What a Difference Affirmative Action Has Made:
Juggling the Numbers

To the Editor:

Shelby Steele, in “Affirmative Action Must Go” (Op-Ed, March 1), correctly notes the perniciousness of affirmative action. However, his suggested remedy, eliminating affirmative action and making discrimination a felony, would not correct the preference-ridden system.

Many employers began employing preferences to avoid liability for discrimination based on statistical underrepresentation of women and minorities. As long as statistical disparities are viewed as strong evidence of discrimination, employers will experience pressure to get their numbers up.

Increasing the penalties for discrimination will only increase this pressure. Thus, the only difference under Mr. Steele’s regime is that employers would be even less candid about what they are doing than they are now.

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