

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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Golf Course Superintendents Association of
America, 1421 Research Park Dr., Lawrence, KS
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International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box
908, Urbana, IL 61801; (217) 328-2032.

International Turfgrass Society, Crop & Soil
Environmental Sciences, VPI-SU, Blacksburg, VA
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National Arborist Association, The Meeting
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1094; (603) 673-3311.

National Golf Foundation, 1150 South U.S.
Highway One, Jupiter, FL 33477; (407) 744-
6006.

Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, 2021 Coffey Rd.,
Columbus, OH 43210; (614) 292-2601.



Professional Grounds Management Society, 120
Cockeysville Rd., Suite 104, Hunt Valley, MD
21031; (410) 584-9754.



Professional Lawn Care Association of America,
1000 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite C-135,
Marietta, GA 30068-2112; (404) 977-5222.

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment,
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Sports Turf Managers Association, 401 N.
Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611-4267; (312)
644-6610.

Turf and Ornamental Communicators Associa-
tion, 421 West Travelers Trail, Burnsville, MN
55337; (612) 894-2414.

AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



And good riddance, affirmative action?

Ward Connerly, according to an article in *Newsweek* magazine earlier this year, doesn't want to be defined as an affirmative action businessman, despite the fact that the black Californian half-owns a land-use consulting company.

"I want to be judged by the quality of my work," he told *Newsweek*.

An admirable attitude, to be sure. But, unfortunately, racial bigotry still exists in certain pockets of this country. And that's what has helped affirmative action proliferate for the last quarter-century.

The state of California will put the issue to a vote next year: Is it good and just to continue affirmative action, which has confounded many a small businessman and government contractor for 25 years? Or is it an exercise in futility?

When the Supreme Court heard *Adarand Constructors v. Peña* in June, the only clear message sent by its 5-4 decision was that racial preferences are rarely acceptable.

The once-noble idea of affirmative action, like a lot of federal legislation, has been radically abused. It has also mutated. Originally meant to assist African-Americans, the victims of 200 years of victimization and oppression in this country, its interpretation has since widened.

Now included as "protected classes" by the government are women, Hispanics, Orientals, Iranians and virtually every other minority in this country. In four cities (Minneapolis, Seattle, San Francisco and Santa Cruz, Calif.), transsexuals are even protected by affirmative action rules.

Affirmative action has led, over time, to many contractors—especially those who deal with government entities—adjusting their business practices to take advantage of the government. For instance, one contractor appointed his sister president of the company while he assumed the role of vice-president. That way, the company

qualifies as "disadvantaged" or "protected." Frankly, there's nothing wrong with this approach; it's simply a smart businessman doing some creative thinking—and a lot of people are doing it.

It's no secret, then, that our government has overcompensated. Its policies, as one pundit notes, "in the name of equality, leapfrog the less qualified over the better qualified."

Almost universally—even among minorities like Connerly—affirmative action is seen as wrong:

"So long as we continue to count by race, ethnicity and gender, and to distribute benefits and preferences accordingly, civil rights will be a hollow and corrupt substitute for equal opportunity." (Linda Chavez, writing in *Forbes* magazine)

"Many minorities and females have no definitive way to know whether, or to what extent, they got where they are by their own efforts. By and large, group quotas stigmatize even legitimate achievements." (Dr. Thomas Sowell, a black, writing in *Forbes*)

That government is now taking a closer look at affirmative action is a step in the right direction. Only time will tell, however, whether our elected political leaders have the social wisdom to—at the very least—amend the tenets of affirmative action.

As black jazz pianist Duke Ellington once said, all he ever wanted was the chance to command, rather than demand, respect. Would that it were so.

Jerry Roche