

# NEXO

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The Midwest's Premier Latino Research Center



Food Stamps, Public Assistance, Welfare and Health Insurance

## Public Assistance Patterns in Michigan

By Dr. Jean Kayitsinga and Dr. Rubén Martínez, JSRI

From 2000 to 2006 the number of Latinos in Michigan increased by 20.3% while, at the same time, they experienced lower earnings, increased poverty rates, and higher unemployment rates than non-Hispanic Whites. These social inequalities are due both to individual attributes and to fluctuations in labor market opportunities in the state. Also impacting the well-being of Michigan's Latinos are social and health insurance programs.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA; also known as the "Welfare Reform Act") of 1996, was designed, among other things, to end the dependence of "needy" families on government programs and to increase the flexibility of states in the operation of public assistance programs. Nationally, the PRWORA ended "Aid to Families with Dependent Children" (AFDC) and replaced it with "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families" (TANF). The Act's main purpose was to transition those on public assistance programs into job training programs and into the workforce.

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## New Licensing Policy Strands Michigan Drivers

By Luis Moreno, MA, JSRI Research Assistant

On Jan. 22, 2008, Michigan joined several other states in placing new restrictions on driver licenses for immigrants. This policy will be "one more tool in our initiative to bolster Michigan's border and document security,"<sup>1</sup> according to Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land. The new initiative was sponsored by State Representative Rick Jones (R-District 71, Oneida Township), and it asked Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox to revisit a 1995 opinion that determined that the State of Michigan could not deny a license to an applicant "simply because the applicant was not legally in the country."<sup>2</sup>

The outcome was a new opinion in December 2007 (No. 7210) by Attorney General Cox that placed new restrictions on all non-U.S. citizens attempting to obtain a Michigan driver's license.<sup>3</sup>

The new restrictions are part of the aftermath of 9/11, when federal and state governments began passing multiple policies and laws that limit the civil liberties of citizens and non-citizens alike. Part of the logic Cox applied was, theoretically, to also somehow secure our state's borders with Canada. In May 2005, U.S. Congress passed the REAL ID Act, which placed strict regulations on the issuance of state driver's licenses. The REAL ID Act requires each state to overhaul driver's license laws and procedures into a multi-tiered, government-approved system.

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# Policies and the Public Good

Laws and public policies, by promoting the public good, are crucial elements in the stability and sustainability of a society. Based on a broad range of social values, public policies allocate privileges and access to goods and services among members of society. Politics, on one level, is a struggle over the formulation and implementation of policies, which are framed by political ideologies based on distinct views of human nature and society. As a result, public policies tend to promote the interests of one or more groups over those of others and, for purposes of legitimacy, tend to be presented as tools that promote the public good.

Over the past three decades we have seen this nation struggle with a series of civil rights, immigration, college financial aid, education accountability and other policies. Indeed, a maze of public policies have been passed and implemented that can be characterized as punishment and accountability oriented-policies based on a view of human beings as lazy, selfish, greedy, and requiring a strong hand to keep them in check. Unfortunately, such policies have imposed tremendous social and financial costs society.

In economics, the term externalities refers to costs or benefits that accrue to third parties as a result of a transaction by other parties. For example, all of us bear the costs of air pollution although only a few of us are major air polluters (as are owners of factories, for example). Public policies also tend to have positive and negative externalities. Who, one may ask, is negatively impacted by the denial of driver's licenses to undocumented workers in Michigan? The direct benefit, according to supporters of the policy, is to the citizens of Michigan who will now be able to assume the jobs undocumented workers had allegedly taken from them.

There may be positive externalities, but the negative externalities are the ones that come readily to mind. There are, for example, the inconveniences that Michigan citizens themselves must endure by having to meet more requirements to obtain a license. There is also the likelihood that there will be more persons driving without a license—something that clearly does not promote the public good. And, it may be that farmers will bear the brunt of this policy if farmworkers cannot get to the work sites and the crops are lost. Or, consumers may have to pay higher prices for fruits and vegetables if farmers have to pass on higher labor costs.

All public policies must be evaluated to see if they produce the outcomes they are intended to produce, and to see if they are producing externalities. Do they promote the public good, or do they just impose costs on society and its citizens? From a research perspective, studying the impact of the new requirements to obtain a driver's license on Michigan's citizens is important.

Restoring jobs to Michigan's citizens promotes the public good. On the other hand, if all that happens is that fruits rot in Michigan's fields, then the public good has not been served very well. Policymaking is highly complex and, unfortunately, social policies often do not produce the results we desire relative to the public good.



# A STRUGGLE OVER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION



by Rubén Martínez,  
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## Introduction

Forty-four years after the 1964 Civil Rights Act (CRA) and President Lyndon Johnson's Executive Order (EO) 11246 in 1965, disadvantaged groups are still vulnerable to exclusion from education and employment opportunities. Affirmative Action (AA) was a response to discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, and other factors. AA policies aim to create opportunities for members of protected groups who otherwise experience limited opportunities based on race, sex and other attributes.

Americans' responses to AA have been mixed in legal, social movement, and political arenas. The supporters of AA argue that inequalities remain and are persistent between Whites and Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans in the quality of education and proportions of students who graduate, in labor force participation, unemployment, poverty, earnings, and occupations, and that AA is needed to overcome opportunity gaps. Opposition to AA tends to be more philosophical, seldom acknowledging that historical inequalities exist, or claiming that Whites are the victims of racial preferences resulting from AA, and calling for equal treatment based on merit and achievement without regard for race or gender.

The implementation of AA has been challenged on many occasions in the courts, and some states, including Michigan have enacted anti-AA measures. For example, in 2006, Proposition 2 in Michigan — a statewide referendum that prohibits public institutions from using affirmative action to give preferential treatment based on race, gender and other attributes, while also prohibiting discrimination against groups or individuals based

on race, gender, color, ethnicity, or national origin for employment, education, or contracting purposes — was passed.

The continuing struggles over AA reflect fundamental societal problems that still need to be addressed by policy makers and include issues of racism and sexism, discrimination, and equal access to society's resources. This article provides a historical account of AA and diversity efforts promoting inclusion and assesses the potential impact of Proposition 2 in Michigan on minorities' enrollments and on our institutions of higher education.

## A History of Segregation and Racial Preferences

In the 1890's, some states had in place segregation laws that provided for "equal but separate" accommodations for Whites and "colored races" in education, transportation and other areas of life. Louisiana, for example, passed the "Separate Car Act" in 1890 which stated "that all railway companies carrying passengers in their coaches in this state, shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the white, and colored races, by providing two or more passenger coaches for each passenger train, or by dividing the passenger coaches by a partition so as to secure separate accommodations..." The penalty for violating the law was a \$25 fine or 20 days in jail.

This law was challenged by the Committee to Test the Constitutionality of the Separate Car Act relative to both interstate and in-state travel. With regard to interstate travel, Judge John Howard Ferguson ruled that the law was unconstitutional, but with regard to in-state travel, he ruled that it

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was constitutional. The defendant in the in-state travel case was Homer Plessey, a person considered one-eighth black. Plessey's attorney argued that the Act violated the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (which prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude) and the 14th Amendment (which affirmed equal protection of all citizens and prohibited infringements on privileges and immunities of citizens). Ferguson ruled that a state had the constitutional power to regulate railroad companies operating solely within its borders and upheld the Louisiana Separate Car Act. The case was appealed until it reached the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme ruled on *Plessey v. Ferguson* case, and held that neither the 13th nor the 14th Amendments were applicable in the case, and that the Louisiana law was constitutional. In short, the ruling affirmed "separate but equal" segregation in the nation. This court case extended what came to be known as the Jim Crow Period (or *de jure* racial segregation) in society for several decades. It was a time when state and local laws provided for inferior treatment and accommodations for people of color in public education and public facilities, including transportation, bathrooms, restaurants, theatres, and so on. Minorities, however, continued to struggle for equality in American society.

During the first half of the 20th century there were numerous Mexican American and African American court cases challenging educational segregation in the United States. These legal struggles were forerunners to the 1954, historical landmark Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court found segregation inherently unequal and a violation of the 14th Amendment. However, the Brown decision did not completely or immediately end educational segregation in the United States.

The slow pace of change led to the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) in which Blacks, Mexican Americans and other minority groups promoted equal opportunities in all walks of life, cultural pluralism, and community empowerment. Out of those struggles came the expansion and formalization of AA, a tool for providing equal opportunities to historically underrepresented groups in a society of racial and gender inequality. The CRM was followed by broad-based diversity movements promoting social and philosophical perspectives emphasizing respect for differences among people, equality and inclusion in society.

