principles are deductively applied to a certain specific situation

that you want to convince people of. I try to do this with affirmative action issues.

Oftentimes, opponents of affirmative action and similar policies say, it's not fair: You're punishing all white people or all males for what some did. It's the old idea that you shouldn't be punished for what someone else did. Minor Threat has a song called "Guilty of Being White", and this song expresses this idea very well.

In order to convince one of my liberal peers in graduate school of this, I tried to use an example from christianity. He was against christianity like I am. So I hoped I could show him the errors in the logic of a certain Christian idea and then make that a general principle to apply deductively to the issue of affirmative action. In christianity there is the issue of original sin. Opponents of this say it's not right to punish all of humanity for what Adam and Eve did. Dan Barker has a song that says, "You can't win with original sin."

So I asked my peer, “Do you think the sins of the fathers and mothers should be the sins of the sons and daughters?” He wanted more elaboration. He too was trained in philosophy [as he told me]. I elaborated on the christian idea. A little. Soon it went into affirmative action type issues. He did not express all that many rational arguments, but he threw at me the old, "You benefited from the oppression." Great.

I've always thought it was wrong for a group of people to be punished for a few. When I was a kid, adults would do that, and I thought it was so unfair. If one kid was in trouble, the whole group would get in trouble. You can't always control the kid. Even if you could, the whole group still shouldn't get in trouble for it. So even if some white people are bad, just as even if Adam and Eve are bad, all should not be punished for it. But this logic is not something that liberals want to accept.

Some opponents of affirmative action even go as far as saying “it's racist.” You hear the term reverse discrimination. Ward Connerly views it in that way. He says, “It's going against the spirit of Martin

Luther King Jr.” He said, “King taught us that we need to have a world where we're judged not on the color of our skin but by the content of our character.” Connerly believes “affirmative action is judging people on the color of their skin.”

One of my professors also said something interesting about racism and affirmative action. He said, “Some of the people who oppose affirmative action have arguments for their position.” He said, “Others are bloody racist.” Indeed, he's right. Some people do hide behind it, as he said. Think of someone like David Duke. David Duke has come forward and has opposed affirmative action. Some say, [like observers note] Duke has... over the years become more sugar-coated, even though we all know who he is. Thus, instead of saying something really outrageous, he gets behind a relatively mainstream position opposing affirmative action [like observers note].

Some people who oppose affirmative action say, we get called racist for opposing it. I think that's horrible. Again, some people who do oppose it are racist. But it's not because they oppose affirmative action. The issue of affirmative action should not be

the litmus test of whether you're racist or not, despite what liberals want to do. There's too many other more important matters. Like I said earlier, Ward Connerly talks about being called lots of really bad names because he opposes affirmative action: People call him “a traitor to his race.” That's horrible. This is one of the reasons I oppose affirmative action, because I agree it is racist.

Some oppose affirmative action because they say it demeans minorities. It gives them a crutch, these people say. I think that's a very valid criticism. With affirmative action policies, the whole point is because minorities have been discriminated against, we need to give them a handicap. You hear the term “leveling the playing field.” I know from my personal life that this leveling the playing field can be really awful.

I resigned in August from the school system. When I worked there, probably the two most gifted children were minorities. I have a policy of not mentioning race unless it's immediately relevant to the conversation at hand. I have no need to describe someone as black unless it's directly relevant. Thus, I

told you that they were minorities because it is very relevant for what I'm about to say. These kids were super, super, super gifted. Very intelligent. Very bright. One was... mixed and one was black. I would think it would be terrible if one day they get a position just because of their color. Instead of looking at their abilities, you're looking at their race. I don't think these kids need handicaps. They can thrive. them. It would be so insulting as these other people are saying if these kids get positions because of affirmative action. They are as smart as you can get. Really. Thus, affirmative action is not what they need. They need opportunity. Prevent discrimination, sure. Give them positions because of their race? No way, Jose.

One of the most stupid related issues is the issue of affirmative action reparations. Reparations are asinine in a sense. In some circumstances, I think reparations are just. To me, what matters is who is actually suffering. I am definitely a big fan of paying restitution to people who have suffered, whether the government causes the suffering or a private citizen. If you're a private citizen and you wreck someone's shed, the state is probably going to require you to

pay restitution. But the government can throw people in jail for however long, and then, unfortunately, we find out the person is innocent. The government doesn't have to pay restitution.

