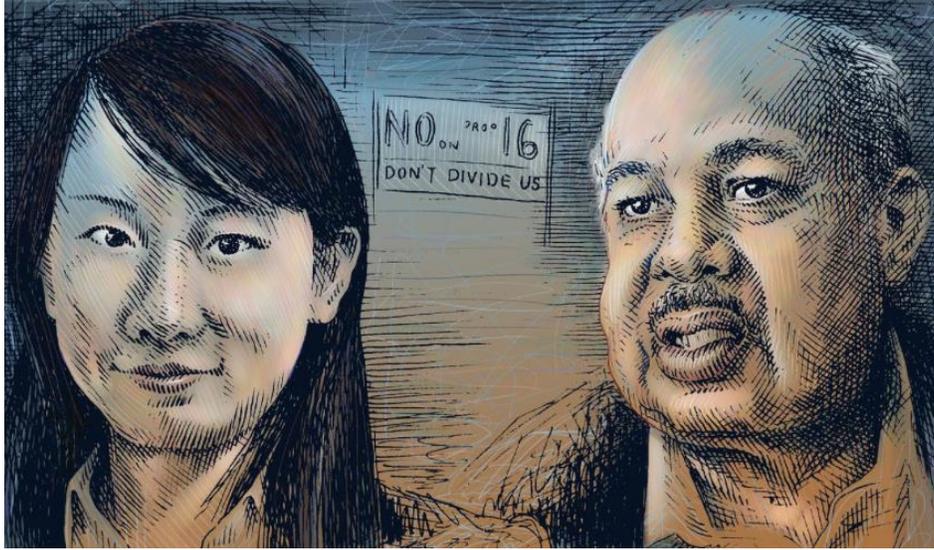


The Duo That Defeated the ‘Diversity Industry’

Californians rejected racial preferences even more soundly this year than in 1996. Will the Supreme Court reverse itself next?

By **Tunku Varadarajan**, Wall Street Journal, Nov. 20, 2020

<https://californiansforequalrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Duo.pdf>



Ward Connerly, 81, is a black Louisiana native who’s spent the past quarter-century campaigning against racial preferences. Wenyan Wu, 33, is a Chinese immigrant who has recently become an activist opposed to anti-Asian discrimination in higher education. They joined forces this June.

He’s the grizzled mentor who says he got out of his “rocking chair” to defend “the American creed.” She, his protegee, is outspoken about freedom in the classic American way, yet deferential to the older man in a manner that’s unmistakably Asian. She refers to him as “Mr. Connerly” throughout the interview, which is done on Zoom—Ms. Wu speaking from rural Georgia, where she lives because “the cost of living is low”; Mr. Connerly from an office near California’s capital, Sacramento.

The pair led the team that vanquished California’s progressive elite on Nov. 3, when Proposition 16—a ballot referendum that would have reinstated racial preferences by state and local government agencies, including universities—was defeated, 57% to 43%, according to the latest count. Mr. Connerly is president and Ms. Wu executive director of Californians for Equal Rights, known widely as No on 16, the principal committee organized in opposition to the ballot measure. “Mr. Connerly is captain of the team,” she says impishly. “I’m the enforcer.”

The result should be “chastening for the left and the race activists,” Mr. Connerly says. Joe Biden carried California nearly 2 to 1 over President Trump. That means at least 3.5 million Biden voters cast ballots against the racial-preference amendment, which Democratic lawmakers put on the ballot and Mr. Biden’s running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, endorsed.

It’s not the first time something like this has happened. Proposition 209, the constitutional initiative that banned preferences in the first place, won California voters’ approval in 1996, even as Bill Clinton was carrying California on his way to re-election. Although the state has shifted considerably to the left since then—Mr. Biden’s vote share exceeded Mr. Clinton’s by more than 12 points—the rejection of racial preferences appears to have been even more resounding this time. Proposition 209, styled the California Civil Rights Initiative, had less than 55% support.

Mr. Connerly led the 1996 ballot effort after persuading his fellow University of California regents to ban preferences in UC admissions earlier that year. The state was the first to adopt a ban on racial preferences. Eight more have done so since, five by ballot measure (Washington, Michigan, Nebraska, Arizona and Oklahoma), two by legislation (New Hampshire and Idaho), and one by executive order of the governor

(Florida). Mr. Connerly says proudly that “37.7% of people in our country live in a state that is free of preferences.”

All this despite the outsize clout of preference proponents. No on 16 had to overcome a vast funding disparity. Whereas the referendum’s backers had a war chest of \$27 million, “we raised a little over \$1.7 million,” Ms. Wu says, “and nearly all of our funds came from 7,000 Chinese-American donors of modest means.” Asians are harder hit than whites by racial preferences in higher education; Ms. Wu estimates their admissions to UC schools would have fallen as much as 50% if Proposition 16 passed. When an NBC reporter raised this point with a Democratic state senator, he shrugged it off: “Black and Hispanic people have even greater concerns.”

