

Discrimination and Affirmative Action

May 1995

Findings in Brief

- Majorities of voters feel that “a great deal” or “some” racial/ethnic discrimination exists in California against blacks, Latinos and Asians — with more seeing discrimination against Latinos and blacks than against Asians.
- Attitudes about discrimination vary by the race/ethnicity of the voter. Whites are less likely than minorities to believe that “a great deal” of racial/ethnic discrimination exists.
- There is widespread opposition to giving weight to race/ethnicity when choosing between two equally qualified applicants to college or a job or promotion. About eight in ten voters oppose this approach, including majorities of whites and racial/ethnic minorities.
- Slightly more voters (38%) report having greater concerns about whites losing out in the workplace because of affirmative action policies, than about minorities losing out because of racial/ethnic discrimination (33%). Opinions about this are sharply divided along racial/ethnic lines.
- When asked how much discrimination exists against women in California today, a plurality (45%) maintains that “some” exists. Women are far more likely than men to believe that sexual discrimination against women exists in California.
- About eight in ten voters oppose the idea of giving weight to gender when choosing between two equally qualified candidates for college or for a job or promotion. This view is shared by large majorities of men and women.
- Slightly more voters (40%) express greater concern about women losing out due to sexual discrimination in the workplace than are concerned about affirmative action policies working against men (32%). Opinions on this are highly polarized between men and women.
- Half of voters (50%) supports the idea of giving some weight to economic need when choosing between two equally qualified applicants for college admissions, while 44% disagree. But, by a greater than two to one margin (64% to 30%) voters oppose this approach when choosing between two equally qualified candidates for a job or a promotion.
- Awareness of the proposed “California Civil Rights Initiative” that would abolish state and local laws relating to affirmative action remains at a high level (62%). After being read a summary description of the proposed initiative, a majority of voters (56%) says they would vote YES on the initiative, 34% would vote NO and 10% are undecided if the election were held now.

Most believe discrimination exists against minorities in California

Majorities of voters feel that “a great deal” or “some” discrimination exists in California today against blacks, Latinos and Asians. About three in four voters believe that Latinos are discriminated against “a great deal” (30%) or “some” (44%). Similar proportions say this regarding blacks — 28% feel blacks are discriminated against “a great deal,” while 47% say there is “some” discrimination against them. Somewhat smaller proportions believe Asians are discriminated against “a great deal” (19%) or “some” (43%).

Attitudes about discrimination vary by the race/ethnicity of the voter, with whites being less likely than others to believe “a great deal” of discrimination exists.

Perceptions of the amount of discrimination against Latinos, blacks and Asians in California

	A great deal	Only Some	None a little	at all	No opin.
Perceived discrimination against LATINOS					
Statewide	<u>30%</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>
Whites (Anglos)	24%	47	20	8	1
Latinos	49%	37	8	6	*
Blacks**	51%	35	9	5	*
Asian/others**	43%	32	17	8	*
Perceived discrimination against BLACKS					
Statewide	<u>28%</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
Whites (Anglos)	22%	51	20	6	1
Latinos	44%	36	13	6	1
Blacks**	60%	40	*	*	*
Asians/others**	44%	29	11	16	*
Perceived discrimination against ASIANS					
Statewide	<u>19%</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>
White (Anglos)	15%	43	29	10	3
Latinos	29%	44	19	7	1
Blacks**	35%	48	13	4	*
Asians/others**	33%	39	20	8	*

* less than 1/2 of 1%

** relatively small sample base

Opposition to giving weight to race/ethnicity when considering equally qualified college or job applicants

Given the situation where two candidates for college admissions or for a job or promotion possessed about equal qualifications, voters were asked whether or not any weight should be given to the race/ethnicity of the applicants. The survey shows that there is widespread opposition to giving weight to the race/ethnicity of the applicants, with about eight in ten opposing the idea.

The view that race/ethnicity should not be given weight is shared by majorities of whites and members of each racial/ethnic subgroup of the voting population.

If two candidates for (college admissions) (a job or promotion) possessed about equal qualifications, should weight be given to the RACE/ETHNICITY of the candidates?

	Yes, give some weight	No, do not	No opinion
<u>Race/ethnicity vis-a-vis college admissions</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>4</u>
Whites (Anglos)	15%	81	4
Latinos	17%	80	3
Blacks**	26%	60	14
Asians/others**	27%	72	1
<u>Race/ethnicity vis-a-vis a job or promotion</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>3</u>
Whites (Anglos)	12%	86	2
Latinos	23%	74	3
Blacks**	34%	56	10
Asians/others**	25%	73	2

** relatively small sample base

Workplace concerns about whites losing out due to affirmative action slightly greater than concerns about minorities losing out due to job discrimination

Voters were asked which was of greater concern to them in the workplace — minorities losing out because of racial/ethnic discrimination or whites losing out because of affirmative action policies. The results show that slightly more than one in three voters (38%) are more concerned about whites losing out because of affirmative action policies, while 33% report a greater concern about minorities losing out because of discrimination. Another 13% volunteer that they are concerned about both and 16% say neither or have no opinion.

