

# ABA Body Backs Endorsement of Affirmative Action

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CHICAGO, Aug. 9—The American Bar Association, the nation's largest lawyers group, added its voice today to the escalating national debate over affirmative action by endorsing "legal remedies and voluntary actions that take into account . . . race, national origin or gender to eliminate or prevent discrimination."

With no opposition, the ABA's House of Delegates, the group's policy-making body, put the 350,000-member association on record favoring remedies to discrimination, which are now the subject of intense debate in Congress and around the nation.

"We are not talking about reverse discrimination," Detroit Mayor Dennis W. Archer, a member of the House of Delegates, told colleagues. "We're not talking about quotas." Archer said the ABA was endorsing "policies that embody this nation's promise of equal opportunity for all."

The resolution was introduced by a "broad coalition" of ABA members, according to the Rev. Robert F. Drinan, a Georgetown University law professor and former congressman.

While the ABA's position is not binding on anyone, the endorsement allows the group to throw its lobbying weight behind affirmative action in state legislatures and Congress.

Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) last month introduced broad legislation that would go beyond a recent Supreme Court ruling and end race- and gender-based federal affirmative action programs. Meanwhile, President Clinton has said that such federal programs need to be improved but should not be eliminated.

Archer, who is black, told the House of Delegates that he has "benefited from affirmative action. Although I am qualified, I needed affirmative action to have an opportunity to demonstrate my ability."

Archer said affirmative action helped bring him to the ABA, to his former law firm, which he integrated, and to the Michigan Supreme Court, where he served as a judge.