I think in cases such as the Japanese internment, We should pay restitution as long as the people are still alive. People who actually suffered under internment are owed big time from the government.

Reparations are different. Reparations are saying blacks today should be paid because of the slavery in the past. First of all, you have to wonder whether just money is going to solve all these racial problems. Probably not. It's more than a money deal. One dude who I locked horns with at MSU Mankato was a proponent of reparations. He was a newspaper editor. He wouldn't print my pro-life editorial until I started raising a fuss about it to some people there. He once wrote an editorial about reparations. I read this one piece that presented some really good arguments against reparations. It said, "Not all blacks were slaves, and also not all whites were slave

owners.” It's said that there were free blacks, and also there were a great number of whites who were too poor to own slaves. Historians generally say a very small percentage of the population that was white owned slaves. Thus, the argument was, why should blacks who were never slaves be provided reparations? And also, why should whites who were never slave owners have to pay? It's not only making the people who weren't then, it's making the people who are ancestors of the people who never were slaves or slave owners.” It's nuts.

Historian Kenneth Davis discussed in one of his books that “some blacks actually contributed to slavery.” Some people think the answer is easy, just give all blacks reparations. No, it's not that easy. You might actually be giving reparations to someone whose ancestor traded other blacks into slavery. Kenneth Davis says [in the *The Politically Incorrect Guide to U.S. History*], “There were African tribe leaders who sold their fellow blacks into slavery. Shouldn't they have to be responsible?”

Again, it's the asinine issue of ancestors. If the sins of the fathers and mothers are the sins of the sons

and daughters, it's a stupid idea. I didn't cause slavery. I didn't contribute to it. I wasn't around when it happened, as opponents of reparations say. People who want reparations these days weren't actual slaves. Also, when you think about the racial issues, it's hard to figure it out.

I don't see in any way how this could be neat and tidy. Are you going to have some calculation that determines blacks deserve X number of dollars? There are some people who are partially white and partially black. What happens with those people? Do they get reparations or do they have to pay it? Does it matter what percentage is greater, white or black? If someone's 75% white and 25% black, then they have to pay more?

What about other oppressed people? Virtually every ethnic group or racial group has been oppressed at some time. You don't think of white people as being oppressed as a whole much, but certain ethnic groups within the category of white have been oppressed. I am white. Entirely Caucasian. But some of my ancestors were oppressed. My ancestors are Polish. I'm 50% Polish. When Hitler went over to

Poland, he was extra hard on the Polish. He thought the Polish people, being from Eastern Europe, were inferior. He thought Western Europe, particularly the Germanic people of Western Europe, were superior. His reasoning was, inferior people, such as those of Eastern Europe, deserve to be treated horribly because they are inferior. Am I entitled to reparations because my ancestors suffered? A lot of people died in Poland. Poland was a big center of the Holocaust. The big extermination camps were there.

I am 25% German, so unfortunately I may be responsible for paying reparations. It's a good deal I'm 50% Polish because the net amount would be money to me. I would have to pay some, but I have more Polish and German in me, so in the end I get money. It looks like everyone would be exchanging money with everyone else. Almost. Reparations are nuts.

Again, whatever the government does today that oppresses racial groups, the government needs to pay back big time. As long as the people actually suffering are still alive. This one article by this racist dude raised a good point. He was racist, and that's

terrible. He did have a good point about his position. He said, “A lot of white liberals were hypocrites because white liberals talk, the integration talk, but really walk the segregation walk.” He says, “Why do you white liberals live in your nice homes in segregated neighborhoods?” He said, “If you really believed in what you believe in, you would move in to these racially mixed neighborhoods.”

I have seen patronizing liberal attitudes in regard to class. When I worked at that school, the principal was really rich since he was a principal. They make over \$80,000 a year. He lived in a really nice neighborhood. I live in a low-income neighborhood. I only made \$13,000 then. He was telling me about how I need to act around low-income children. Yet I live in a low-income area. Stupid liberals. He doesn't. He lives in a nice neighborhood.

