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Economic-Based Affirmative Action in College Admissions.

Bans on race-based affirmative action in public university admissions have limited efforts to diversify student enrollment. Some states have resorted to allowing students in the top decile(s) of their high school graduating class (or with a minimum high school GPA) automatic admission to public universities. As a consequence, academic standards at the more selective public institutions have dropped, Blacks and Hispanics remain greatly underrepresented, and otherwise highly qualified students have been forced to attend less selective schools. This paper will first review the effects of the “Top Ten Percent Rule” on admissions in Texas since the Hopwood decision. Then it will provide an alternative plan that will create greater socioeconomic and racial diversity, strengthen academic standards, and increase graduation rates at more selective public universities. (Received September 22, 2010)