

Talking Point A: Organize to preserve affirmative action and further racial justice

Pro-affirmative action legislation

Time after time it has been proven that when people truly understand what affirmative action programs are, they declare their support. After the passage of Proposition 209 in California, students attempted to pass the **Equal Educational Opportunity Initiative**, which read simply: "In order to provide equal opportunity, promote diversity, and combat discrimination in public education, the state may consider the economic background, race, sex, ethnicity, and national origin of qualified individuals." Florida's NAACP wrote their own **Florida Equal Opportunity Initiative** in an attempt to save affirmative action in their state. Lacking both the resources and the time of anti-affirmative action forces, both initiatives failed, but were effective campaigns to build unity among pro-affirmative action forces and educate the public about the importance of affirmative action.

Pro-affirmative action lawsuits

After the passage of Proposition 209 in California, the ACLU filed a lawsuit arguing that Proposition 209 was unconstitutional because it violated the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment. The California Supreme Court refused to hear the case. In Michigan, a **federal suit** has been filed over the use of the term "civil rights" in the title of the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative's anti-affirmative action legislation.

Private colleges support affirmative action

During the *Gratz v. Bollinger* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* Michigan cases, a coalition of private colleges and universities filed an **amicus brief** in support of affirmative action. The colleges urged the Supreme Court to "consider the experience of admissions before diversity was highly valued and before race-conscious approaches were employed, and the progress toward more equal opportunity since that revolution. It should consider the realities of admitting applicants, to serve a highly selective college's mission, in a society in which race still matters in determining a person's available opportunities and life experience, and the effects of discrimination and entrenched discrimination still linger."

Mandate that students who perform in high school have access to college

Education activists are working on "**Ten Percent Plans**," to ensure that students who perform well in their respective high schools have access to state universities, no matter how their high schools may compare to each other. The engineers of these plans believe students who lack access to college- and test-prep classes in their high schools still deserve the option to attend a university in their state.