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Scholarly Findings on Affirmative Action Bans

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In November of 1996, California voted and approved Proposition 209 (also known as the California Civil Rights Initiative) by a tally of 54.55% to 45.45%. It is unknown how many of those voters voted for the initiative because the name implied that it was pro-civil rights. Nonetheless, California became the first state to ban the practice of affirmative action through a ballot initiative. Several other states followed California's lead.

This policy brief provides an overview of what is known about the impact of these bans nationally and complements research specific to California (see, for example, Kidder 2020). It includes: admission of highly qualified applicants, racial and ethnic diversity in higher education at highly selective and less selective institutions, ethnic and racial diversity in graduate fields of study, STEM degrees, faculty diversity, and the way that colleges and universities have attempted to compensate for the absence of affirmative action.