Opinions are sharply divided by the race/ethnicity of the voter. By a 45% to 25% margin, whites are more concerned about whites losing out because of affirmative action policies. On the other hand, large pluralities of Latinos and Asians, and virtually all blacks, say that they have greater concerns about minorities losing out in the workplace because of racial/ethnic discrimination.

Which is of greater concern to you in the workplace — minorities losing out because of discrimination or whites losing out because of affirmative action policies?

	Whites losing out	Minorities losing out	Both	Neither/no opinion
Statewide	38%	33	13	16
Whites (Anglos)	45%	25	14	16
Latinos	28%	54	8	10
Blacks**	*	80	5	15
Asians/others**	24%	40	15	21

* less than 1/2 of 1%

** relatively small sample base

Discrimination against women in California

While about six in ten voters recognize that discrimination against women exists, most use the term “some” rather than “a great deal” in describing its extent.

Specifically, 45% say that there is “some” discrimination against women and another 17% categorize it as being “a great deal.” A little more than one-fourth (27%) say there is “only a little” and another 10% say there is no discrimination against women.

When attitudes toward sexual discrimination against women are examined by the gender of the voter, women are more likely than men to believe that discrimination exists today. Nearly three in four women (72%) believe there is “a great deal” or “some” discrimination against women today, compared to 50% of men who feel this way. In addition, non-whites (including both men and women) are also more apt than white men or women to believe “a great deal” of discrimination against women exists.

Perceptions of the amount of discrimination against women in California

	A great deal	Some	Only a little	None at all	No opinion
<u>Perceived discrimination against WOMEN</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>1</u>
Men (total)	13%	37	34	15	1
White men	9%	38	38	15	*
Non-white men	26%	35	22	15	2
Women (total)	20%	52	20	6	2
White women	18%	54	19	6	3
Non-white women	28%	46	22	4	*

* less than 1/2 of 1%

Opposition to giving weight to gender when considering equally qualified college or job applicants

About eight in ten voters oppose the idea of giving weight to gender when choosing between two equally qualified candidates for college admissions or for a job or a promotion.

There are no large differences between the attitudes of men and women about this either in relation to college admissions or for a job or a promotion, with three in four or more opposed. Majorities of voters among all subgroups oppose giving weight to the gender of the applicants, although non-whites (both men and women) are somewhat more inclined than white men and women to think gender should be given some weight.

If two candidates for (college admissions) (a job or promotion) possessed about equal qualifications, should weight be given to the GENDER of the applicants?

	Yes, give some weight	No, do not	No opinion
<u>Gender vis-a-vis college admissions</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>5</u>
Men (total)	12%	84	4
White men	9%	89	2
Non-white men	24%	69	7
Women (total)	14%	79	7
White women	10%	84	6
Non-white women	24%	64	12
<u>Gender vis-a-vis a job or promotion</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>5</u>
Men (total)	13%	82	5
White men	10%	87	3
Non-white men	25%	66	9
Women (total)	18%	76	6
White women	15%	81	4
Non-white women	27%	61	12

Workplace concerns about women losing out due to discrimination slightly greater than concerns about men losing out due to affirmative action policies

Voters were also asked whether they were more concerned about women losing out because of sexual discrimination in the workplace or men losing out because of affirmative action policies. The results show that a slightly larger proportion of voters is more concerned about women losing out.

Currently, 40% of voters say they are more concerned about women losing out because of sexual discrimination in the workplace vs. 32% who are more concerned about men losing out because of affirmative action policies. Another 11% volunteer being concerned about both and 17% say neither or have no opinion.

Opinions about this split sharply along gender lines, with women much more likely to be concerned about women losing out because of gender discrimination and men more likely to be concerned about men losing out because of affirmative action policies.

Which is of greater concern to you in the workplace — women losing out because of discrimination or men losing out because of affirmative action policies

	Women losing out	Men losing out	Both	Neither/no opinion
Statewide	40%	32	11	17
Men (total)	26%	43	13	18
White men	23%	46	12	19
Non-white men	36%	31	14	19
Women (total)	53%	23	9	15
White women	47%	24	11	18
Non-white women	71%	21	5	3

Many believe economic need should be considered for college admissions, but majority opposes giving it weight for job or promotion candidates

Voters were asked whether some weight should be given to the economic need of the applicants when deciding between two equally qualified candidates for college admissions or for a job or promotion. Half (50%) of voters are supportive of giving some weight to economic need vis-a-vis college admissions, although 44% disagree. However, by a greater than two to one margin (64% to 30%) voters oppose this approach with regard to evaluating candidates for a job or promotion.

