

Letters

Affirmative action

SIR – You treated race-based preferences for college admissions as somehow immoral, a well-intended injustice meant to remedy another existing injustice ("Time to scrap affirmative action", April 27th). But this assumes that admissions policy is just about merit, and that the deserving are those who do better on standardised tests. Universities do not exist solely to serve such students, but also to attain broader, complex social and economic goals.

RON DAVIS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

SIR – It would not be fair to stop using race as criteria in admissions until admissions based on family or other "legacy" connections are also banned. The fact that being the son or daughter of alumni can get someone into a university for which they may be "academically unsuited" is just as unfair. To know that you have struggled and overcome only to meet someone whose daddy put in a good word and got them in without effort can be soul destroying.

BREANA WHEELER

London

SIR – Affirmative action is only a symptom of the wider problem, which is that American liberal discourse uses race as a proxy for economic class. This prevents many liberals from even speaking about the distressingly low class mobility in America. It creates a climate in which it is acceptable to mock the poor and uneducated, so long as they are white. It also creates a divide between poor whites and all others in the lower class that inflames racial issues.

ADAM EMERSON

Ann Arbor, Michigan

SIR – You gave some credence to the claim that universities foster diversity among students. This might be more persuasive were academia not rife with speech codes and other enforcements of political correctness, suppressing the kind of diversity that really matters most: diversity of thought and opinion.

FRANK ROBINSON

Albany, New York

The Economist, 2013