

**Coalition of Labor Union Women
16th Biennial Convention
Orlando, Florida
September 7 - 10, 2011**

PROTECT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The concept of Affirmative Action came out of the Civil Rights Movement of the 50's and 60's, focusing on efforts to build a society based on equality. Affirmative Action has been a method of providing members of groups who have been victims of discrimination at least some better opportunity to gain access to education and jobs, and is a simple one-step attempt to redress the injustices of over three hundred years.

Since the mid-1990s, there have a number of insidious attacks and legislative attempts to eradicate affirmative action, stating that the kind of discrimination which gave rise to affirmative action programs no longer exists. Instead, opponents say affirmative action programs cause "reverse discrimination" against whites and men. In addition, those who oppose affirmative action claim that its abolition will lead to more jobs.

Both claims are false. Research demonstrates that there is still a conscious and unconscious bias in institutions (business, education, housing, government, etc.) in our society that bars the way for minorities to achieve the highest successes. In the wake of enacting an anti-affirmative action measure in California higher education institutions, the state saw a dramatic decline in the enrollment rates of minority students in the University of California system. At UC-Davis, the percentage of women among new faculty hires dropped from 52 percent before similar legislation, to 13 percent in the year after the law was enacted. Washington State saw a decrease of more than 25 percent in the share of Seattle public works contracts awarded to women or minority-owned firms.

Often labeled Civil Rights Initiatives, these actions have duped thousands of voters into signing petitions and voting in favor of measures over the years because they're typically described as bans on discrimination instead of attacks on programs that help women and people from traditionally underrepresented groups.

An indication of ongoing support for affirmative action comes with the recent decision (7/1/2011) of the 6th Circuit that struck down (2-1) Michigan's ban on the consideration of race and gender when enrolling students at public colleges and universities. The Court ruled that Michigan's Proposal 2 is unconstitutional because it burdens minorities.

But support in the face of continuing battles is needed to protect this movement. Attacks like those in Oklahoma are ongoing, seeking to destroy affirmative action policies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) reaffirms its support for the concept of affirmative action as a method to promote equality in employment, education, housing and health care.

CLUW urges its members to join local and state coalitions to continue strong support for affirmative action.

CLUW will press for the expansion of affirmative action criteria to include the consideration of those bearing the burden of poverty and low socio-economic status in addition to the other categories.