## Affirmative Action

In 1964, legislators passed the Civil Rights Act (CRA) to end segregation in education and public places. Shortly after Congress passed the CRA, in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson issued EO 11246 to ensure nondiscrimination against minorities by federal contractors. The EO obligated contractors to act preemptively to identify and eliminate discriminatory barriers. Whereas anti-discriminatory law provides a mechanism for recompensing individual victims and changing the behavior of discriminating organizations, AA regulations aim to protect members of groups vulnerable to exclusion, thereby preventing discrimination from occurring.

President Johnson's EO followed Title VII of the CRA in creating other "official minorities" or "protected groups." The CRA, the EO of 1965, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, or age. Implementation of AA precipitated resentment among some segments of the population. By seeking to prevent exclusion based on racism and sexism AA created a context in which some members of the dominant group would feel aggrieved both on principle and in seeing some opportunities going to members of protected classes instead of themselves.

Critics of AA argue that it has benefited members of minority groups regardless of whether specific individuals had been personally excluded from opportunities, and that it has mostly benefited the most advantaged members of protected groups, persons who can succeed without AA. Other critics of AA assert that when all members of minority

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The welfare reforms of 1996 have undoubtedly impacted Latinos' access to health services and cash assistance programs. Researchers H.R. Cordero-Guzman and V. Quiroz-Becerra stress, in the book *Latinos in a Changing Society*, that despite efforts to increase health coverage among low-income populations, other reform elements undermine these policies and reverse the overall intended effects on Latinos. They further argue that the 1996 reforms have neither created universal health coverage nor eliminated poverty among Latino families.

In our previous newsletter, we examined earnings, educational attainment, unemployment, and poverty rates among Michigan's race/ethnic groups. Overall, Latinos and African Americans were doing less well than their White counterparts. In this issue we examine the extent to which public assistance and health programs serve the needs of Michigan's populations, with specific emphasis on Latinos. The following three research questions are addressed: **1) What proportion of Latinos report using to social and health programs, including food stamps, public assistance or welfare, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and private and public health insurance coverage?**; **2) Do Latino families have different access to existing social and health programs services when compared to other racial groups?** and, **3) To what extent are racial or ethnic gaps in access to social and health programs reduced when education, age, family structure and composition, employment status, poverty, and location of residency are taken into account?**

## **Political Views and Previous Research**

Liberal politicians have traditionally emphasized how the plight of disadvantaged groups can be associated with society's broader problems, including racial discrimination and social class subordination. They understand that structural barriers restrict the inclusion of Latinos and other minorities in the workforce (and other areas of society), and seek to promote progressive social change — particularly through government programs — that expand employment opportunities.

In contrast, conservative politicians clutch values that emphasize individual effort and competition when evaluating the experiences of the disadvantaged. Moreover, they tend to emphasize cultural deficiencies and deviance when explaining persistent poverty. From this perspective, the nation's welfare system has been systematically redefined as the cause of rising poverty and increased dependency on social programs, rather than its remedy. The underlying assumption is that "welfare" undermines work incentives and causes family breakups.

Liberals counter that society's structure lies at the root of poverty and isolation for the disadvantaged. The primary reasons for poverty and increasing inequalities include the economy's fluidity (particularly the loss of manufacturing jobs and a diminished taxpaying labor force), the changing class composition of minority communities, and minorities' increasing isolation from mainstream social structures (e.g. William J. Wilson).

Mounting personal barriers (like low education and children), limited economic opportunities, and restricted social or community networks reduce the likelihood of participants leaving TANF. Parisi and associates have shown that departures from TANF by African Americans are influenced more by human capital and local economic, social, and spatial conditions than are those by Whites. The 'work-first' initiative under TANF is most likely to succeed when individual barriers to work are few and economic opportunities and community support elements are general.

On the other hand, some scholars (such as F. M. Howell) have pointed to fluctuating job prospects — with some rural labor markets holding little promise for those exiting welfare rolls and competing for jobs. Other geographical labor markets are positioned to fare much better, but require increased childcare services to complement parents' transition off welfare rolls or away from other social services programs. For instance, J.N. Zimmerman and associates reported in 2006 separate and independent effects for caseload characteristics and local conditions, and suggested that caseload reductions and the economic sustainability of recipients are affected not only by individual characteristics but also by their local environments.

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Still others hold that the broadening of social benefits is key to effectively trimming dependency on social services. A study of Kentucky, Louisiana, and Maryland by Braun and associates noted that even families using governmental assistance to supplement their income fall far short of being “self-sufficient.” Such families are at risk of living in economic crisis, or critical hardship, with inadequate earned and unearned income to meet their basic needs. Clearly, rurality and locality matter. Families’ use of assistance varies widely, and economic self-sufficiency is unlikely for most people in these situations in the foreseeable future.

Research studies by Angel and associates shows that children of poorly educated, immigrant, and Mexican-origin parents are the ones most likely to be without any type of health insurance. Part of this is reflected in these families’ residency in states with low insurance coverage. Moreover, serious holes in the health-care safety net affect poor Americans differently based on their state of residence, race, ethnicity, and household structure. Nevertheless, publicly funded medical care services have helped reduce racial and ethnic gaps in health costs.

With regard to food stamp participation, Nord found that declining participation in food stamp programs is attributable to rising incomes, non-participation in the programs by many low-income households, and reduced public access to food stamp programs. Although food stamps are still accessible to the neediest households, hunger and poverty are increasing among low-income families headed by single women. This substantiates claims by other researchers that “single parent households” and “low parental education” significantly increase the likelihood of adult welfare assistance.

The impact of the Civil Rights Movement and the rapid influx and emerging demographic shifts and patterns of Latino immigrants into the U.S. have brought the issues of individual health and healthcare disparities to the forefront of many policymaking discussions. The relatively recent phenomenon of high Latino immigration rates to rural areas is increasingly common in the Midwest

and Great Plains states, where they are drawn by and contribute to growing economic markets. A rural setting, low socioeconomic status, and high concentrations of minorities are closely intertwined, and such regions are often medically underserved (Walker and associates). Moreover, low socioeconomic status and poor or limited English proficiency skills among immigrants are directly associated with the apparent lack of regular and preventive medical and dental care. According to Seccombe and associates, older families, those unemployed, and Hispanics are most at risk when it comes to accessing or participating in health care programs — even as Medicaid enrollment is considered “automatic” by the average American.

The PRWORA allowed states greater discretion and wider latitude in developing and implementing their TANF programs. As one would expect, those options have created significant differences in treatment and access among racial and ethnic groups. DeJong and associates have found that states have relaxed regulations regarding eligibility criteria for certain groups, but have become more stringent when developing “behavioral guidelines” for maintaining eligibility and exemptions. Welfare and immigration reforms have substantially altered the nation’s social, political, and economic climates in which immigrants seek access to public health insurance benefits.

The recent, rapid rise in the Latino population (the majority of which is not immigrant), when coupled with rising concerns over social services costs and changing economic conditions in Michigan, has steadily increased racial and ethnic competition, prejudice, and discrimination against Latinos. These factors tend to impede access not only to public insurance benefits, but to health care services as well. In this study, it is hypothesized that racial and ethnic gaps appear as differences in access to social and health programs and persist even after controlling for a set of risk factors, including householder and spouse’s highest education level, householder’s age, family structure (married-couple, male-headed, and female-headed households), number of children, employment and poverty status, geographical residence, and industry of employment.

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## Data and Methods

Using data from the Current Population Survey for the period 2002-2007, this study focuses only on Michigan's non-institutionalized civilian population. It centers on food stamp participation, welfare assistance, and health insurance coverage (including Medicaid, Medicare, and other government healthcare programs). The central independent variable used is householder race and ethnicity.

To assess, weigh, and determine racial and ethnic disparities among groups, a series of risk factors were selected as control variables; these include householder's highest education level (and spouse if present), householder's age, family structure (married-couple, male-headed, and female-headed households), number of children, employment and poverty status, geographical residence, and industry of employment (core vs. periphery).

Two types of analyses are provided: 1) descriptive statistics of family characteristics<sup>1</sup> and 3-year averages of the numbers and rates of people receiving food stamps, welfare assistance, and health insurance coverage, and 2) logistic regression analyses to describe the disparities in access to these services and benefits while controlling for the risk factors described above.

## Findings

### Food Stamps

The results in Table 1 show 3-year averages and rates of people receiving food stamps in Michigan by race and ethnicity for 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods. The 3-year average rate of people receiving food stamps in Michigan was estimated at 9.3% for 2005-2007; that reflects an increase of 1.2% over the 2002-2004 3-year average rate of 8.1%. The 3-year average rate of African Americans receiving food stamps in Michigan was 26.2% for 2005-2007 and was higher than the rate for Latinos (19.0%), and non-Hispanic Whites (5.8%). The average number of people receiving food stamps in Michigan steadily increased between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods for non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans, and while the number of Latinos increased as well, changes in their rate were not statistically significant.

