

CALIFORNIA'S TOP 10 RACIAL EQUITY BILLS FOR 2004

AB 2408—Language Access

Vetoed by the Governor, this bill would clarify and strengthen existing state bilingual staffing requirements under the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act passed in 1974 and ensure that state agencies are held accountable for compliance. Forty percent of all Californians speak a language other than English at home.

SB 379—Hospital Charity Care

Vetoed by the Governor, this bill would protect California's 6.5 million uninsured from unfair billing by requiring hospitals to establish charity care and reduced payment policies, setting minimum eligibility at 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Three of four of California's 6.5 million uninsured are people of color; over half are Latino.

AB 1796—Food Stamp Restoration

Signed by the Governor, this restores Food Stamp eligibility to formerly incarcerated individuals convicted of nonviolent drug offenses, with certain exemptions. Approximately 24,100 adults will regain eligibility. Latinos and Blacks each account for approximately one-third of California's male incarcerated drug offenders.

SB 1399—Felon Rehabilitation

Vetoed by the Governor, this legislation would ensure that all new inmates would receive educational, vocational, and psychological assessments and be provided with a comprehensive rehabilitation program to ensure their success upon release (those with life sentences were excluded). Two of three male adult prisoners are Black or Latino.

AB 2832—Equity in Pay

Vetoed by the Governor, this legislation would increase the state minimum wage to \$7.25 as of July 1, 2005 and \$7.75 as of July 1, 2006. The racial pay gap for Blacks and Latinos is between 14 and 26 cents lower per every dollar earned by whites.

AB 2275—Equal Opportunity

Vetoed by the Governor, this legislation would require each state agency to establish an equal opportunity program to ensure that the state policy of providing equal opportunity to all job applicants and employees is enforced. Forty-six percent of California's 220,000 state employees are people of color.

SB 1419—Opportunity to Learn Index

Vetoed by the Governor, SB 1419 would hold the state and schools accountable for providing necessary resources for learning and teaching. A study by the UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access found that schools with "critical opportunity problems" had, on average, a 93 percent student of color population.

AB 2387—College Access

Vetoed by the Governor, this legislation would authorize UC and CSU to consider race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, geographic origin, and household income in undergraduate and graduate admissions, so long as no preference is given. Between 1997 and 2003, UC admission rates have dropped by five percentage points for Blacks and four percentage points for Latinos, while increasing eight percentage points for whites.

SB 1234—Omnibus Hate Crimes

Signed by the Governor, this bill establishes a statewide standard definition of hate crimes, strengthens penalties for hate crimes, and provides for training of peace officers. Nearly two-thirds of hate crimes in California are racially or ethnically motivated.

SB 18—Native American Sacred Land Preservation

Signed by the Governor, the act ensures that California Native American tribes will be consulted in local land use planning and development decisions impacting Native American places, features, and objects. California has become the nation's first state to protect tribal sacred sites.