

7 December 2000

54 Legislative Council Bill #3

**UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
STUDENT UNION**

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**A Bill**

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**Bill History**

The history of special preferences for any citizen based on their unique color or race has been one of institutionalized discrimination against those same people and the rest of the population. To accept the notion that an individual can receive “added consideration” based solely on a characteristic they were born with is inherent of a caste system and is fundamentally opposed to the principles espoused by our American ideals. America was founded on the principles of equal opportunity for its people. Certainly, our history is peppered with questionable applications of this high-minded ideal, but the issue remains of how best to achieve parity of opportunity without artificially elevating those not best qualified.

45 LCB #19 says:

Affirmative action is a term which broadly encompasses any measures beyond simple termination of a discriminatory practice, adopted to correct or compensate for past or present discrimination or to prevent discrimination from occurring in the future. Elimination of inequalities in public employment, public contracting and public education have been the main goals of affirmative action.

Affirmative Action is not the problem. To be more precise, it is the use of racial preferences incorporated into that program that is contested. The University of Colorado should be an academy based on skill and merit. Those who study here should be the best qualified based on a blind set of admissions criteria, with limited allowances for those under qualified in academics but possessing an exceptional skill set. If a student excels in their academic pursuits, meets the qualifications set by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and has the necessary character to pursue a college education, they should be granted admission. If they fail in these qualifications, they should not.

Under guidelines issued by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the University provided a 20% freshman class loophole for the incoming class in fall

2000. Twenty percent of students admitted failed to meet the admission requirement of a 103 index score, a number tabulated by compilation of a student's high school GPA and college aptitude standardized test scores. These 20% were admitted at the University's discretion. Special consideration was paid to applicants' extracurricular activities, athletic ability, leadership skill, musical talent, cultural and economic background, and a wide range of other qualities. However, within this window, the University may accept a student who does not meet the 103 index score by providing "added consideration" based solely on an applicant's race.

The reasoning for the racial preferences is, and always has been, to atone for past inequities and bring about racial harmony. This in turn is supposed to increase cultural and ideological diversity. Yet this notion flies in the face of reason. The University of Colorado should seek, as much as possible, to evaluate people on their merits as individuals, not as an aggregate group of characteristics. This program is a hindrance to minority students and an insult to those who are qualified yet second-guessed. The obligation of the University of Colorado is to guarantee equal opportunity and ensure that the application process is fair and unbiased, not to promote a program of forced proportional representation

The race box on applications represents the antithesis of everything that had hoped to be accomplished at the onset of affirmative action. There have been sub-standard results from this program. Racial impartiality as a final objective is suffering and the University still cannot show proportional representation in the student body. In fact, only 13% of new students enrolled for the fall of 1999 were students of color. The University of Colorado still does not enjoy true equality and it never will until it eliminates racial preferences. The current system is failing all students and it is time that the Student Union takes action.

Rather than have a program that favors some students at the expense of others, the University needs to pursue a program that aggressively recruits underrepresented students through alternative methods. That means sending more representatives to economically disadvantaged areas where historically the University has done a poor job of recruiting students. More attention also needs to be paid to recruiting qualified students from community colleges where they have already exhibited their commitment to educating themselves. Once at the University, a better program needs to be implemented to retain students in need and help facilitate their timely graduation. As the premier academic institution in this state, we should be leading the charge towards achieving a true state of racial impartiality and should not tolerate classes among students. No student's rights are secure as long as the University of Colorado has the power to make you check a box and to confer benefits on the basis of that box.

This bill will likely meet strong opposition from proponents of racial preferences. Those who oppose this bill, like those who support it, should be able to articulate their position without resorting to techniques such as flooding Legislative Council meetings with an angry mob or conducting a slanderous discussion about the motives of those who authored and sponsored this bill, or those who oppose it. We represent all 25,000

students of the University and are here to have conversations about the issues that affect them; this is one of those issues.

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### **Bill Summary**

This bill clarifies UCSU's position in Special Order 45 LCB #19, from November 14, 1996, eliminating the provisions regarding racial preferences in the admissions process.

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**THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED by the Legislative Council of the University of Colorado Student Union, THAT;**

**SECTION 1:** UCSU supports the elimination of racial preferences and categorizations on admissions applications and all other official University documents.

**SECTION 2:** UCSU supports the aggressive recruitment of minority students from throughout the state of Colorado and elsewhere. Specifically targeting socio-economically disadvantaged areas where recruitment in the past has been poor.

**SECTION 3:** UCSU supports a vigorous set of retention programs on campus designed to help those in need, once here, to complete their education at CU-Boulder.

**SECTION 4:** UCSU will pursue a course to eliminate racial and gender preferences and promote equal opportunity in the hiring, firing, retention, tenure promotion process, admissions and dismissal processes at all levels of the University of Colorado.

**SECTION 5:** UCSU will lobby through the Legislative Affairs Commission, office of the UCSU Executive and in all official statements to eliminate racial and gender preferences and promote equal opportunity in the hiring, firing, retention, tenure promotion process, admissions and dismissal processes at all levels of the University of Colorado.

**SECTION 6:** This bill takes effect upon passage.

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Failed

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