Table 2 presents coefficient estimates of a logistic regression of families receiving food stamps on race and ethnicity, controlling for education, age, family structure and composition, employment status, residence, poverty status, and industry of employment risk factors. Model 1 estimates racial and ethnic differences in access to food stamps, providing a baseline of comparison of the other models. The odds<sup>2</sup> of receiving food stamps were computed for each group.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix Table 1, available in the full version of this paper on the JSRI web site: [www.jsri.msu.edu](http://www.jsri.msu.edu)

<sup>2</sup> Odds represent the likelihood of the occurrence of an event. For example, odds of receiving food stamps are computed as the probability of receiving food stamps divided by the probability of not receiving food stamps. Odds are obtained by exponentiating the coefficient estimates (log-odds) presented in the logistical regression tables. For example, African Americans' odds of receiving food stamps are  $\exp(1.74) = 5.7$  times those of non-Hispanic Whites.

**Table 1. People Receiving Food Stamps by Race and Ethnicity in Michigan: 3-Year Averages — 2002-2007**

RACE/ETHNICITY	2002-2004				2005-2007				CHANGE			
	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE
Non-Hispanic White	409860	25216	5.3	0.32	455750	26600	5.8	0.34	45891	18647	0.6	0.2
African American	311730	25842	22.4	1.89	361413	27532	26.2	1.95	49683	19213	3.7	1.4
Latino	47919	10496	14.8	3.21	68008	12393	19.0	3.48	20090	8284	4.1	2.4
Other Race	30965	8757	3.8	2.25	8295	10009	3.4	2.54	-22670	6777	-0.4	1.7
Total	800473	34682	8.1	0.35	929451	37144	9.3	0.37	128979	25859	1.2	0.3

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African Americans' odds of receiving food stamps are 5.7 times those of non-Hispanic Whites, on average. Latinos' odds are 3.9 times those of non-Hispanic White families. The odds of receiving food stamps for Asians are not significantly different from those of non-Hispanic Whites. For those in other racial groups, the odds of receiving food stamps are 3.0 times higher than those of non-Hispanic White families and likely reflect barriers experienced in the labor markets.

To further clarify the relationship between race and ethnicity and food stamp participation, coefficients in Model 1 are converted into probabilities of receiving food stamps and are graphically displayed in Figure 1. The results in Figure 1 show that African Americans, Latinos and other racial groups are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to receive food stamps in Michigan. Given that they have higher rates of poverty and unemployment, this is not a surprising finding.

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**Table 2. Logistic Regression Coefficients for 2005-2007  
FOOD STAMPS**

	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3		MODEL 4		MODEL 5	
	COEFF	SE								
Intercept	-2.762	0.077	-2.553	0.403	-4.323	0.468	-5.065	0.486	-5.727	0.523
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>										
African American	1.740	0.128	1.575	0.140	1.039	0.159	1.015	0.171	1.337	0.335
Latino	1.361	0.206	0.877	0.235	0.680	0.271	0.761	0.278	1.809	0.380
Asian	-0.661	0.592	-0.010	0.665	0.143	0.667	0.488	0.669	1.112	1.050
Other race	1.113	0.354	1.007	0.386	1.077	0.434	1.160	0.453	1.333	.874
Native			0.248	0.276	0.164	0.291	0.331	0.316	0.581	.333
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>										
High school or less			2.527	0.235	2.196	0.247	1.946	0.249	1.289	.256
Some college			1.609	0.243	1.394	0.253	1.263	0.253	.895	.262
Age (in years)			-0.052	0.006	-0.030	0.007	-0.032	0.007	-0.021	.007
<b>FAMILY STRUCTURE/COMPOSITION</b>										
Male-headed families					0.602	0.251	0.509	0.267	0.197	0.285
Female-headed families					1.671	0.154	1.712	0.158	1.011	0.178
Number of children					0.390	0.050	0.390	0.052	0.252	0.056
<b>EMPLOYMENT/RESIDENCE</b>										
Part-time							1.045	0.208	0.525	0.230
Not employed/unemployed							1.685	0.153	0.960	0.184
Nonmetropolitan							0.471	0.181	0.301	0.199
<b>POVERTY STATUS/INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT</b>										
Poverty									2.833	0.242
Core industry									-0.090	0.169
Poverty* Black									-0.790	0.379
Poverty* Latino									-1.566	0.512
Poverty* Asian									-0.815	1.337
Poverty* Other									-0.631	1.037

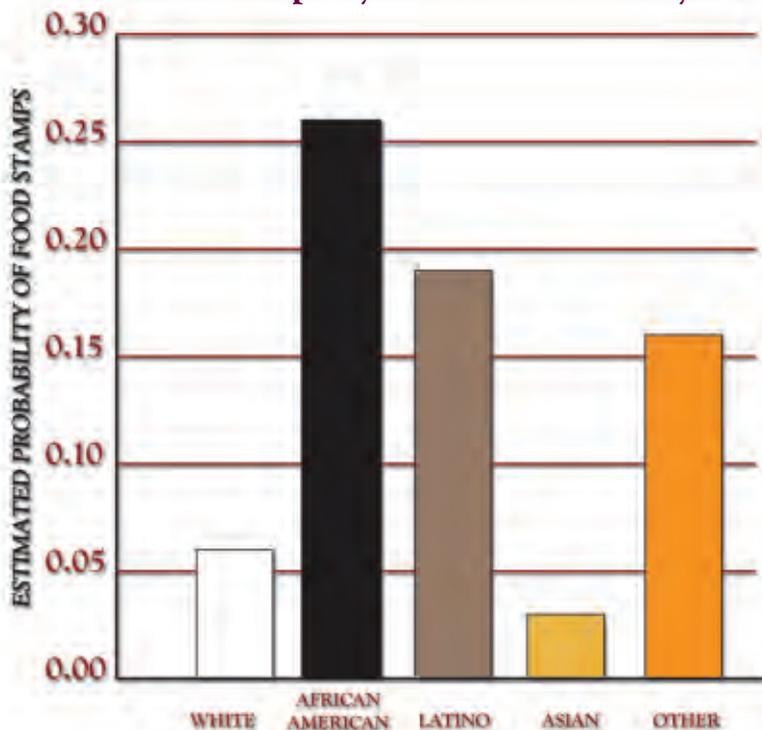
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Model 2 in Table 2 adds controls for immigration status, education, and age. Food stamp participation is comparatively higher for families in which the householder and spouse have low levels of educational attainment. The odds of participating in food stamp programs for families in which the householder (and spouse if present) has low levels of educational attainment are 12.5 times those of families in which the householder (and spouse) have a college or higher education.

The odds of families participating in food stamp programs for those with some college level of education are 5.0 times those of families with college or higher levels of education. The primary householder's age coefficient is significant and negative, suggesting that younger families are more likely to receive food stamps (when families need assistance) than older families. The likelihood of food stamp participation decreases as the householder's age goes up (when fewer families need assistance). The odds of receiving food stamps decrease by 5% for each additional year in householder's age.

**Figure 1. Estimated Probability of Food Stamps by Race and Ethnicity**



To further assess how the gap in receiving food stamps between the racial/ethnic groups changes once immigration status, education, and age are controlled, odd ratios (which is a ratio of odds compared between two groups) from Model 1 are compared to those in Model 2. Adding these controls reduces the odds ratio describing the gap in food stamp participation between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by 18%. Adding these controls also reduces the gap in receiving food stamps between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites by 62%.

Model 3 controls for family structure and composition. Results show that the odds of receiving food stamps are significantly higher for members of single-headed families, particularly female-headed families, than for married-couple families. In female-headed households, the odds of receiving food stamps are 5.3 times those for married-couple families. On the other hand, the number of children increases the odds of receiving food stamps for both types of households. For each additional child, the odds of receiving food stamps increase by 48%. The odds ratio describing the gap in receiving food stamps between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites is reduced by an additional 71% once these factors are controlled. Adding these controls also reduces the gap in food stamp participation between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites by an additional 22%.

Model 4 assesses the effects of employment status and geographical residence. The results for employment status and metropolitan/non-metro residence indicate that households with part-time and unemployed householders are significantly more likely to receive food stamps than those families with full-time workers. Part-time workers' odds of receiving food stamps are 2.8 times those of full-time workers while householders who are unemployed are 5.4 times. Moreover, families in nonmetropolitan areas are more likely to receive food stamps than those in metropolitan areas. The odds of receiving food stamps for families living in nonmetropolitan areas are 1.6 times higher than those of families living in metropolitan areas. The odds ratio describing the gap in receiving food stamps between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites is reduced by an additional 2%.

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Adding these controls increases the gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites in terms of receiving food stamps by an additional 8%. This is due to differential residential concentrations across metropolitan and non-metro areas.

