

## Exclusion of Race: Mission Impossible

By Zayana Ross

The government of California has put together the legislation that outlaws the collection of data on a racial basis because they think a “colorblind society” would make us more accepting of each other. Haven’t we claimed our colorblindness years before? Isn’t racism “over” now?

Racism may not be as overt as it used to be but it is still integrated within our society as a state and, more emphatically, as a nation.

Imposing governmental laws does not change the mindsets of individuals in the American society. Although this governmental law—prohibiting the collection of racial statistics—may make the problem of racism a bit more hidden, people are still affected by the past differences and the gaps between minority and majority. Statistics show a pattern that minorities need amplified assistance due to their circumstances. It is critical that we as a society see where help should be directed so that this law will not add to the ignorance of this state. The only way to do that is through collection of racial statistics.

People that are considered minority, such as African Americans, are more likely to be impoverished or have less wealth than the majority as we all as a society seem to know. How exactly do we know this? Racial statistics. No longer taking in data would sufficiently ignore the fact that minority needs more support.

Children of the majority are constantly given a chance, through their family’s wealth and past opportunity, to rise above those of the minority through education. *Still Separate, Still Unequal* by Jonathan Kozol, states that wealthy parents in can pay as much as \$24,000 for a full day program early as preschool. While this happens, the underprivileged have no opportunity for preschool. As a result, the privileged children have been more educated in school and by the time that the underprivileged have the room to play catch up they are too far behind. The gaps just grow wider as time continues on.

Having knowledge of this through current and past statistics shows where exactly the help needs to go, even for the parents of these children that were never able to provide an opportunity for the betterment of their family through education. These parents do not have the money because they do not have the career to provide that. They do not have the career because they do not have the skill to give them a good background. Lower skill means that most of the jobs they can be hired for are “in retail and service industries” (William Wilson, *Being Poor, Black, and American*). These jobs are for workers with lower levels of education, which means the job is more likely to have “lower wages, be unstable, and lack the benefits of worker protections” and this makes these workers “more likely to experience hardships” (Wilson). The racial statistics that are provided to reveal this information will show that the underprivileged do not have the same opportunity as the majority.

Extra help—welfare, food stamps, medical care, etc.—has as it should be provided to people stuck in this type of predicament but only because through statistics, the government knows who needs support. The discontinuation of such data could discontinue the benefits that can help make the country better as a whole.

There is no other way nor has there been any other way to know progression and failure of minorities over the years unless it is recorded. The excessive scholarships and educational programs made specifically for minorities allow people that need it to put in extra work and time to gain the skill and money that they need to be a part of higher education. Forming a “race-less” Californian world would take that away, making them more vulnerable to staying at the bottom of the pyramid where most of racial minorities reside.

In attempt to be colorblind, let us not blind ourselves to the point where we do not view who is being discriminated against. Taking away statistics does not stop police from racial profiling, as I am sure we would wish it could. This goes back to individual thoughts of different races. We will begin to fall behind other states in attempting to make a colorblind society and less efforts are put forth to solve a widespread issue such as racial injustice.

We will stop seeing who usually ends up in higher education within California, in essence, we ignore the problem of racial injustice instead of trying to solve it. For example, in 2008, 30% of the college population were White males while only 5% were African American males. The fluctuation of these numbers over the years is important because these numbers need to change significantly and positively. If data is collected altogether, we will only see the ups and downs of California instead of seeing the big pieces of the puzzle that have continually been left behind or the big pieces that have not been compatible with majority of society.

Everyone in California does not have the same opportunities racially; it has been integrated very well in society—and seen in statistics—that the majority will have a better opportunity of succession. We should not record people of California as if this is untrue, as if everyone has been treated equally in public institutions. That just makes us all ignorant to pretend that everyone has the same—fair—history. We cannot stop trying to make equity in competition between the majority and minority but if we ignore statistics of races that is precisely what we are doing.

One may argue that being colorblind would help us to not see race statistically but what about individually? With the existence of the stereotypes that have been sown into our thinking—our society—it will be impossible to make us all not see race just because the statistics have been eliminated. The truth is that help needs to be undeviating from those who have needed it over the years. Since statistics would no longer be recorded racially, that doesn't mean the problem has ceased, it means that we would know less about the problem.

Less education about such a topic leads to ignorance or the belief that racism doesn't exist anymore. If we were colorblind, people would learn less about themselves—and individual cultures—but race is integrated too deep into American and Californian culture to forget so suddenly where the deficit lies.