The Yes campaign received \$6.5 million from a single donor—Quinn Delaney, chairman of the Oakland-based Akonadi Foundation, which says it aims to “eliminate structural racism.” The largest contribution received by No on 16 was less than 1% as large—\$50,000 from Students for Fair Admissions, a nonprofit group that has sued Harvard, alleging that it discriminates against Asians.

“Patricia Quillin, wife of the Netflix CEO, gave \$1 million,” Ms. Wu adds, then goes on to list other givers of “big sums”: the California Teachers Association, Blue Shield, the [Pacific Gas & Electric](#) Co. Other donors include Steve Ballmer, former CEO of Microsoft, as well as owners of the San Francisco 49ers, the San Francisco Giants and the Los Angeles Dodgers. By contrast, Ms. Wu says, the lone \$50,000 donation accounted for “only 2.9% of our funds.”

If No on 16 was a grassroots movement, the Yes campaign was a redwood grove. Ms Wu calls opponents the “diversity industry” and “Big Diversity”—“like Big Pharma, Big Tobacco!” The Yes on 16 website boasts nearly 900 endorsements from politicians, nonprofits, newspapers and other corporations. When I ask Mr. Connerly how his side managed to prevail, there’s no false modesty in his answer: “First of all, you could say that we just ran a masterful campaign. That would be one explanation.”

Another would be that in 1996 preferences had long been the rule, so that “we had to convince the people of the state that equality was the right way to go, and that it would not produce adverse consequences.” And today “there’s no systemic racism in the state of California,” Mr. Connerly says. “There were still remnants of that back in 1996.” By now, “it may very well be that the question of equality—of equal citizenship—is accorded the same kind of stature in our culture as that of liberty,” an ideal Americans recognize as “self-evident.”

“Equal citizenship is not negotiable any more,” Mr. Connerly says. “You get the same rights, same responsibilities. You own just as much cultural stock in the country as anyone else.” Black people “have not always been accorded equal citizenship, I can tell you, because I know a little bit about that,” having been born in the South in 1939. But America has overcorrected for past wrongs. “Black people have been accorded a certain stature in American life” because of their history, Mr. Connerly says. “In the race sweepstakes right now, being black means that you get preferred stock.” Unless you’re a “race advocate,” he adds, “that is not a good thing.”

President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Executive Order 11246 of 1965 required government contractors to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin.” That, Mr. Connerly says, “began an era of racial bean-counting that has brought us to where we are today, with ‘diversity’ and ‘affirmative action’ on steroids, being used not really for black people, but to remake America.” Proposition 16, he says, was intended to “transform California and usher in the use of race unlike anything we’ve ever seen in our country.”

Yet the racial debate isn’t black and white any longer. Mr. Connerly says Asian-Americans have “had the temerity to rise up and say, ‘Hey, what about us?’” Ms. Wu is an example. Regarding affirmative action, she asks: “What should we really affirm? Do we affirm rigid racial lines that are outdated, or do we affirm real-life disadvantages that cut across racial, ethnic and gender lines?”

Ms. Wu came to the U.S. in 2009 from Wuxi, population five million—“a small town by Chinese standards.” She earned a doctorate in international studies from the University of Miami and was “perplexed” when it dawned on her that Asians, “as a group, are being scapegoated in education to fulfill a narrative of very shallow diversity.” It shocked her to discover that America wasn’t living up to its ideals as a “land free for everyone.”

She hears from parents in New York’s Chinatown who fear their children will be squeezed out of the city’s specialized public high schools because of their leftist mayor’s push for “diversity.” They tell her that they worry their kids will be unable to “redeem the American dream.” These are poor parents who don’t speak English and have told their children: “You work hard, you study hard, you’re going to get out this ethnic enclave. You’re going to get out of Chinatown.”

When politicians and school administrators say there are “too many” Asians in elite classrooms, “I feel minimized,” Ms. Wu says. “I feel stigmatized that I was

reduced to a racial box—that my hard work is being blamed for the lack of so-called proportionality in these institutions.” Mr. Connerly, listening, can’t contain himself. “I have a more visceral reaction,” he says. “I am repulsed by that kind of language, because I have lived it. That’s what’s wrong with prejudice. You don’t see people as individuals.”

Mr. Connerly describes the Asian-American fight for educational equality as “probably the truest civil-rights movement of our time.” The civil-rights movement in the 1960s, he says, “was about civil rights, yes. But it became about advancing the condition of black people.” That’s why “you have people who have accused me of not really being a civil-rights guy—because civil rights in their mind is Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson. But those guys are race advocates.” Mr. Connerly offers a test for whether people are “really pro-civil rights”: “It’s when they will defend the right of a white person—a white male—to be treated equal to everyone else.”