The final model in Table 2 introduces controls for poverty and low-income status, industry of employment, and interaction between poverty status and race and ethnicity. The odds of receiving food stamps for poor African Americans are 1.7 times those of poor, non-Hispanic Whites while odds for poor Latinos receiving food stamps are 1.3 times. The odds of receiving food stamps among poor, non-Hispanic Whites are 17 times those of non-poor, non-Hispanic Whites. The odds of receiving food stamps for poor African Americans are 29.4 times those of non-poor, non-Hispanic White families. For poor Latino families, the odds of receiving food stamps are 21.7 times those of non-poor, non-Hispanic White families. The odds of receiving food stamps for non-poor African Americans are 3.8 times higher than those of non-poor, non-Hispanic White families. The odds of receiving food stamps for non-poor Latinos are 6.1 times those of non-poor, non-Hispanic White families.

## **Public Assistance and Supplemental Income**

The results in Table 3 show 3-year averages and the rates of people in Michigan who received public assistance or welfare benefits by race and ethnicity for 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods. The 3-year average rate of public assistance (or population receiving welfare benefits) for the 2002-2004 period was 3.1%. Comparatively, for the 2005-2007 period,

it was 2.8%. For the 2005-2007 period, the average rate of public assistance or welfare benefits was 9.2% for African Americans, 4.6% for Latinos, and 1.5% for non-Hispanic Whites. Between the 2002-2004 period and the 2005-2007 periods, the average number of people who received public assistance or welfare benefits declined significantly for African Americans and remained relatively unchanged for other groups.

The results in Table 4 show 3-year averages and rates of people in Michigan who received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) by race and ethnicity for the periods 2002-2004 and 2005-2007. For 2002-2004 period, about 4.0% of people in Michigan received SSI. Almost the same rate of 3.9% was observed for the 2005-2007 period. During that period, the average rate of SSI was 10.2% for African Americans, 5.1% for Latinos, and 2.8% for non-Hispanic Whites. Between the 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods, Latinos experienced a significant increase in number and percent of people receiving SSI (increasing from 2.6% to 5.1%).

Table 5 presents coefficient estimates of a logistic regression of families receiving welfare assistance (public assistance and SSI) on race and ethnicity, controlling for education, age, family structure/composition, employment status, metro/nonmetro residence, poverty status, and industry of employment. Model 1 estimates racial/ethnic differences in welfare assistance. On average, the odds of receiving welfare assistance for African Americans are 6.3 times those of non-Hispanic Whites. For Latinos, the odds are 2.9 times those of non-Hispanic Whites. Figure 2 (page 18) displays estimated probabilities of welfare assistance by race/ethnicity. The results show that African Americans, followed by Latinos, are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to receive welfare assistance.

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**Table 3. People Receiving Public Assistance or Welfare by Race and Ethnicity in Michigan: 3-Year Averages — 2002-2007**

RACE/ETHNICITY	2002-2004				2005-2007				CHANGE			
	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE
Non-Hispanic White	126160	14144	1.6	0.18	117129	13839	1.5	0.18	-9031	10065	-0.1	0.1
African American	156150	19754	11.2	1.43	126561	18177	9.2	1.40	-29589	13663	-2.1	1.0
Latino	16857	6784	5.1	2.05	16516	6639	4.6	1.67	-341	4828	-0.5	1.4
Other Race	6072	4161	0.4	1.10	4882	7269	2.0	1.44	-1191	4384	1.6	0.9
Total	305239	21994	3.1	0.22	281365	21241	2.8	0.22	-23875	15553	-0.3	0.2

# PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

*Continued from Page 10*

Model 2 adds controls for immigration status, education, and age. The odds for welfare benefits are significantly higher for families in which the householder (and spouse if present) has lower levels of education than those in which the householder (and spouse if present) has higher levels of education. The odds of welfare benefits for families in which the householder (and spouse if present) has high school or less education are 9.3 times those of

families in which the householder (and spouse if present) has a college or higher education. The odds of receiving welfare benefits for those with some college level of education are 4.0 times those with a college or higher levels of education. Householder's age is significant and negatively associated with welfare benefits. The odds of receiving welfare benefits decrease by 2% for each additional age. Adding these controls reduces the gap in welfare benefits between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by 22%, and the gap in welfare benefits between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites by an additional 46%.

*Continued on Page 18*

**Table 4. People Receiving Supplemental Security Benefits by Race and Ethnicity in Michigan: 3-Year Averages — 2002-2007**

RACE/ETHNICITY	2002-2004				2005-2007				CHANGE			
	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE
Non-Hispanic White	224872	18843	2.9	0.24	219536	30969	2.8	0.24	-5337	31048	-0.1	0.2
African American	147388	19178	10.6	1.39	141169	31354	10.2	1.37	-6219	31466	-0.4	1.0
Latino	8285	4732	2.6	1.46	18304	11490	5.1	1.90	10019	11036	2.5	1.2
Other Race	18515	7123	5.4	1.90	7548	10066	3.4	1.44	-10967	10442	-2.0	1.2
Total	399061	24993	4.0	0.25	392982	41144	3.9	0.25	-6079	41237	-0.1	0.2

**Table 5. Logistic Regression Coefficients for 2005-2007 PUBLIC ASSISTANCE or WELFARE**

	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3		MODEL 4		MODEL 5	
	COEFF	SE								
Intercept	-2.762	0.077	-2.553	0.403	-4.323	0.468	-5.065	0.486	-5.727	0.523
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>										
African American	1.740	0.128	1.575	0.140	1.039	0.159	1.015	0.171	1.337	0.335
Latino	1.361	0.206	0.877	0.235	0.680	0.271	0.761	0.278	1.809	0.380
Asian	-0.661	0.592	-0.010	0.665	0.143	0.667	0.488	0.669	1.112	1.050
Other race	1.113	0.354	1.007	0.386	1.077	0.434	1.160	0.453	1.333	.874
Native			0.248	0.276	0.164	0.291	0.331	0.316	0.581	.333
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>										
High school or less			2.527	0.235	2.196	0.247	1.946	0.249	1.289	.256
Some college			1.609	0.243	1.394	0.253	1.263	0.253	.895	.262
Age (in years)			-0.052	0.006	-0.030	0.007	-0.032	0.007	-0.021	.007
<b>FAMILY STRUCTURE/COMPOSITION</b>										
Male-headed families					0.602	0.251	0.509	0.267	0.197	0.285
Female-headed families					1.671	0.154	1.712	0.158	1.011	0.178
Number of children					0.390	0.050	0.390	0.052	0.252	0.056
<b>EMPLOYMENT/RESIDENCE</b>										
Part-time							1.045	0.208	0.525	0.230
Not employed/unemployed							1.685	0.153	0.960	0.184
Nonmetropolitan							0.471	0.181	0.301	0.199
<b>POVERTY STATUS/INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT</b>										
Poverty									2.833	0.242
Core industry									-0.090	0.169
Poverty* Black									-0.790	0.379
Poverty* Latino									-1.566	0.512
Poverty* Asian									-0.815	1.337
Poverty* Other									-0.631	1.037



# SOCIETY OF LATINO/A S

By Alejandro Gradilla, JSRI Research Assistant

One of the many goals of the Society for Latina/o Scholarship (SOLS) graduate student group is to provide opportunities for members and guests to present their current research in peer settings. This event is promoted by group members as *Conversaciones*, a “brown bag” research forum that provides a setting in which select graduate students can present their findings and practice the delivery of their research. They can, if they desire, also receive critiques regarding their presentation. Presenters often gain insight into a variety of research methods through discussions with other graduate students. These lunchtime events are available for students, faculty, and community members to attend. Visitors provide their expertise in their field of specialization or acquire knowledge on a new topic. Since the fall semester of 2007, SOLS has organized several brown bags that were presented by members and MSU faculty.

SOLS is a Latina/o graduate student group at Michigan State University composed of students from various disciplines. The group’s purpose is for student scholars to share ideas, encourage academic growth, and support one another. This group has been in existence at MSU since 2003 with the support of the Julian Samora Research Institute.

Last fall, SOLS organized three *Conversaciones* events in which student members presented their research in preparation for national conferences, symposiums, or guest lectures. The members of the group have found that presenting their work before their actual event has been helpful in many ways.

“With the feedback and constructive criticism that I received from SOLS colleagues, I was able to polish the presentation and my presentation skills,” said David Cordova, a doctoral candidate in the Marriage and Family Therapy program at MSU. “I also found that presenting my work to a multidisciplinary audience was beneficial because it allowed me to visualize my work from different perspectives.”

In his presentation, “They Just Spit in Our Face,” Cordova provided an analysis of how Mexican American youth confront multiple challenges in their lives, including racism, drugs, family, and education — each of which has an effect on the outcome of their future. This brown bag luncheon was in preparation for a national conference, where Cordova eventually won the “Outstanding Student Paper” award for his research and presentation.