I agree with the sentiment that if people support affirmative action, they better do what they say. I believe in practicing what one preaches. “An example is the best sermon”, said Mark Twain. Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” “Talk minus action equals zero”, someone

said. If you support affirmative action and you are white, give up your job so some minority or woman, or preferably a minority woman, can have it. I don't think many people want to do that. They want to retain their seat. Yet they want to create conditions that make the rest of us have more difficult times getting jobs.

I really don't care who gets a job as long as I get a job. Unfortunately there is competition, there's not unlimited jobs out there. Plus, certain jobs have lots of people who want them. If you support reparations, I say start paying if you're white. Start paying. Put your money where your mouth is or shut up.

Since I believe in taking action, I think it's important to find out how we can take action against affirmative action. Ward Connerly talks about how he has taken some action [in his book]: What he does is something that I don't think many of us could do because it would involve a lot of sacrifice. His main issue is affirmative action. So it's something he can devote himself to fully. My main issues are alcohol, television, among others. I can make lots of

sacrifices in opposing television and alcohol.
Affirmative Action is far down on my list.

What Ward Connerly does [according to his book] is “his business doesn't do business with other businesses which use what he calls race-based preferences.” I think that's really noble. It's really hard to find a job the way it is. So if you as a job applicant are trying to only go to places that don't use racial based preferences, you're going to be really limited.

I have some other limitations the way it is, so that's enough. I have various ethical restrictions for employment. There's a lot I eliminate. Fortunately, there's still a lot left, but I eliminate a lot. If I added Ward Connerly's notion, that would eliminate just about everything, since so many people in so many places fall under these affirmative action laws.

I have found a way to fight back. It's really a subtle way. I have applied to a lot of jobs. First before I worked for the school system and now before I got hired in collections. When I worked for the school

system, The first day I went down to Human Resources. I had to fill out some paperwork. On one of the forms was affirmative action questions. I left that blank intentionally. The one employee at Human Resources saw that and asked, "If I did that on purpose?" I said yes. Fortunately, he laughed it at that. Since I didn't agree with affirmative action, I wanted to not comply with it. At least the listing procedures. The good news is, you don't have to fill those out. I knew that, and that's why I didn't do it. The forms are usually very explicit about this. They say it's not required, it can't be held against you in the job hiring process. Thus, employers have to beg you or try to persuade you to do it.

In other matters, if you take a stand, you're probably going to have to make sacrifices. Here, you can take a stand without having to make a sacrifice. It can't be held against you, yet you can still throw some sand in the gears of this horrible mechanism. It's a win-win situation for you. After I resigned from the school system, I really... got this going. I got a lot of questionnaires about affirmative action. Some places even had the gall to send me a rejection letter and then ask me to send back the affirmative action

form. You just rejected me and you think I'm going to help you. with something that's stupid to begin with.

The bad side of this is the places don't necessarily know why you're not filling them out. Many people probably don't fill them out because they're lazy or they don't feel like it. I bet only a few are like me who don't fill them out because of a reason. based in principles. If you were bold, you could even write messages on these forms and send them to the places in their closest page, paid envelopes. If you put your mind to it, there's a lot of ways you can fight affirmative action.

When you get down to it, I don't think affirmative action is the most important issue. For one, it's not a life or death issue. Certainly, it affects quality of life. Whether, for the whole, it does so for better or for worse is hard to say. I think it decreases, despite great attention, It's very admirable to want to stop racial discrimination and give people the even playing field. Unfortunately, I don't think affirmative action is the way to go. In issues such as abortion and the death penalty, people may die if you advance

one position. People are probably not going to directly die from policies either way, but it can certainly cause a good or bad quality of life. If people aren't getting opportunity, that may lead to lots of negative circumstances. Whether the people are minorities or whites.

I remember Howard Dean got a lot of flack for saying "he thought affirmative action should be based on class rather than race." What a good perspective he has on that. Class is something else. I have seen people who were liberal Every other issue, race, gender, sexual orientation, even being sensitive to transgender matters. But when it came down to class, they were classist.

I think we need to get rid of affirmative action. We need to find other ways to stop discrimination.

Good evening.