The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the use of racial preferences in college admissions to achieve “diversity” in a series of rulings: *University of California v. Bakke* (1978), *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) and *Fisher v. University of Texas* (2016). On Nov. 12, the First U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in Harvard’s favor in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, rejecting the claim of anti-Asian discrimination.

Mr. Connerly is confident the U.S. Supreme Court, with a newly minted 6-3 Republican-appointed majority, will reverse that decision and overturn its precedents. “With Prop. 16 having been rejected as decisively as it was—strike ‘decisively,’ make that overwhelmingly—and with the court having been reconfigured by President Trump, we might get the decision that we need sooner than one would have thought.”

Stressing that he’s “only reading the tea-leaves,” Mr. Connerly says the Supreme Court could “go back to the *Bakke* case and say the Constitution is colorblind. They would look at the 14th Amendment. They would also say: We’re not legislators, and the Congress has already ruled in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that there should not be discrimination on the basis of race. Why have we been ignoring this command for all these years?”

In a final flight of imagination, Mr. Connerly adds, “They’ll ask Justice [Clarence] Thomas to write the majority decision here, to end racial preferences. And Justice Thomas will write, ‘Free at last. Free at last.’ ”

Mr. Varadarajan is a Journal contributor and a fellow at New York University Law School’s Classical Liberal Institute.



Main Street: Civil-rights champion Ward Connerly has joined Asian-Americans in their fight against efforts to repeal Proposition 209, which makes it illegal for California to consider race in deciding who is admitted to state universities. Images: AP/WSJ Composite: Mark Kelly

<https://www.wsj.com/video/series/main-street-mcgurn/opinion-ward-connerly-resumes-his-fight-against-affirmative-action/93BA4B43-F036-4B14-BFEB-49A4C0597386>

Selected Online Comments on This Article

Compiled by Stuart Hurlbert

IAN MAITLAND

Thanks for the truly inspiring article. Not to slight Wenyuan Wu's vital contribution, Connerly's was a stunning accomplishment. When his antiracist legacy was threatened, Connerly volunteered again and, against all the odds, routed its enemies a second time. Let's hope his achievement will lead Americans to do some serious soul-searching over the direction our country has taken. It was a terrible wrong turning when the Civil Rights Act was interpreted to mean the opposite of what it clearly stated -- that we should be treated as individuals, not based on our race. Connerly's faith in a color-blind America deserves to be rewarded by seeing his vision come true -- Justice Clarence Thomas writing the Supreme Court's majority decision to end racial preferences. "And Justice Thomas will write, 'Free at last. Free at last.'"

JEFFREY E. ROTHMAN

The origins of affirmation were that it was to be a temporary fix to help kids who went to substandard primary and secondary schools, which left them at a disadvantage when applying for college admission. It was understood that it might take a generation to fix the matter. Fifty plus years later, poor kids attend public schools which are worse than they were when affirmative action was conceived. Of course, no one wants to take responsibility for this, when it's as plain as day that the teachers' union in large cities are in bed with local politicians, and they scratch either others' backs. One can say this is a form of institutional racism. because in big cities, the Black and Brown kids are on the short of end of this situation.

WILLIAM STRONG

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XAVIER L SIMON

The left's fixation on color and race is a malignant disease that's spreading far and wide. I hope there are more brave people out there like Mr. Connerly and Ms. Wu willing to fight as they have for real freedom. If we all don't fall [in] behind them the Republic will be lost.

JOSEPH BRETON

Democratic voters most likely comprise the portion of voters who voted to REINSTATE racial preferences. Particularly the younger, college-educated Democrats...whose brains are largely re-programmed into Marxist and racist robots by Academia. Fortunately (in this case) for California, the state has the largest per cap population WITHOUT a high school diploma. So Academia doesn't penetrate as deeply in CA as it does in many other states...therefore millions of unprogrammed people still go to the polls.

JOSEPH PORWOLL

So many excellent quotes. "That's what's wrong with prejudice. You don't see people as individuals." Very true and basic to our Declaration of Independence and Founding principles. Yet, we are still fighting for it nearly 250 years later. The inequality inherent in the conditions of an individual's birth and environment are impossible to correct but demonstrably capable of being overcome by determination. That is what America is about, individuals being able to choose what they do, decide the value of their effort, and keep what they earn under the law with no limitation other than their own ability and choice.

PAULINE COGGER

I'd use the criteria that the next time you are sitting in your seat on an airplane, silently worried, landing in turbulent bad weather, do you want the best qualified pilot or someone hired due to racial or sexual preference? Please let me know before you land. P's dad.

