

14th Amendment in Regards to College Admissions

The University of California Regents vs Bakke, 1978. A white man applies under general admission to a college twice. The first time he scored too low and was denied, the next time he scored high, and was still denied admission. The court found that the college had a special admissions process which acted as a "racial quota," meaning people with lower scores than him was admitted because their ethnicity was that of a minority's. The college argued that in the interest of the state, their process is meant to improve integration in medical professions. Their argument did not stand. Why? Because it is still judged base on race, which is unconstitutional and violates Equal Protection Laws.

Grutter v Bollinger, 2003. A white Michigan resident is not admitted though they had a 3.8 GPA and a 161LSAT score. One of the arguments was that it was not unconstitutional because the government could use this to fix past discrimination. Now these two cases are talking about affirmative action, which means, "An act or policy favoring those who tend to suffer from discrimination, especially in relation to employment or education." This means these colleges had applied affirmative action to favor minority ethnicities or gender because they tend to be discriminated against. However, by doing this the opposite is true as well. By favoring one race or gender, you put a disadvantage upon another one. In other words, reverse discrimination. This is all in the name of bringing diversity to our campuses and employment.

Now I am all about bringing diversity to our campuses. I want everyone to be able to get a great education because I do believe in the 14th Amendment. I also believe that there are plenty of people who are at a disadvantage and who need help, but not because of their ethnicity.

Now why exactly is affirmative action favoring gender and race faulty? One. It is not flawless regarding diversity. The purpose of diversity is to bring about different cultures and ideas; A different skin-tone doesn't mean they have a different culture or idea. But most importantly, is that it weakens a fundamental value of having merit. The person must earn it. If colleges admit people based on gender or race and not merit, it would be a detriment to all parties.

In addition, it would not be fixing past racial discrimination. Giving people free passes because of the past, shows the people, that they are separate, and still the victims. The 14th Amendment grants everyone born or naturalized in America the right to life, liberty, property and equal protection under the law. We have African Americans, Latino Americans, Chinese Americans, Whatever-ethnicity Americans, but we all have something in common. We are Americans! We can put the past down, and move forward.

In fact, what holds people back is not their gender or race, but money. The gap between the wealthy and the impoverished grows larger, and there are those who want to go to college but can't financially afford it. I propose affirmative action based on socioeconomic class. It would be a last resort, and no it's not perfect, however if one with more financial security is denied, they still can apply elsewhere. Not every person has that privilege. For this

proposal to work, merit must be considered above everything including their financial status. This way of using affirmative action would educate those who want to do the work but are poor, help them get better jobs, and potentially close the class gap. The point is to give everyone an opportunity, which can only be done if they are willing to do the work, not because they were born a certain way.

I am Rina McClain, a soon-to-be graduate of Muskegon High School. Thank you.