



Dear California Voters,

The California Students Higher Education Advocacy Round Table (HEART) is a coalition of student-led organizations, associations and partners from across California dedicated to cultivating and empowering the next generation of student leaders by providing an ongoing venue for community college and university students to have statewide conversations and collaborate on key priorities in public higher education.

The California Students HEART coalition recognizes that our higher education system does not reflect the racial, ethnic or gender diversity of California in its student body, faculty, staff, and leadership, hurting our students and the state economy. This is largely due to California's ban on affirmative action which prevents California's prestigious colleges and institutions from considering race as a factor in contracting, hiring, and admissions.

As a coalition representing students from across the state's public higher education segments, we are asking you to join us in voting Yes on Prop 16. It is time for young people to come together: the fight to dismantle systemic racism is on the ballot in California.

In California, we believe in giving everyone, regardless of race or gender, an equal shot at fair wages, good jobs, and quality schools. But the truth is we're not yet living up to those values; systemic racism and sexism still hold too many young Californians back in hiring, employment, promotions, and educational opportunity.

As a result, students of color are underrepresented across all sectors of higher education in California. Although Californians between the ages of 18-24 are 47% Latinx, only 42% and 27% are enrolled in a California State University or University of California school. Black students are also heavily underrepresented in the California State University and University of California where only 9% and 3% of students are Black. Additionally, women in California earn less than 80 cents on every dollar compared to white men. For women of color and single moms, it's far less. In states that allow affirmative action, women and people of color earn higher wages and are able to compete on equal footing for state contracts. But right now, California is one of only 9 states that bans affirmative action. That's why businesses owned by people of color in California receive only 57% of the contract dollars that they would if opportunities were equal, and women receive only 29%.

We all do better when everyone has a fair chance to succeed. For too long, the wealthy and well-connected in California have controlled access to lucrative careers, top universities, promotions, state contracts, and other opportunities.

They keep picking people like themselves over well-qualified people from different backgrounds. Prop 16 is our generation's chance to dismantle California's inequitable systems.

We ask that you join us in voting #YesOnProp16, repealing the ban on affirmative action and leveling the playing field for young women and people of color to access our college institutions.

For more opportunities to get involved in the Yes on Prop 16 campaign visit <https://www.mobilize.us/voteyesonprop16/>

Sincerely,

The California Student Higher Education Advocacy Round Table (HEART)
Comprised of leadership from the three segments of California's public higher education's student associations