*If you would like to know about our next Conversaciones event, or would like to present your current research Project on Latina/o communities, please contact us.*

## SOCIETY FOR LATINA/O SCHOLARSHIP

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# SCHOLARSHIP



DC Researcher reports

## IMMIGRATION POLICIES AFFECT NATIONAL SECURITY, ECONOMY

In addition to members preparing their research for conferences, SOLS also hosted workshops for members to enhance their skills in various areas. For example, Jose Moreno, a doctoral student in MSU's Chicano/Latino Studies Ph.D. program, provided an outlook on the methodologies and tools used to conduct oral histories in Chicano/Latino Communities. At another event, Roberto Reyes — a Master's student in Digital Rhetoric & Professional Writing — and Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán — Ph.D. candidate in American Studies — collaborated on a workshop for students to become familiar with the Dreamweaver web-design program. Latina/o graduate students find that having a space to present their work for constructive criticism is important.

"These workshops allow emerging scholars to continue their professional development and learn what is going on in related fields," said Carlos Alemán, an MSU doctoral candidate in History. "We're also to form a sense of community and unity with other Latina/o scholars."

Dr. Walter A. Ewing, a Senior Research Associate with the Washington-based Immigration Policy Center, recently brought to MSU his message of how — without reform and responsive economic considerations — the nation's immigration policies jeopardize both the nation's security and economy.

While Michigan is not a primary gateway for most of the nation's incoming immigrants — whether legal or undocumented — the state is affected by the fluidity of an inter-continental migrant stream dependent upon and driven by America's economy.

Dr. Ewing's presentation, co-sponsored by MSU's Canadian Studies Center, Chicano/Latino Studies Program, and JSRI, focused on the contradictions between America's archaic immigration restrictions and current economic considerations.

The U.S. government projects to pay \$2.5 billion to build a 70-mile "border fence" between Texas and Mexico, basically ignores the 4,000-mile Canadian border, and already uses police, combat troops, and INS agents to enforce both immigration law and national security operations, Dr. Ewing said.

The fence costs rise when you factor in the projected \$180 million needed to maintain it, said Ewing, whose published work has appeared in the *Georgetown Journal of Law and Public Policy*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Immigration Law Today*. Mounting costs are forcing the government to "go hi-tech," Dr. Ewing said, and mobile detection "security" systems monitor immigrant traffic.

"But the security system was not intended for immigration enforcement," he explained, adding that upwards of 12.7 million American citizens have already been misidentified or mislabeled as security risks. "Neither does immigration control guarantee protection against terrorist attacks."

Dr. Ewing's assessments on these issues are available on the JSRI web site <[www.jsri.msu.edu](http://www.jsri.msu.edu)> as Research Report #38.



# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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groups are equally eligible for AA, the best-among them prevail while the most deserving lose out. Members of racial/ethnic groups who are disadvantaged but have not benefitted from AA have, in some cases, been a source of opposition to AA. Others have argued that in creating group-based rights, AA compromises the principle of merit-based allocation, discriminates against people, fosters inefficiency, harms its intended beneficiaries, and perpetuates racism by making color relevant.

After *Brown v. Board of Education*, a series of mixed court decisions were handed down relative to segregation and Affirmative Action. The 1968 Supreme Court decision (*Green v. County School Board*) held that school districts that had operated segregated schools had an affirmative duty to take whatever steps were needed to end racial discrimination. This decision led to busing children on the basis of their race to integrate schools. Later in 1974, the Supreme Court ruled that Detroit could not bus students across district lines to integrate schools (*Milliken v. Bradley*). By the late 1990's, the courts had effectively ended "forced busing," and some courts had banned Affirmative Action in admission to elite magnet schools. Desegregation efforts had all but disappeared and *de facto* segregation not only remained but increased.

Until the 1960's, higher education was also highly segregated. Most college students were White Protestants from middle- or upper-class families and more than half of black college students attended all-black colleges. It took a decade of long legal struggle to end segregation at some institutions. By the late 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's, many schools had undertaken AA, recruiting students from underrepresented minority groups.

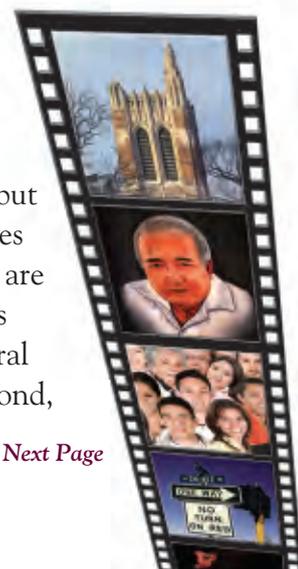
Racial-neutral efforts for racial inclusion were not sufficient for the integration of minorities in higher education because many colleges and universities require SAT or ACT tests for admission. These tests were viewed by some as culturally biased; and

performance on them is highly related to socio-economic status. As a result, White students frequently outscore Black and Latino students on such standardized tests, making Blacks and Latinos' chances of admission relatively limited. Finally, such tests failed to meet their purpose of predicting how well students would perform academically. In this context, selective institutions started treating race as a key factor in their admissions process to provide minorities greater chances of admission. By the 1970's, affirmative action programs were the norm in many institutions.

AA has, to a limited extent, increased minority students in colleges and universities. Minority students still remain underrepresented in institutions of higher education. Schools that have implemented stronger forms of AA tend to have higher minority enrollment rates than schools whose implementation is weaker. AA has substantially increased minority representation in disciplinary, legal and professional programs at elite schools. After graduating, AA beneficiaries tend to get good jobs and serve their communities. Ending AA would likely reduce minority representation in institutions of higher education, particularly at elite schools. In states that ended race and sex preferences in education, minority's enrollments in colleges and universities have been differentially impacted, with declines more likely where alternative programs have not been implemented.

## Affirmative Action Challenges

Critics of AA have argued that it compromises the principles of fairness and meritocracy, discriminates against Whites in favor of minorities, fosters inefficiency, harms its intended beneficiaries, and perpetuates racism by making race and ethnicity relevant. Opposition to AA not only emphasizes individual merit and ignores structural barriers in society, but is, to a certain extent, based on a series of misconceptions. First, most people are unaware that different legal standards govern AA in higher education, federal contracting, and in employment. Second,



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# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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the prevalence of race-conscious AA tends to vary from considerable in higher education to minimum in employment. Minimum AA practices to comply with the law have been most prevalent. The existence of race preferences for minorities has probably led Whites to overstate the extent to which AA really limits their own opportunities, and to conclude that AA prioritizes minority group status over qualifications. The belief that minority preferences in employment are rampant is contrary to empirical evidence which shows the persistence of race and sex discrimination in employment.

Over the past three decades, opposition to AA has taken the forms of legal activism and voter referenda (California, Washington, Michigan, among others). Recently, opponents of AA have had some success in using the courts to challenge the explicit use of race in decision making by public agencies in apparent violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. Ultimately, opponents of AA's aim is to dismantle affirmative action by prohibiting preferences based on race, gender, and other attributes.

Critics of AA have alleged that race-based preferences by public universities violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment as well as Title VI of the 1964 CRA, which barred educational institutions from discrimination. On some occasions, the cases were appealed to and heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. For example, in 1978 the high court addressed *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California*, a challenge to admissions at the UC Davis Medical School by a white male who was denied admission more than once. The court struck down quotas and ruled that the state had a compelling interest in a diverse student body and that race could be used in a narrowly tailored program that avoided causing undue harm to other citizens. This meant that a public institution could not give categorical preferences on the basis of race except to remedy past discrimination, and then it had to be one of several factors taken into consideration.

In 1996, the Federal Appellate Court for the Fifth District, in *Hopwood v. Texas*, rejected *Bakke* and held that the University of Texas Law School's separate admissions processes for Whites and minorities violated the Equal Protection Clause and that admissions decisions must be colorblind or free of race. In June of 2003, the Supreme Court clarified the issues of race preferences in higher education in two cases against the University of Michigan. In 2003, in a case against the University of Michigan School of Law (*Grutter v. Bollinger*), the Supreme Court reaffirmed *Bakke*, holding that diversity is a compelling state interest and that the admissions program was appropriately tailored and implemented. In the other case involving the University of Michigan (*Gratz v. Bollinger*), the Supreme Court struck down the undergraduate school's practice of automatically adding points to minorities' admission scores.

With regard to voter referenda, in 1993, then California Republicanation Gov. Pete Wilson appointed Ward Connerly, an African American, to the University of California Board of Regents. During his first year on the Board, Connerly construed racial preference in hiring and admission processes at UC as "reverse racialization" and soon launched a proposal that would disallow the use of race in admissions and employment processes.

In January 1996, the UC Board of Regents voted to stop the use of race and gender in the hiring, admission, and contracting practices in the UC system. Soon after a collective of conservative academics established the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) and, along with Connerly, pushed a statewide anti-affirmative action ballot measure known as "Proposition 209" to prohibit Affirmative Action by state and local agencies.