RICHARD LENTZ

The San Francisco 49ers owners donated a large sum to institute racial preferences. I wonder why they do not practice what they would require of others. I see no Asians, no Latinos, and no women on their roster. I realize football is more important than education, but I would expect to see some leadership here.

JOHN SCHROEDER

It's ok with the 49ers if you have a less qualified dentist but not ok for them to have a less qualified left guard.

MICHAEL BALDRIDGE

The Yes campaign received \$6.5 million from a single donor—Quinn Delaney, chairman of the Oakland-based Akonadi Foundation, which says it aims to “eliminate structural racism.”. He wants to eliminate structural racism by creating structural racism in college admissions? You can't make this stuff up.

BOB SHAPIRO

Equal rights, not special rights, is the way for this country to continue. Chief Justice Roberts has said the way to stop discriminating by race is to stop discriminating by race.

GEORGE REBOVICH

Maybe progressives are very slow learners and they need the Chief Justice to repeat his wisdom over and over and over again.

ERIC HASSELBERG

Let's see if Roberts really meant what he said when the next affirmative action case hits the court. Will he go spineless like he did in finding a penalty to be a tax in the Obamacare case? Justice Roberts, your role is to interpret the law - not spend your time worrying about the reputation of the court as an institution. Use common sense interpreting the law and the reputation of the court will take care of itself.

EUGENE BOUTZ

When the next case hits the SCOTUS it will not matter a whit what Roberts thinks or does because just as the composition of the California population has changed so has the ideological composition of the Court, and dramatically so thanks to President Trump. Affirmative Action will meet its long overdue demise in this Court, 5-4, obviously. When it does, good riddance.

ALFRED BARCLAY

Every racial and ethnic group has suffered discrimination for well over the last century and most worked hard and eventually their children rose socially and financially. I think Asians suffered the worst discrimination. As a lifelong New Yorker, I watched, through the decades, uneducated Asian immigrants work diligently, keep their noses to the grindstone, focus on excelling in academics and achieving success. No complaining. First it was the family-owned Chinese hand laundries (remember those, back when?). Their children studied relentlessly and went to college. Then the Chinese tailoring and dry-cleaning shops and their children who went off to college. The Chinese garment workers (sweat shops) and their studious children. Then the Chinese restaurants and their kids who did the same. They didn't protest, destroy property, assault police, burn police stations and businesses, loot, deface streets and buildings, topple statues. They became model citizens, not extortionists.

JONATHAN LEE

"Mr. Connerly offers a test for whether people are 'really pro-civil rights': 'It's when they will defend the right of a white person—a white male—to be treated equal to everyone else.'" A bold and true statement. Thank you Mr. Connerly and Ms. Wu for your tireless work, and thank you Mr. Varadarajan for writing this article.

JOHN PAUL HARMON

It is about time. I have been discriminated against, institutionally and systematically, for 45 years because I am caucasian and male. And now my son faces the same discrimination at the beginning of his career. The racial justice warriors would have a more sympathetic audience if they campaigned for justice.

ROBERT D RUNG

Congratulations, Ward Connerly - what a guy! As for the 'Oakland-based Akonadi Foundation, which says it aims to “eliminate structural racism.”, what could be more Orwellian? Structural racism is precisely what they are hoping to entrench!

MARSHALL DILLON

Why don't we have more brave people like Wu and Connerly, especially in CA?

JOHN SCHROEDER

Not everybody can afford 24/7 protection.

ROBERT FEINBERG

Equally problematic is the fact that Diversity activists are re-writing high school and college history books and attempting to indoctrinate a generation of young impressionable students.

DON ATKINSON

It goes far beyond attempting. They have been succeeding in this endeavor for about 60 years.

VERNE THIBODEAUX

Great article about two remarkable people. Thank you .

MICHAEL MOSS

The Chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, recently wrote to the alumni of the university, after Prop 16 was rejected, stating that she and UC President Michael Drake were disappointed that Prop 16 did not pass! That is simply outrageous. What are these top UC officials doing making such statements? They are welcome to their personal opinions, but what are they doing supporting a political position in their official capacity. Totally inappropriate. That is all you need to know about the University of California, which has spent 23 years blatantly developing ways to work-around the intended purpose of Prop 209 (passed in 1996), building anti-Asian quota-techniques that clearly conflict with the purpose of that Proposition. All this happy talk about "diversity" is just cover for a social policy the voters of CA have clearly rejected, twice.

