



Understanding Affirmative Action: Politics, Discrimination, and the Search for Justice

J. Edward Kellough

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For some time, the United States has been engaged in a national debate over affirmative action policy. A policy that began with the idea of creating a level playing field for minorities has sparked controversy in the workplace, in higher education, and elsewhere. After forty years, the debate still continues and the issues are as complex as ever. While most Americans are familiar with the term, they may not fully understand what affirmative action is and why it has become such a divisive issue. With this concise and up-to-date introduction, J. Edward Kellough brings together historical, philosophical, and legal analyses to fully inform participants and observers of this debate. Aiming to promote a more thorough knowledge of the issues involved, this book covers the history, legal status, controversies, and impact of affirmative action in both the private and public sectors and in education as well as employment. In addition, Kellough shows how the development and implementation of affirmative action policies have been significantly influenced by the nature and operation of our political institutions. Highlighting key landmarks in legislation and court decisions, he explains such concepts as disparate impact, diversity management, strict scrutiny, and representative bureaucracy. Understanding Affirmative Action probes the rationale for affirmative action, the different arguments against it, and the known impact it has had. Kellough concludes with a consideration of whether or not affirmative action will remain a useful tool for combating discrimination in the years to come. Not just for students in public administration and public policy, this handy volume will be a valuable resource for public administrators, human resource managers, and ordinary citizens looking for a balanced treatment of a controversial policy.

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