

A Referendum to Reinstate Racism

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Fighting racism should be at least *conceptually* easy.

The California Assembly referred to Golden State voters Proposition 16, a constitutional amendment that would repeal a *previous* constitutional amendment voters had authorized in 1996, with Proposition 209.

That amendment “stated that discrimination and preferential treatment were prohibited in public employment, public education, and public contracting on account of a person’s or group’s race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin,” *Ballotpedia* explains. “Therefore, Proposition 209 banned the use of affirmative action involving race-based or sex-based preferences in California.”

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But important and well-monied interests really want to “use affirmative action programs that grant preferences based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, and national origin. . . .”

The list of supporters is a veritable Who’s Who of California Democrat pols and corporations and major lobbying organizations. They’ve spent almost \$20



million and counting.

The opposition, organized as Californians for Equal Rights, consists of a smattering of Republican pols and a few non-partisan organizations such as Students for Fair Admissions, and has spent about \$1.2 million.

While fighting racism with a prohibition on discrimination in government hiring, and the like, is simple, clear, and across-the-board, fighting racism by preferring individuals of *some* races over those in *others* is cumbersome. And nutty.

And wrong.

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Why so popular among “blue” pols?

There’s money in divisiveness, pitting one group off another.

Over 16 times more money, apparently.

Think of Prop 16 as a litmus test. Will “blue” California buy into the politics of racial division?

Or will Golden State voters stick with the color-blind principles most Americans favor?

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.