

Talking Point E: Race and Gender Matter

“Colorblindness” is not the answer

Many white Americans claim to be “colorblind” and assert that they do not acknowledge race at all, whether for positive or negative reasons. The targets of racism, however, agree that discrimination is alive and well.

- After Hurricane Katrina, **71% of Blacks** polled felt that the hurricane exposed racial inequality as a major issue in the U.S. Only 32% of whites agreed.
- While 74% of whites agree with the simple statement that women and people of color are **“not always given equal consideration for job promotions”**—79% of Latinos and 87% of African Americans agreed with this statement—whites are increasingly opposed to “affirmative action” to change the situation.

There’s no “reverse” to racism

- It cannot be argued that white males are discriminated against as a group if they are overrepresented in most high-status categories. While white men make up only 48 percent of the college-educated workforce, they hold over 90 percent of the top jobs in the news media, 96 percent of CEO positions, 86 percent of law firm partnerships, and 85 percent of tenured college faculty positions. (*NAPALC, 2000*)
- According to the Department of Labor’s **Glass Ceiling Commission**, reviews of 94 Fortune 1000 companies showed that of all the employees 37.2% were women and 15% were minorities. Women represented only 16.9% of all the managers, while minorities represented only 6%. At the executive level of management, women made up 6.6% and minorities 2.6% of all positions.

Race-based pay inequity continues

- In 2001, the average per capita income was \$24,142 for whites and \$15,269 for Blacks. (*“Income in the United States: 2002,” U.S. Census Bureau, Table 4, May 2002*)
- Latino men earn 63 cents to the dollar earned by their white male counterparts; Latina women earn 52 cents to every dollar earned by their white female counterparts.
- White college graduates earn 11 percent more than Asian college graduates. White high school graduates earn 26 percent more than Asian high school graduates. (*National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, 2000*)
- College-educated African American women annually earn approximately \$800 more than white male high school graduates and \$17,727 less than college-educated white men. (*“Money Income in the United States,” U.S. Census Bureau, Table 10, September 2000*)