Proposition 209 was passed in November 1996, with 54% of the voters supporting it. Although legal challenges ensued, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overruled a U.S. District Court's blockage of enforcement of the proposition and held that it was constitutional, effectively ending Affirmative Action programs at local and state levels in California.

The aftermath of Proposition 209 has led to the launching of similar measures in other states (Washington, Michigan). In 2006, Proposition 2 in

# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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Michigan was put on the ballot and passed by a 16 point margin (58% to 42%). The proposal was defeated in Ingham, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties. The final tally was 2,141,010 in favor and 1,555,691 opposed.

## Cultural and Social Diversity

Diversity programs seek to affirm and enhance social equality and improve equal access for minority groups in society. As a social and philosophical movement, diversity recognizes differences among groups and holds that such differences should be respected within organizations. People exhibit status characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, and culture that identify them as different. As such, diversity promotes a positive attitude toward difference and inclusion rather than exclusion.

People of color still deal with injustice and inequality in the United States because the structures of inequality and domination are institutionalized throughout society. There are *de facto* preferences for Whites in job hiring, in promotions, in elections, and so on. And while conservative scholars and political pundits continue the onslaught of negative propaganda and rhetoric that resonate with the sentiments of fearful and frustrated Americans, the solutions advocated tend to perpetuate society's racial inequalities. These reactions have led to nativism on the part of some White Americans.

Nativism, a social movement by the dominant group that seeks to protect the status of the dominant culture by emphasizing assimilation and exclusion, promotes a narrow and ahistorical view of equality. It assumes that structures of racial inequality have been eliminated and ignores the fact that the nation's schools remain highly segregated today. Unfortunately, corporate and governmental multicultural festivals and events of the past thirty years, while helpful in promoting cultural inclusiveness, have presented superficial symbols of equality while institutionalized forms of racial discrimination and injustice have persisted in America.

AA's aim of promoting opportunities for members of minority groups collides, in principle, with the ideologies of equal opportunity and meritocracy, which focus on the success or failure of individuals rather than on structural inequities in society. Support for AA differs by race and ethnicity, although polls have shown that the majority of Americans continue to support Affirmative Action to overcome discrimination. Interestingly, according to The Pew Research Center, in 2003 only about 16% of Americans reported experiences with Affirmative Action, whether they had been helped or hurt by it. Moreover, when the language is changed from "overcoming discrimination" to "preferential treatment," people express less support for AA. Generally, approximately 54% of Whites favored AA in 2003, while 87% of African Americans and 77% of Latinos supported AA.

Differences in perceptions also exist in relation to racism. According to a CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll earlier this year, a majority of African Americans (61%) continue to view racism as a serious problem, while only a minority (25%) of Whites view it as such. A similar pattern is evident relative to views regarding improvements in the quality of life for African Americans. Thus, White Americans appear to express conflicting views regarding racism and affirmative action.

## Conclusion and Policy Implications

Disparities remain among Whites, Hispanics, African Americans, and Native Americans in high school and college graduation rates, employment, occupations, and in earnings and poverty. Supporters of programs such as AA emphasize persistent and growing inequalities and argue that AA is indeed needed. Opponents of AA, while sometimes acknowledging the persistence of inequalities, challenge AA and want to dismantle it by prohibiting preferences based on race, gender, and other attributes.

Affirmative Action was implemented with the idea that it would be temporary. As anti-discrimination regulations and their attendant practices eradicated discrimination from the fabric of American institutions, it was expected that the need for AA would disappear. The principles that

# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

*Continued from Previous Page*

all persons should be treated equally and judged on the basis of their merit and character are supported by most, if not all, Americans, and AA was to help the nation ultimately achieve the conditions in which these principles hold in everyday life. Today's colorblind policies, however, ignore the fact that such conditions have not been attained and that society remains colored by racism and discrimination. As such, a level playing field does not exist. President Johnson's analogy — that prohibiting racism without taking steps to help its victims is akin to having two runners in a race in which one is weighted down with a ball and chain — remains more pertinent today than in his time. Indeed it may be more appropriate today given that in the 1960's, minorities were not even allowed on the same "race track" with Whites. In today's colorblind context members of the dominant group will reap the benefits through "de facto preferences" while discrimination will ensure that minorities do not.

The benefits of AA are numerous. Because of AA enforcement and administrative support at several universities, minorities have accessed better job opportunities and have enrolled in and graduated from better institutions of higher education in the nation. In contracting, AA has supported minority and women-owned businesses. With opposition to AA, employers and universities are pursuing inoffensive and legal ways of promoting inclusiveness and diversity. In higher education, the percentage plans granting admissions to the top ranked high school graduates are an example, as is the use of geographic and other factors.

Currently, Michigan residents are unsure about the future effects of Proposition 2 relative to equality of opportunity and the representation of people of color in major institutions. Proposition 2 is likely to negatively impact minority enrollments at the research institutions in the state. Last October, the University of Michigan released fall 2007 enrollment numbers showing a slight decline (less than 1%) from the previous year among African American, Latino, and Native American students in the freshman class. Conversely, freshman enrollments among Asians and White Americans increased above 2006 levels. Michigan State University and Wayne State University had similar enrollment patterns.

Affirmative Action and diversity are likely to remain hot issues in a period of American nativism because they reflect fundamental tensions about the relationship between equal opportunity and structured inequalities. With the opposition to AA programs spreading to other states, opportunities for success among minorities will likely be impacted. Enrollment of minorities at selective universities will depend among other things on the quality of education provided by the K-12 system and on the outcomes of the continuing civil rights struggles that persist in the state and those yet to come.

In addition, the rapid increase of the Latino population in the U.S., coupled with increasing economic hardships and inequality among people and places, are likely to draw strong opposition to programs such as AA. However, if conservative movements continue to close off opportunities for minorities, not only will the future of the state and the nation be imperiled, but racial injustice and oppression will surely color the nation's tapestry throughout the 21st Century.

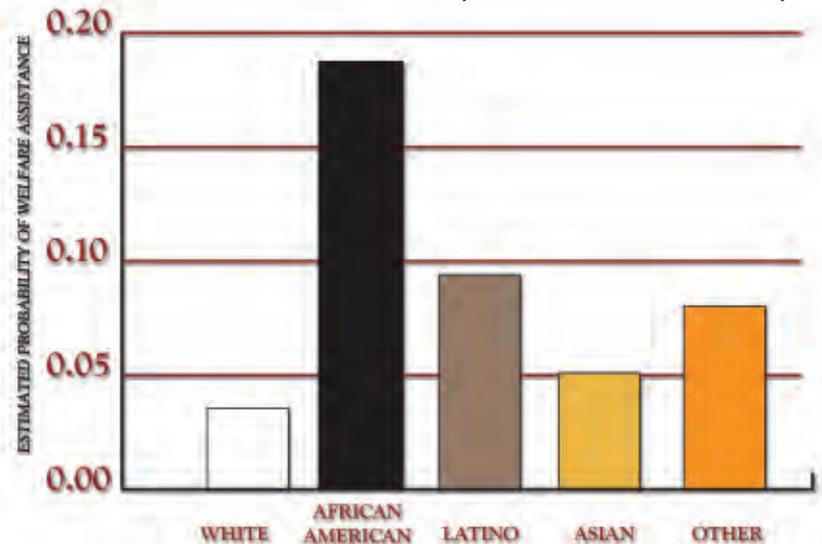
# PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

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Model 3 introduces controls for family structure and composition. The odds of receiving welfare benefits are significantly higher for members of single-headed families, particularly female-headed families, than for married-couple families. The odds of receiving food stamps for members of single male-headed families are 2.19 times those of married-couple families. For members of single female-headed families, the odds of receiving welfare benefits are 4.1 times those in married-couple families. As expected, having children in the household increases the likelihood of receiving welfare benefits. The results show that for each additional child in the household, the odds of receiving welfare benefits increase by 29%. Adding these controls in the model reduces the odds ratio that describes the gap in receiving welfare benefits between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by an additional 64%. Adding these control variables also reduces the gap in receiving welfare benefits between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites by an additional 29%.

Model 4 adds controls for employment status, metro/nonmetro residence, poverty status, and industry of employment. The odds of receiving welfare benefits for householders who are unemployed are 4.0 times those of householders who work full-time. The odds of receiving welfare benefits for poor/low-income families are 3.4 times those of non-poor families. The odds ratio describing that gap in receiving welfare benefits between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites is now reduced by an additional 24%. Adding these controls increases the gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites in terms of receiving food stamps by 7%.

Figure 2. Estimated Probability of Welfare Assistance by Race and Ethnicity



Again, this is probably due to differential residential concentrations across metropolitan and non-metro areas.

