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Publisher’s Note

Over two hundred years ago, Thomas Jefferson penned the words that have shaped and formed the governmental policies of the country we live in today, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.” However, since the day Jefferson and the other signers of the Declaration of Independence committed themselves and the United States to this powerful language, American citizens have continually questioned whether the “truth” of equality for all mankind regardless of attributes such as age, gender, or race is anything more than a wistful aspiration. Such skepticism has led to the development of one of the most controversial governmental policies in our country’s history—affirmative action.

In this, the nineteenth volume of the Brigham Young University Prelaw Review, entitled The Role of Affirmative Action in Creating a Just Society, students have authored articles on all aspects of affirmative action from the history of the policy to current issues of contention that will soon come before the Supreme Court. The articles published were hand-picked from papers authored by prelaw undergraduate students hoping to experience the publishing process. The editing process was also conducted by undergraduate prelaw students. Indeed the primary purpose of the Prelaw Review is to provide an opportunity for editing and publishing work for undergraduate students and to encourage undergraduate students to educate and involve themselves in these controversial political issues early in their academic careers.

Some of the articles in this Review endorse the policy, while others oppose it. However, regardless of which stand one takes on the issue, one thing is clear: affirmative action is not going away anytime soon. It is a policy that will continue to be called into question time and time again. And because of that, it is essential that the prelaw students of today who will be the attorneys, lawmakers and judges of tomorrow, carefully consider the issue. Additionally, it is important that each of us, as voting citizens of this country, determines where we will make our stand. Indeed, as the well-known English poet Thomas Tusser stated, “Each man must for himself alone decide what is right and what is wrong, which course is patriotic and which isn’t. You cannot shirk this and be a man.” It is my hope that this edition of the BYU Prelaw Review will help all of us carefully consider the issue of affirmative action and determine whether it is a policy that ultimately upholds or undermines the truth we hold to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.

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