YAIR WEINSTOCK

The Democrats/Progressives are hiding behind their labels as they pine for the conversion of our Constitutional Republic into an Elitist Autocracy. They have bought into the view of the populace as a 'basket of deplorables' and have committed themselves to better our lot by micromanaging our lives. As a naturalized citizen, my family taught me the values of self-sufficiency and merit, and the founders have taught me that Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit are axiomatic to a free society. Keep up the fight.

ZHENG LU

I took a look at UC-Berkeley graduation rate. The graduate rate from the "under-represented" group is significantly lower than the graduation rate from the so-call "over-represented" group. UC-Berkeley continue to reduce the enrollment of the students that are more likely to graduate and enroll students are very likely to fail. It doesn't make any sense to a person with reasonable mind. It's a waste of taxpayers' money. Students that can't graduate will accumulate a student debt that they won't be able to pay back. (Joe Biden will bail them out anyway). In the meantime, they take away the opportunities from the students that can graduate with a real degree, who can create a lot of high paying jobs in this country. No wonder Intel has to ask TSMC in Taiwan to make their latest chips because the mission of the elite universities in U.S.A. is not to train more qualified engineers but to fill the racial diversity quota.

CLAIRE MEI

What puzzles me is the majority of Asian vote for Democrats. Who are they? Opportunists? Free loaders? People with Asian guilt that we are doing better?

CHARLES JONES

Ward Connerly...a man with endless talent and apparently endless energy. He has provided a critical service for all Americans. Thank you Mr. Connerly!

MARK HANDY

I've written this before but it seems apropos here: My son attends a private school (97% white). He is half white and half brown (Mexican). My son gets straight As. He works his butt off. He has missed just one day of school in six years. Our family learned long ago that we don't need a preference to achieve success. Instead, we have to do what every other successful person does in this country: work hard, keep working hard, and never stop working until you achieve your goals. Both my wife and I are the first from our respective families to earn college degrees (I have a JD as well). We both grew up poor. We took our education seriously and we work hard for the things we have. We are now teaching our son the same thing. We are building a strong, young man who will be a solid citizen of the United States. He will be a contributor to society. He will never, ever consider himself a victim of the system. And he will never yearn for a race-based preference.

ERICH HERNANDEZ-BAQUERO

I'm inspired by this duo and their accomplishment. Great to see American values alive and well. Thanks for bringing their effort to light!

LEO MARKMAN

Good news but I'm worried about 43% which is almost a half of CA population thinking it's OK to discriminate. And I'd like justice warriors NFL and NBA to be punished for the lack of diversity in their rosters.

ROBERT CLARK

In Kurt Vonnegut's short story, *Harrison Bergeron*, the US makes everyone equal. The Handicapper General enforces equality laws. For example, those with good vision are forced to wear glasses to blur their vision, since not everyone's vision can be corrected to 20/20 vision. Those deemed too beautiful are forced to wear mask to hide their good looks. Diversity practices today are similar. If you're of Asian descent, work hard, and have the qualifications to get into an Ivy you may be "handicapped" into lesser schools. If your skin color belongs to a favored group, your path is eased. Ultimately, these practices make us all worse off. If we really want to improve the lives of minorities, we should raise standards, not lower them. People of all races will rise to the challenge.

AL SMITH

My son, who teaches middle school English and Literature, taught the Vonnegut story "*Harrison Bergeron*" to his eighth grade class last week. He said the students were literally leaping out of their chairs to talk during the discussion period. He reported it was the most fulfilling class he has ever taught. Anyone who has not read this cautionary tale of reverse discrimination should definitely do so (its available for free on line) !!!!

LARRY GRIFFIS

I hope he also has them read *Animal Farm* as we had to in high school back in the 60s.

JOHN CARTER

"...the *'Diversity Industry'*". Speaking against current liberal doctrine--Diversity is NOT the strength of our country! Assimilation of varied cultures and social classes is the strength of our country! Diversity for the sake of being "diverse" weakens our society by stressing diverse differences. Our country once prided itself as a "Melting Pot" of diverse peoples adding to and melding into a unified American spirit. These people were proud of American citizenship and valued the opportunity to provide for their families and improve the lives of their children. Looking back 70 years, this Melting Pot spirit of America seems to have peaked in the post-WWII victorious America of the 1950's--a structure weakened by the social revolution and anti-war disruptions of the late 60's, with later discovery that "diversity" could be blended with welfare payments into political leverage--and "diversity" has become divisive.

STEVE GOKORSCH

The California vote is reassuring. It is very clear that the United States is NOT racist. Again and again our citizens vote to eliminate racial legislation, quotas, set asides and policies. We tell our leadership that we believe in equal rights and equal opportunity for ALL of our citizens. Rev. Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, Kamala Harris and the other race baiters together with their BLM and Antifa friends keep trying to paint a picture of our nation which simply is not true. Anyone who is interested in hearing real racists can tune into SIRIUS Urban View any day.