## Health Insurance Coverage

### No Health Insurance Coverage

The results in Table 6 show 3-year averages and rates of people in Michigan without health insurance coverage by race and ethnicity for 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods. The 3-year average percent of people without health insurance coverage significantly increased from 2002-2004 to 2005-2007 periods. For the 2002-2004 period, an average of 1,622,244 people had no health insurance coverage, or 16.4% of the total population. For the 2005-2007 period, almost 1.86 million people in Michigan had no health insurance coverage, representing 18.7% of the population. This represents an average increase of 236,012 people without health insurance coverage, or a 2.3% increase between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007.

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Table 6. People Without Health Insurance Coverage by Race and Ethnicity in Michigan: 3-Year Averages — 2002-2007

RACE/ETHNICITY	2002-2004				2005-2007				CHANGE			
	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE
Non-Hispanic White	998380	34349	12.8	0.44	1161361	60040	14.9	0.47	162981	59559	2.1	0.3
African American	469699	23665	33.8	1.76	501714	40911	36.3	1.79	32014	40656	2.5	1.3
Latino	89035	11115	27.3	3.59	117112	20225	32.7	3.68	28077	19943	5.4	2.3
Other Race	65130	10162	13.4	2.67	22627	17996	10.1	2.56	-42503	17815	-3.3	1.9
Total	1622244	42824	16.4	0.43	1858256	74271	18.7	0.45	236012	73768	2.3	0.3

# A PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

*Continued from Previous Page*

African Americans and Latinos are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to not have health insurance coverage. For the 2005-2007 period, the average percentage of people without health insurance coverage was estimated at 36.3% for African Americans, 32.7% for Latinos, 14.9% for non-Hispanic Whites, and 10.1% for other racial groups. Between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods, the average percent of Latinos without health insurance coverage increased by 5.4%. For the same periods, the average percent of non-Hispanic Whites increased by 2.1%. The average percent of African Americans and that of other racial groups without health insurance coverage did not significantly change between the two periods.

## Government-Sponsored Health Insurance

The results in Table 7 show 3-year averages of the number and percent of people in Michigan with government sponsored health insurance coverage, including Medicaid, Medicare, and other government health plans such as CHAMPS, VA, or military health care by race and ethnicity for 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods. For the 2002-2004 period, an average of 3,406,574 people had government sponsored health insurance coverage, or 34.4% of the total population. From 2005-2007, 3,631,759 people in Michigan were covered by government sponsored health insurance, representing 36.5% of the population. This represents an increase of 225,184 people with government-sponsored health insurance, or a 2% increase between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007.

African Americans and Latinos are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be on government-sponsored health insurance programs. For the 2005-2007 period, the average percentage of people with government-sponsored health insurance coverage was 53.6% for African Americans, 44.3% for Latinos, 33.5% for non-Hispanic Whites, and 13.4% for other racial groups. Between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods, the average percent of Latinos with government health insurance coverage increased by 5.5%. For the same periods, the average percent of non-Hispanic Whites increased by 2.7%. For other racial groups, the average percent of those with government-sponsored health insurance coverage decreased by 12.3%. The average percent of African Americans with government-sponsored health insurance coverage did not differ significantly between the two periods.

## Medicaid Coverage<sup>3</sup>

African Americans and Latinos are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be on Medicaid coverage. For the 2005-2007 period, the average percentage of people with Medicaid coverage was 39.3% for African Americans, 32.1% for Latinos, 15.1% for non-Hispanic Whites, and 11.4% for other racial groups. Between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods, the average percent of non-Hispanic Whites with Medicaid increased by 2.0%. For other racial groups, the average percent of those with Medicaid coverage decreased by 8.3%. The average percent of African Americans and Latinos with Medicaid coverage did not differ significantly between the two periods.

*Continued on Next Page*

<sup>3</sup> For multivariate analyses, poverty is defined as less than 150% of the poverty threshold.

**Table 7. People Without Government Sponsored Health Insurance Coverage by Race and Ethnicity in Michigan: 3-Year Averages — 2002-2007**

RACE/ETHNICITY	2002-2004				2005-2007				CHANGE			
	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE	ESTIMATE	SE	%	SE
Non-Hispanic White	2399046	47306	30.7	0.61	2609092	79578	33.5	0.62	210046	79447	2.7	0.4
African American	756065	23559	54.5	1.86	740274	42426	53.6	1.85	-15791	41896	-0.9	1.3
Latino	126503	12217	38.8	3.94	158755	21353	44.3	3.91	32252	21182	5.5	2.5
Other Race	124960	12732	25.7	3.38	29230	21204	13.4	3.03	-95730	21206	-12.3	2.3
Total	3406574	54872	34.4	0.55	3631759	91715	36.5	0.56	225184	91668	2.0	0.4

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## Medicare Coverage<sup>4</sup>

African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites are significantly more likely than Latinos to have Medicare coverage. From 2005-2007, the average of people with Medicare coverage was 21.0% for African Americans, 11.3% (Latinos), 20.8% (non-Hispanic Whites), and 8.4% for other racial groups. The average for all racial and ethnical groups with Medicare coverage did not differ significantly between the 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods.

Table 8 presents coefficient estimates of a logistic regression of families without health insurance coverage, controlling for education, age, family structure and composition, employment status, and residence. Model 1 estimates racial and ethnic disparities in health insurance coverage. The odds of not having health insurance coverage for African Americans are 3.7 times those of non-Hispanic Whites on average, and for Latinos the odds are 3.2 times. For other racial groups, the odds of not having

health insurance coverage are 2.2 times those of non-Hispanic Whites on average. African Americans, Latinos, and other racial groups are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to not have health insurance coverage.

Model 2 (Table 8) controls for immigrant status, education and age of the householder. The odds of having no health insurance coverage for natives are 41% less those of immigrants, including both naturalized citizen and non-citizen immigrants. The odds of having no health insurance are significantly higher for families in which the householder (and spouse if present) has lower levels of education. The odds of having no health insurance coverage for families in which the householder (and spouse if present) has high school or less education are 6.8 times those of families in which the householder (and spouse if present) has a college or higher education. The odds of having no health insurance coverage for those with some college level of education are 3.1 times those with a college or higher level of education. Householder's age is significant and negatively associated with welfare benefits. The odds of having no health insurance

<sup>4</sup> Core industries include mining, construction, durable manufacturing, whole sale trade, utilities, finance and insurance, professional, scientific, and technical services, and public administration. The remaining are classified as periphery industries.

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**Table 8. Logistic Regression Coefficients for 2005-2007 HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE**

	MODEL 1		MODEL 2		MODEL 3		MODEL 4		MODEL 5	
	COEFF	SE								
Intercept	-1.926	0.055	-1.177	0.281	-2.162	0.340	-2.531	0.356	-2.578	0.382
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY</b>										
African American	1.309	0.109	1.168	0.116	0.692	0.129	0.622	0.137	0.282	0.159
Latino	1.171	0.172	0.580	0.192	0.425	0.201	0.440	0.199	0.403	0.233
Asian	-0.331	0.355	-0.385	0.412	-0.339	0.411	-0.066	0.430	-0.130	0.509
Other Race	0.784	0.302	0.749	0.303	0.746	0.310	0.761	0.324	0.588	0.353
Native			-0.525	0.186	-0.679	0.194	-0.611	0.214	-0.522	0.233
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>										
High School or Less			1.923	0.138	1.651	0.144	1.409	0.148	0.921	0.159
Some College			1.134	0.145	0.955	0.149	0.822	0.152	0.629	0.158
Age (in years)			-0.33	0.004	-0.016	0.005	-0.023	0.005	-0.015	0.005
<b>FAMILY STRUCTURE/COMPOSITION</b>										
Male-headed Families					0.961	0.173	0.975	0.188	0.817	0.203
Female-headed Families					1.361	0.114	1.408	0.119	0.833	0.138
Number of Children					0.152	0.042	0.150	0.043	0.006	0.049
<b>EMPLOYMENT/RESIDENCE</b>										
Part-time							0.962	0.154	0.656	0.171
Not Employed/Unemployed							1.598	0.113	1.046	0.138
Nonmetropolitan							0.369	0.141	0.248	0.150
<b>INCOME FROM WELFARE AND POVERTY STATUS</b>										
Welfare Assistance									1.128	0.198
Poverty									1.773	0.132
Core Industry									-0.009	0.123

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*Continued from Page 20*

coverage decrease by 3% for each additional year of the householder. Controlling for these variables reduces the gap in health insurance coverage between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by 15%, implying that one reason African Americans have lower health insurance coverage is because they have lower levels of education. Even more profound is the effect of education and age on the gaps in health insurance coverage between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites. Controlling for education and householder age reduces the health insurance gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites by 81%.

