There is an ongoing public debate on the permissibility of affirmative action. This poster presents and evaluates the main arguments for and against affirmative action. In order to assess the main arguments, the poster relies on deductive evaluative criteria. Validity is the most important deductive evaluative criterion. An argument is valid when it is impossible for all the premises to be true and the conclusion false. Arguments are easier to assess when they are in valid form; if all the premises are true you are guaranteed a true conclusion. Alternatively, if there is a false premise, the argument fails to provide evidence for the conclusion.

Drawing on the work of Pojman, the poster considers the main argument against affirmative action. The “Discrimination Argument” holds that affirmative action is wrong because it discriminates. The poster will present the discrimination argument and give Pojman’s reasons for thinking the premises are true, the poster will then criticize each premise.

The poster will also consider the two main arguments in favor of affirmative action.

The “Compensation Argument” holds that affirmative action is permissible because compensation is owed for past harms. After giving reason to accept the premises, the poster will offer Pojman’s criticism of both premises. Pojman’s criticisms are convincing; a new argument for affirmative action is needed. The poster will conclude by presenting the “$43 Million Argument,” which defends affirmative action by showing that diversity improves outcomes.