GEORGE REBOVICH

If you want to destroy a country the most effective way is to have the population focus on their differences instead of their similarities. The former sets people against each other. The latter brings them together. The history of the world since recorded time has shown this to be true.

MICHAEL BOMYA

In a course named Contemporary Moral Problems I read the Bakke case in 1978. It was as wrong then as it is now. Affirmative Action will be overturned in the SCOTUS and that right soon. My professor was a brilliant black man and gave me an A for my essay against the Bakke ruling. Diversity of thought was respected in 1978. This is a true cause for celebration! Mr. Connerly and Ms. Wu are a dynamic duo of superior quality. I also thank Mr. Varadarajan for having the courage to pen this outstanding op/ed.

DANIEL MCCULLOCH

Perhaps the best editorial in the WSJ in the last 5 years. The difference between being pro civil rights and being a race advocate is the key to understanding how we arrived at this point. The race advocates have untouchable status with the media even though they are some of the most vocal proponents of racism.

JIM BOWEN

Equality of opportunity. Not equality of outcome. Connerly & Wu are representative of true social justice warriors and have my gratitude and earned my respect.

RICH BATEY

What a moving commentary. As a California voter, I voted with Mr. Connerly and Ms. Wu and I thank them for their efforts and sound moral judgement. I'm also truly pleased to learn that there are still enough California voters who understand that racial discrimination in the name of anti-discrimination is an immoral contradiction.

SUZANNE SOMOSI

Thank G-d there are pinpricks of light in the darkness. People are waking up and hopefully putting the brakes on the runaway vehicle before it goes over the precipice. What is most encouraging is that this is happening in California of all places. Affirmative Action doesn't only hurt Asian Americans and Whites, it hurts Blacks and Latinos as well. Perhaps them most of all. Telling any group of people that they are incapable of succeeding on their own is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Let's put our energies into fixing the broken public education system in our country. That will be a start. Can we clone Mr. Connerly and Ms. Wu and bring them to New York City where our leaders are destroying education with one lockdown at a time?

JOAN CLENDENIN

Ward Connerly is a apt spokesman for diversity. Love that man. Helped him get 209 initiative passed years ago and have watched as judges and legislators have worked to undermine voter's wishes for a "free" and diverse populace. Look at the sports world. There success is measured by work and accomplishments; not color, gender or anything other than talent and hard work and playing by the rules [no battering or drugs]. Ward: long may you live and work for California and the nation.

DONNA MARIA TICCHI

Excellent column, Mr. Varadarajan, and bravo to Mr. Connerly and Ms. Wu for their inspiring work! I recently had to complete the new, required "DEI" (diversity, equity, and inclusion) training at a non-profit organization where I volunteer. "Equity" has become the new buzzword for racial preferences and special treatment.

PAUL GOERTZEN

Basically it is about a small group of elite, enlightened, self-absorbed, up-tight, progressive crowd TELLING the hard working, fun loving, traditionalistic, worried about bills, and make-it-on-their-own rest of us what to think and do. It's all about power. Guess what....a lot more of us who fit in the second category than the other category regardless of color or culture. That is why the "enlightened" seek to divide us, they are outnumbered and want your government to restrict your rights. Hopefully this is the spark that helps the beautiful state of California get back to greatness, but time will tell.

MIKE GILLESPIE

These are 2 great Americans - who truly understand what it takes to preserve freedom and reward hard work. Kudos.

BRET WALRATH

Thank you, Mr. Varadarajan for this excellent article. Mr. Connerly and Ms. Wu light the way for all of us.

MARK A. ROSASCO

Our civil rights amendments and legislation are sound, then we started these administrative acts that are in direct conflict with our new our amended constitution and laws. We started with outreach and inclusion programs and then went to multiple standards for people based on race and gender, the very essence of discrimination that we supposedly outlawed. In 2020, America is too complicated and diverse for these generalizations about race and gender. There are elite African Americans, poor whites, and millions of immigrants who have no basis for preferential treatment or limits based on historical discrimination. It is way past time to enforce the laws as written and stop trying to have a de facto quota system based on subterfuge. We need a one standard system based on merit with help to all citizens based on demonstrated need. You don't stop discrimination by more discrimination based on policies that are nothing more than collective punishment. People are individuals.

MARK FISHER

My wife's maternal grandparents came to this country more than 100 years ago to escape vicious anti-Semitism, including lethal pogroms, in Russia. They arrived with hand luggage, fourth-grade educations and no English. Prejudice against Jews was widespread in the United States in those days. Yet they persevered, opened a store, worked hard and retired as millionaires. My wife and all nine of her cousins have college degrees. One is a law professor. Only in America!

