

immigration reform must address race preferences

For many years now, our nation has debated the merits of race preferences ("affirmative action"). This debate has been conducted in our legislatures, our courts, our schools, our communities and at the ballot box. ■ Now, our nation is engaged in a debate about immigration. This debate is wide ranging and many people honorably and strenuously disagree over what course America should take. However, immigration and race preferences cannot be considered in isolation. Under existing laws and policies, the majority of immigrants coming to America will automatically be eligible for race preferences and privileges not provided to the great majority of Americans. *This is unfair!* ■ As voters in California, Washington and Michigan made clear in their overwhelming support of ballot measures banning government mandated racial preferences – and as voters in five other states will have the opportunity to prove again in November 2008 – the *American people strongly oppose the idea that our government should treat us differently* based on race, ethnicity, sex or national origin. They understand that while preferences were aimed at giving a helping hand to those who had historically suffered discrimination, in practice they have served above all to compound injustice, needlessly breeding resentment by systematically privileging some Americans over others. Yet, immigrants cannot even claim to be victims of the historical discrimination that "affirmative action" was designed to redress. ■ It is essential that any new immigration legislation not perpetuate – indeed not exacerbate – these injustices. Any new legislation should include carefully drafted provisions to ensure that the new immigrants and their children *not be afforded any special privileges* that put existing Americans, including minority Americans who have suffered actual discrimination in the past, at a disadvantage. ■ We, the undersigned, hold a variety of views about immigration. But we are united in the conviction that *each individual should be judged on his or her merits*. While immigrants and their descendants should be afforded the right to compete fairly and freely in every aspect of American life, they should receive no special benefits on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity or national origin. We have drafted language that would enable the Congress to *preserve this very important objective*.

Ours is a nation dedicated to the proposition that all of us should be treated as equals under the law. Those who seek to join the American family should likewise be treated as equals. No individual or group of individuals should bring to our land an expectation for a future entitlement to preferential treatment – and under no circumstances should we grant it.

Ward Connerly
American Civil Rights Institute

Linda Chavez
One Nation Indivisible

Peter Schaeffer - Diversity
Alliance for a Sustainable America

Roger Clegg
Center for Equal Opportunity

Jennifer Gratz
Michigan Civil Rights Initiative

Manny Klausner
Libertarian Law Council

Max McPhail
Arizona Civil Rights Initiative

Diane Schachterle
American Civil Rights Coalition

John Uhlmann
American Civil Rights Foundation

Heather MacDonald
Manhattan Institute

Tim Asher
Missouri Civil Rights Initiative

Leon Drolet
Michigan Taxpayers Alliance

Joe Hicks
Community Advocates, Inc

George LaNoue - Project on
Civil Rights and Public Contracts

Valery Pech Orr
Colorado Civil Rights Initiative

Harry Stein
City Journal

Johnny Zamrzla
American Civil Rights Coalition

Andrew Thomas
Maricopa County Attorney

John Carlson
Washington State Civil Rights Initiative

Tim Fay
Adversity.net

Stuart H. Hurlbert
San Diego State University

Mychal Massie
Syndicated Columnist

John Rosenberg
Discriminations.us

Doug Tietz - Nebraska and
Oklahoma Civil Rights Initiatives