

California's experiences with and responses to Proposition 209 bear on the Fisher v. University of Texas case with respect to both questions of "compelling interest" and "narrow tailoring." Two related developments led to the end of race-conscious admissions at the University of California. This article advances the five central findings and conclusions. First, it compares minority students' perceptions of campus racial climate at research universities with or without affirmative action and "critical mass." Second, it examines affirmative action bans and "chilling effects." Third, it examines two myths about credentials and performance upon which critics of affirmative action rely. Fourth, it claims that UC has a "natural experiment" verifying that class-based policies are not effective substitutes for race-conscious policies. Last, the article discusses UC business schools and UC Law schools as case studies demonstrating the need for race-conscious affirmative action.