KIM JADY

Even the most extreme progressives can't justify racial preferences. So easy for these wealthy corporate oligarchs to promote this evil as they never have to be concerned with applying for a job.

MARK TANASE

Have these two set up anything nationally? I want to donate to those who fight for the individual - not for a "group". Keep up the good fight!

JIM ANDERSON

When I taught at USF I was profiled as a "cis-gendered straight white male". As a result, I was part of or related to all of the important problems in the world. The Vice-Provost for Diversity had as her key objective to "bring down the capitalist patriarchy that is the root of white supremacy." As they say, crazy does not take a day off.

ROB JOSEPH

What's incredibly pathetic is that part of our kids' tuition is wasted on a Vice Provost for Diversity. We could all save a lot of money on tuition if these useless administrative positions were eliminated.

LARRY COOK

The way I understand MLK Jr's credo was that a man should be judged by his character rather than by the color of his skin. Preferential treatment due to race is NOT equal protection under the law. The whole notion is anathema and has done injury to the black community as a whole in the implementation of left leaning white guilt policies. Case in point: LBJ's war on poverty has done great harm to the black family in the aftermath. Its ravages are still very much in evidence.

WILEY RACER

Thank you for this article. The Black community has so many brilliant expositors such as Ward Connerly, it's unfathomable to me how they are largely ignored within that community.

JOHN FRANCIS

Asian-Americans are a "natural" group for the GOP to welcome into its ranks; especially now that DJT is on the way out. Asians check almost all the boxes for GOP inclusion including a fundamental belief in that America is the land of opportunity for those willing to delay gratification in a quest towards a higher goal. This group is a perfect fit into the Ideal of accepting personal responsibility for one's actions; and as such they should be seen by the GOP as among its strongest adherents. Inherently they reject the Democrat's blame all mantra as the reason for failures. ... As a card-carrying member of the GOP I extend a hearty welcome to my fellow citizens of Asian ancestry. Almost all of your values are mine too. Welcome aboard!

WILLIAM DIXON

Ward Connerly is a great American and a credit to our country. I value him at the same high level as I value Justice Thomas and Thomas Sowell. Had we heeded their counsel over the years, we would be in a much better place regarding equality in America.

JAMES SILVERTHORNE

Good article on a great topic featuring two wonderfully strong people.

VICTOR CHUDOWSKY

It's also time to retire the racial category of "Asian," ideally along with all racial categories. You can be the son of a Japanese diplomat in Malibu or an Afghan refugee in Queens and still be considered "Asian." The diversity industry views its subjects as easily categorized (and stereotyped) racial symbols rather than real people.

BILL GOSSETT

Time to retire all racial categories. Everyone is equal. Men and Women. As long as you have these labels there will be problems.

CHRIS RILEY

Winning retail and losing wholesale; American society is terminally ill. The problem we have is that we have drifted out of the envelope of knowledge and morality that the Founding Fathers told us was the small space where a constitutional republic could exist.

CAROL SANDOR

The progressives in California's colleges and universities are eliminating the SAT tests to get around the disapproval of diversity politics by these 57% of voters. The real problem is the failure of the 1960's programs to deliver a diverse group of students through equal opportunity, partly a result of creating a matriarchy through welfare spending which ended up depriving lots of kids of fathers in their home. Now cultural changes leading to intact families are going to be even harder to implement but through charter schools and other things we still must try.

ANDREW T

Asians are harder hit than whites by racial preferences in higher education; Ms. Wu estimates their admissions to UC schools would have fallen as much as 50% if Proposition 16 passed. When an NBC reporter raised this point with a Democratic state senator, he shrugged it off: "Black and Hispanic people have even greater concerns." Why do many Asians still vote for the unDemocratic Party,

the party that is actively and vigorously discriminating against them is puzzling. Remember your parents came here so you can have the opportunities to compete fair and square. Why vote for the party that wants to make you second class citizens?

LOUISE LAM VEDDER

The Asians who vote democrat are those who have been brainwashed by your very liberal education. Their immigrant parents overwhelming voted for Trump. Like the Cubans in Florida they came to the US to seek their American Dream. They don't want the US to be socialist because they escaped from it. Just watch all the US Chinese independent media on Youtube and their comments.

FRED DOANE

CONNERLY AND WU 2024!

DAVID PRYOR

One really has to wonder what kind of thinking leads to allowing any racial preferences in any public institution. Maybe with a real SCOTUS we can get some correct decisions. Thank you, President Trump.

JAMES HEIMER

Many comments and the column itself assume the next affirmative action case will be heard by a nine-member Supreme Court. If the Republicans can't hold the Senate in January's runoff in Georgia, expect the Democrats to move quickly to eliminate the legislative filibuster and pack the Court and enshrine affirmative action as the law of the land for the foreseeable future.

