As the Supreme Court weighs in on the affirmative action case of Abigail Fisher—a white student from Stephen F. Austin High School [2] in Sugar Land, Texas who claims she was denied admission because of her race—it has now decided to hear also Michigan’s appeal of a ruling that struck down a referendum giving "preferential treatment" to students based on their race.

The court's decision will determine if whites are unfairly discriminated against or if race should be a factor in determining admissions for higher education.

Affirmative action has been controversial ever since it was enacted in 1961. Challenges to affirmative actions started in 1978 in a landmark decision, Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, in which the courts ruled racial quotas were unconstitutional but believed that race could be used for admissions.

The majority opinion was written by Justice Lewis Powell, where he strictly stated that racial quotas were not permitted.

However, universities still used racial quotas as a determining factor in admitting students.

That was until 1994, when affirmative action opponents made challenges to the Supreme Court
and struck down the University of Maryland’s Banneker scholarship practice of awarding only to African-American students.

Throughout the 90’s lower courts struck down admission policies until 2003 the Supreme Court heard Grutter v. Bollinger. In an historic 5-4 decision, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor wrote for the majority that the University of Michigan Law School had a compelling interest in promoting class diversity.

Opponents, outraged over the court's 5-4 ruling, put a referendum to Michigan voters in 2006 which would amend the state constitution and outlaw preferential treatment on the basis of race and other factors in education, as well as government hiring and contracting. The measure passed 58 to 42.

Civil rights groups sued to block the provision and in November 2012, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals voted 8-7 to invalidate the ban as it applies to college admissions while not addressing hiring or contracting.

Now the Supreme Court has decided to hear the case.

Advocates of affirmative action have long claimed that making provisions for minority interest hurts the integrity of institutions. Affirmative action doesn't promote racial harmony but rather racial resentment.

As a minority, I am not a big fan of it. I don’t want bars lowered for me because I believe I am as good as anyone. However, because of wrongs, how does one know that they are being treated fairly?

I believe quotas and window dressing are not wise strategies to create racial harmony, but instead create resentments and hostilities.

I believe policies should based on criteria, and if a particular group is not passing the criteria, then resources should be provided to improve imbalances. The goal should be equal opportunity, not preferential treatment.

I believe in a policy of equal access to equal resources, and if resources are not being distributed equally, this should be weighed. Equal opportunity instead of preferential treatment would heal many scars of affirmative action.

I personally would like to see affirmative action disappear because I believe the best people should be hired regardless of race. However, our history has shown there is a force not interested in seeing those who want to climb out of their conditions getting the opportunity to do so.

Until there is a reasonable doubt we can fulfill those promises, I hope the Supreme Court upholds affirmative action.

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