There are some differences in opinion according to the annual household income of voters, with those in the top earning bracket less supportive of the idea of giving some weight to the economic need of the applicants.

If two candidates for (college admissions) (a job or promotion) possessed about equal qualifications, should weight be given to the ECONOMIC NEED of the applicants?

	Yes, give some weight	No, do not	No opinion
<u>Economic need as a factor in college admissions</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>6</u>
Less than \$20,000	56%	34	10
\$20,000 - \$39,999	52%	38	10
\$40,000 - \$59,999	50%	46	4
\$60,000 or more	45%	54	1
<u>Economic need as a factor for a job or promotion</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>6</u>
Less than \$20,000	38%	51	11
\$20,000 - \$39,999	32%	62	6
\$40,000 - \$59,999	31%	68	1
\$60,000 or more	22%	74	4

High awareness, initial support for proposed "California Civil Rights Initiative"

Awareness of the proposed initiative that would abolish state and local laws relating to affirmative action, known as the "California Civil Rights Initiative," remains at a high level. Currently, 62% of California voters report having heard of the initiative, identical to the level of voter awareness found three months ago.

Those aware of the initiative were asked whether they were initially inclined to support or oppose the proposed initiative prior to a reading of its ballot description. Of the 62% aware of the initiative, 31% say they are inclined to support it, 19% are inclined to oppose it, while 12% have no opinion. These percentages are also very similar to initial levels of support found last February.

Awareness and initial voter disposition on proposed "California Civil Rights Initiative" to abolish state and local laws relating to affirmative action (prior to reading of ballot summary)

	May '95	Feb. '95
Not aware of proposed initiative	38%	38%
Aware of proposed initiative	<u>62</u>	<u>62</u>
Inclined to support	31	31
Inclined to oppose	19	18
Not sure	12	13

CCRI favored five to three after voters are read a ballot summary

All voters, regardless of any prior awareness, were read the following summary of the measure.

"This proposed initiative would prohibit state and local governments from granting preferential treatment to any individual or group using race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin as a criterion for hiring, promoting, granting admissions to college or selecting public contractors."

After being read this description, a majority of voters (56%) says they would vote YES on the initiative if an election were being held today, while 34% would vote NO and 10% are undecided. This compares to a 60% to 35% margin of support for the initiative found last February.

Support for the initiative is strongest among Republicans, conservatives, white men, those with only a bachelor's degree from college, and voters age 50-59. Half or more of Democrats, liberals, blacks, and non-white women oppose the measure.

How voters divide after summary of proposed "California Civil Rights Initiative" is read

(% of total)		Would vote Yes	Would vote No	Undecided
(100%)	Statewide	May '95 56%	34	10
		Feb. '95 60%	35	5
Party				
(46%)	Democrats	42%	50	8
(42%)	Republicans	75%	18	7
(12%)	Other**	47%	32	21
Political ideology				
(36%)	Conservatives	70%	22	8
(45%)	Moderates	60%	31	9
(19%)	Liberals	23%	67	10
Gender				
(48%)	Men	<u>61%</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>7</u>
(37%)	White men	67%	28	5
(11%)	Non-white men	42%	47	11
(52%)	Women	<u>52%</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>12</u>
(38%)	White women	58%	29	13
(14%)	Non-white women	34%	56	10
Race/Ethnicity				
(75%)	White (Anglos)	62%	28	10
(12%)	Latinos	43%	49	8
(7%)	Blacks**	22%	61	17
(6%)	Asians/others**	44%	49	7
Age				
(17%)	18-29	49%	43	8
(24%)	30-39	59%	34	7
(20%)	40-49	50%	42	8
(14%)	50-59	68%	25	7
(25%)	60 or older	57%	30	13
Education				
(28%)	High school graduate or less	50%	36	14
(37%)	Some college/trade school	59%	32	9
(18%)	College graduate	69%	25	6
(17%)	Post graduate work	46%	47	7

**relatively small sample base

(The findings in this report come from a statewide survey of 744 California voters. Interviewing was conducted May 16-22, 1995 by telephone in English or Spanish. The sample was selected using random digit dialing methods and reflects an accurate and reliable representation of the California voter population. Elliott Barkan, Professor of History, CSU-San Bernardino, assisted in the development of the questions asked in this survey.)

The weighted sample sizes of subgroups reported in this release are as follows: men (361), white men (275), non-white men (86), women (383), white women (283), non-white women (100), whites (558), Latinos (94), blacks (50), Asians/others (42), Democrats (342), Republicans (312), others (90), conservatives (268), moderates (334), liberals (142), 18-29 (127), 30-39 (172), 40-49 (149), 50-59 (104), 60 or older (182), H.S. grad. or less (204), some college (275), college grad. (134), post graduate (130).)