BURT B

Congratulations to both Connerly and Yu. Such common sense is no longer common these days. In fact, it's more likely to be vilified - especially by supporters of BLM. Like Douglas Murray say, it's not that we don't know these things, but that we've been browbeaten into pretending we don't know things we've always known. Or, as someone else said, the key to ending racial discrimination is to stop discriminating by race. One can only hope that Connerly and Yu's success is not just the end of a campaign but the start of one.

JON ANDERSON

Reading the WSJ has become an exercise in cognitive dissonance: on one page, we get wonderful profiles of heroes of the American way like this, the kind that increasingly are only found on the margins of the media; on the other, the kind of mindless propaganda pushing the left-wing, globalist agenda of the repressive, anti-American left (you can always tell because they never open the comments section) that you normally expect from the mainstream corporate entertainment apparatus. The journal is free to publish what they want, thank God, but in the end, what is this paper really about?

JEF KURFESS

Using Covid-19 as a pretext, the UC and Cal State systems ended the use of the SAT and ACT exams. Why? The fastest growing cohorts of high school grads coming out of California high schools don't do well. If the higher ed institutions admitted them by lowering their thresholds for acceptance on the tests, the various reporting services would lay out the data for all to see. "Whoa, look at that, Berkeley and UCLA are accepting students whose scores are at the 60th percentile! Not very elite." But, but, but the woke folks in higher ed want to admit a more diverse student body. And, of course, they don't want to shrink even if their pool of truly qualified students is shrinking. Quandary. So, they "took the high road" and dropped those unfair tests and now they can admit anyone they want without anyone being able to shine a pesky spotlight on it. Affirmative action? Who needs it. They are going to do it anyway.

PHILLIP WALL

Was California's progressive elite really "vanquished" concerning Proposition 16? Sure, Proposition 16 was defeated. But 43 % of the California voters voted in favor of making racial discrimination legal. That's a lot of people voting to legalize unequal protection of the law, only 7% or so short of a majority. Recently in Washington, in a similar election, the difference between the winning and losing sides was only 1%. Assuming Biden wins the Presidency, the Diversity Industry will return with more force than before to vanquish alleged "white supremacy" and so-called "Systemic Racism". This will be rife throughout the national government and many Blue States. How would a Trump Supreme Court respond to a stark violation of the 14th Amendment equal protection clause, the latter celebrated previously by liberals in civil rights cases?

WARREN WARD

There are some who see past the color of one's skin and look at the content of their soul. As Morgan Freeman has said, "let's stop calling each other a black man and white man, and just call each other men". I try very hard to live up to that bar. I grew up in a very small cotton growing delta town in LA in the 50's and lived across the street from the black community and we "rolled tires" in the summer. We didn't go to school together, but we played together.

ROB JOSEPH

I was taught the same thing and try to treat everyone the way I would want to be treated. However, now if I say I don't see black or white, I just see a person I'm considered a racist.

RANK THOMAS

That's the world I grew up in: SE Arkansas. My daddy grew up in South Mississippi his saying was "If they're good enough to play with they're good enough to live with.." God help you if you mistreated someone because of their skin color or beliefs if he was around.

ALAN STEWART

Those who defend racial preferences are stuck in the past and will soon be a discarded relic of history. It is not possible to make sense of their arguments.

ROBERT GROW

Making "diversity" a compelling cause, as the SCOTUS has, gives full license for racial discrimination. Supposedly quotas are banned, but the same can be accomplished with diversity "goals." As the law now stands nationally, discrimination (as long as it is against certain groups) is not only allowable but usually required. Connerly has done yeoman service over the past 25 years.

JEF KURFESS

The "disparate impact" movement is behind this. Apparently, every racial/ethnic group deserves to be represented in everything in direct relation to their proportion in the population. Why? On what basis? This is a completely groundless assertion. Now, if someone stepped forward and said, "colleges should contain the same proportion of smart, not so smart, and downright clueless people as the population at large", I could respect the honesty of the position.

GARY FIELD

Every now and then California gets it exactly correct. Wonderful leadership on the "No" campaign by Ward Connerly and Wenyuan Wu. Bravo! Now let's hope that the SCOTUS really reinforces this sentiment from one of our most diverse and liberal states by savaging Harvard for their disgraceful discrimination against applicants with Asian heritage. Harvard, in the 1930s, also thought: "There's too many of them", relative to Jewish applicants. They just can't shake their urge to discriminate. But why bother (regardless of an applicant's ethnic background) applying to an institution which thinks this way? You would almost certainly get a better education in California at Stanford or Caltech, or in the UK at Oxford or Cambridge. Any one of those institutions places academic excellence over what seems to be Harvard's "finishing school for the chosen" philosophy.