

Making the Case for Equal Opportunity: Frequently Asked Questions

These are sample questions a reporter might ask about why equal opportunity is important.

Question: Your group supports equal opportunity programs such as affirmative action – why?

Answer: We support equal opportunity for communities that need it, because when communities prosper, we all benefit. We're in favor of initiatives that make it possible for all communities to succeed by giving them a hand up, not a hand out.

Question: Your opposition says they want a color-blind society. What's your problem with that? Isn't that your goal as well?

Answer: We all want to live in a society that values the content of character, and isn't distracted by the color of one's skin. But our opposition wants to limit the right of communities to have a fair shot to compete. Our country is built on the idea that everyone should have a fair chance to try and succeed – eliminating equal opportunity takes that chance away. All Americans deserve to be treated equally.

Question: But isn't that what your opposition is asking for – equal opportunity for everyone to compete, regardless of race?

Answer: The reality is that anyone who has kids knows that some communities' school districts are better than others, and any homeowner knows that some neighborhoods get better services than others. Equal opportunity is about making sure that all communities get the same chance to succeed.

Question: What does your group want? How do you address criticisms that these programs are unfair and irrelevant?

Answer: We want equal opportunity initiatives that ensure that all communities get a chance to compete. We also want to find ways to expand these opportunities to other communities and individuals who need it. We understand that things are not perfect, but right now this is one option to help communities help themselves.

Question: Who really benefits from these programs?

Answer: We all benefit because we're all in this together. Helping to strengthen communities helps us all, because a strong America is built on strong communities. Just think about how a community plagued with crime or poor schools or abandoned buildings impacts a city's public resources. If communities fail, it becomes a public burden – but when they succeed, it's a public benefit.

Question: If a white person loses her home in a foreclosure and can't get a job to support her family, how is she less deserving of help than a middle-class black family?

Answer: Equal opportunity initiatives provide an opportunity, not an outcome. They give all communities a shot at succeeding where they otherwise might not even have had the opportunity to try. These opportunities should be expanded to more communities in need, and we want to work toward that. Our goal is to expand opportunity, not limit it. We think Americans should have more opportunities, not fewer.