Model 3 controls for family structure and composition. Adding these variables reduces the gaps in health insurance coverage between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by another 81%; it also reduces the contrast between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites in terms of having access to health insurance coverage by an additional 17%. The odds ratio describing the gap in health insurance coverage between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites is now reduced from 1.79 to 1.53. For individual members of female-headed families, the odds of having no health insurance coverage are 3.9 times those of individual members in married-couple families. For members of male-headed families, the odds of having no health insurance coverage are 2.6 times those of members in married-couple families. Each additional child in the household increases the odds by 17%.

Model 4 adds controls for employment status and metro/nonmetro residence. By adding these control variables further reduces the differences in health insurance coverage between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by an additional 7%. The odds ratio describing the gap in health insurance coverage between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites is increased by an additional 1%. For families in which the householder is working part-time, the odds of no health insurance coverage are 2.6 times those of families in which the householder work full-time. As expected, the odds of not having health insurance coverage are even higher for families in which the householder is unemployed, about 4.9 times those of families in which the householder work full-time.

The final model in Table 8 introduces control for welfare assistance, poverty status, and industry of employment. The odds ratio describing the gap in health insurance coverage between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites and between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites are rendered not significant. The odds of not having health insurance coverage for families that receive welfare benefits (public assistance and SSI) are 3.1 times those of families with no welfare benefits. Poor/lower-income families' (<150% of the poverty threshold) odds of having no health insurance coverage are 5.9 times those of higher-income families.

## Conclusion and Policy Implications

Past racial and ethnic differences in the utilization of social and health programs led to prolonged and controversial debates in political arenas and in the social sciences. Those debates eventually gave way to the 1996 Welfare Reform. This study reveals that in Michigan the 3-year averages, in number and percent of people receiving food stamps, significantly increased between 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 periods for non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans, but not for Latinos (not statistically significant). It also demonstrates that differences in access to food stamps between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites and between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites are not fully explained statistically by education, age, family structure and composition, employment status, metro- and non-metro residency, status, and poverty level.

Both African Americans and Latinos are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to receive food stamps. The gaps in food stamp accessibility between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites, and between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites, was significantly greater among poor families, while African Americans and Latinos are significantly more likely to receive them. Among "non-poor" families, Latinos — followed by African Americans — are more likely to receive food stamps than non-Hispanic Whites.

Latino and African American families, even when working, have lower earnings augmented by unearned income to meet their basic food needs and have to continuously rely on food assistance. Among

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poor families receiving food stamps, the gaps between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites and that between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites are wider and statistically significant. This suggests differences in length of unemployment periods, avoidance of social stigma and embarrassment associated with receiving food stamps, especially among non-Hispanic Whites, or it suggests different food sources in communities for poor and low-income families such as food banks and soup kitchens, or having to rely on friends or relatives for sources of supplemental foods.

African American families, and Latino families to a lesser extent, continue to rely on welfare assistance as a source of income to make ends meet. African Americans are more likely than other groups to be poor, unemployed, work for inadequate earnings, and live in poor places and where fewer employment opportunities exist.

Finally, this study reveals that the 3-year averages, in the number and rate of people without health insurance, have significantly increased since 2002. African Americans and Latinos are more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be uninsured and — when education, age, family structure and composition, employment status, residential location, welfare assistance, poverty, and industry of employment are factored in, the gap in health insurance coverage between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites and between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites became statistically insignificant.

This study shows that the gap in access to social and health programs between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites persists even after controlling for immigration status, education, age, family structure and composition, job quality, metro or non-metro residence, poverty status, and industry of employment factors. In contrast, the gap in social and health programs between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites disappears once these factors are accounted for statistically.

Michigan has experienced major economic downfalls during the 2002-2007 period and continues to lose many good jobs, especially blue-

collar jobs in manufacturing that provided good wages and offered health insurance coverage. The newly created jobs are competitive and either limited to those with high education and technical skills or the unskilled and seldom offer the same benefits as the jobs lost. The results of this study imply that social welfare policies should emphasize job opportunities associated with good wages and provide programs to enhance the employability of members of disadvantaged groups, including Latinos and African Americans, people with lower educational levels, single-headed families, especially female-headed families, unemployed, poor and low-income families, and those living in non-metro areas.

This study also shows that education, family social conditions, the quality of jobs, and metro/nonmetro residence matter substantially in reducing the racial and ethnic gap in social and health programs.

This study's limitations raise questions for future research. The most important is the need to include local community dimensions and their varying resources, including employment opportunities; education and training services; social capital, including community support and the extent to which social service agents reach and connect to needy families; human capital, and infrastructure such as transportation and child care that so often are barriers to employment opportunities.

Another limitation is that this study relies on the CPS, which is designed to be representative of the national, state, and large geographical areas, and not to county or local communities. Data on social and health programs exist at the state level, but in Michigan they are not often released by race and ethnicity and county. State data are more accurate when compared to CPS data or American Community Survey (ACS) data from the U.S. Census and would be more informative.

Finally, existing racial and ethnic disparities in access to social and health programs — whether food stamps, welfare assistance, or health insurance coverage — can be eliminated. They are social in nature and depend on existing policy contexts. No Michigan family should be denied access to food, welfare assistance when in need, or lack health insurance coverage, nor should they experience barriers in the labor market that channel them to public assistance rolls.

# Michigan Licenses

*Continued from Page 1*

This applies to any driver's license issued to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, asylees, immigrant workers, and refugees.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) identified and emphasized provisions within the REAL ID Act that allow states to issue driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. This permits undocumented immigrants to be licensed and insured drivers, but the licenses "will not be good for purposes of federal identification."<sup>4</sup>

A number of states have received backlash for passing or proposing bills that permit issuance of driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. A prime example is California's passage of Senate Bill 60 (signed by Gov. Gray Davis in 2003) allowing undocumented immigrants to receive California driver's licenses. This bill contributed to a state recall of Gov. Davis. Arnold Schwarzenegger eventually won the governorship with one of his platform goals being to repeal Senate Bill 60.

In 2007, New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer developed a plan to make a New York state's driver's licenses available to all New York residents, including the estimated one million undocumented immigrants living and working in the state. Governor Spitzer's overall stated goal was to improve roadway safety for all drivers and reduce the number of untrained and uninsured drivers. The plan was denounced by Republican Party members and media pundits, especially conservative commentator Lou Dobbs, who spearheaded a campaign that distorted Gov. Spitzer's driver's license plan. In the end, Spitzer bowed to the pressure and moved to endorse the REAL ID Act.

On Feb. 13, 2008, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan filed a lawsuit on behalf of six Michigan residents in Ingham County Circuit Court challenging Michigan's new driver's license policy. ACLU of Michigan Legal Director,

Michael J. Stenberg pointed out that by wrongfully denying licenses to individuals working and living in our state legally, "the Secretary of State and the Attorney General are wreaking havoc on the Michigan economy and hundreds of thousands hard-working, tax-paying Michigan residents."<sup>5</sup> The lawsuit's main contention is the consequence of legal immigrants being denied driver's licenses.

As noted by Michigan State University's Office for International Studies and Scholars Director Peter Briggs, there are "nearly 400,000 businesspeople, students, professors and their families from abroad who are in Michigan legally, and temporally, on non-immigrants visas"<sup>6</sup> who are affected by the new driver's license policy. Through pressure from the ACLU and the state's business community, the Michigan State Legislature passed a new bill on Feb. 14, 2008 that gave the Secretary of State's office the power to resume issuing driver's licenses to legal, non-permanent immigrants. This bill still leaves about 100,000-150,000 undocumented immigrants living and working in Michigan without access to driver's licenses.

At this point, there are no data available to show that new restrictions on driver's licenses will control or stop undocumented migration into the United States — if that is its underlying aim. It should be noted that policies "designed to make undocumented immigrants miserable, like the denial of a driver's license, will do just that — further marginalizing people who live among us."<sup>7</sup>

- 1 *Barillas, Martin, "Michigan bans driver's license for illegal aliens," Spero News, 22 Jan 2008.*
- 2 *"State driver's license requirements now include permanent legal presence in U.S." Department of State, Terri Lynn, Secretary of State, 21 Jan 2008 and "Illegal Aliens can no longer receive driver's licenses" Rep. Rick Jones – District 71, Oneida Township, 27 Dec 2007.*
- 3 *AG Mike Cox, Opinion #7210, 27 Dec 2007.*
- 4 *NCLR, Denying Driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants: Unfortunate Campaign Issue Bad Public Policy.*
- 5 *ACLU Challenges State's New Policy Denying Resident Licenses, Press Release, 13 Feb 2008.*
- 6 *Peter Briggs, "License rule makes Michigan unwelcoming," Lansing State Journal, 14 Feb 2007.*
- 7 *Andrea Batista Schlesinger and Amy Traub, "Immigrants Drivers License Plan Unravels," The Nation, 14 Nov 2007.*

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