

## DECODING CONNERLY: Ward Connerly Research Fact Sheet

*Ward Connerly is an African-American Republican based in California who for years has toured the country proposing, and often successfully enacting, anti-equal opportunity ballot initiatives in numerous states.*

- **Connerly claims he wants to live in a color-blind society, yet welcomes the support of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan,** saying “If the Ku Klux Klan thinks that equality is right, God bless them. Thank them for finally reaching the point where logic and reason are being applied instead of hate.”<sup>1</sup>
- **Connerly’s campaigns deceptively employ civil rights language.** He calls his proposals “civil rights” initiatives, when they are the opposite. He invokes the language and metaphors of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to persuade people to sign onto his anti-equal opportunity initiatives.<sup>2</sup>
- **Connerly goes to extremes.** In 2003 he tried to do away with California’s collection of health data and other statistics essential to monitoring racial disparities. His proposition, the Racial Privacy Initiative,<sup>3</sup> failed. Of the \$1.7 million in donations for that campaign, \$1.4 million came from six right-wing, extremist donors.<sup>4</sup>
- **Connerly breaks the law.** The California Racial Privacy Initiative was funded through the American Civil Rights Coalition (ACRC), a Connerly-run nonprofit organization. The state of California sued and fined ACRC for violating campaign finance laws. **Connerly admitted violating the law and paid a hefty fine.** He later tried to skirt financial disclosure rules again, in Michigan in 2006.<sup>5</sup>
- **Connerly engages in fraud and unethical tactics.** Connerly has a history of lying and using deceitful tactics to obtain the required signatures for his anti-equal opportunity petitions. **In 2006, hundreds of Michigan citizens testified in federal district court and before the state’s Civil Rights Commission that Connerly’s petition circulators lied**

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<sup>1</sup> “Connerly Criticized For Klan Comments,” *The Associated Press*, November 4, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> “A Preference for Deception,” by Kimberlé Crenshaw. *Ms. Magazine*, Winter 2008, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> “The Assault on Diversity,” by Lee Cokorinos. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> “Contracting Connerly,” by Mary Moore and Jennifer Hahn. *Ms. Magazine*, Winter 2008, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



**and misled them.** For example, one of Connerly's circulators listed the local NAACP president as a supporter of Connerly's initiative, though she never lent her support.<sup>6</sup>

- **Connerly's a hypocrite. Connerly made a profit through his business from the very laws/programs he has sought to repeal.** Connerly & Associates (started in 1973 by Connerly and his wife) reported about \$1.2 million in sales in 1994. However, fifteen companies that hired the company in the 1990's told grant regulators that they had hired a minority and woman-owned business to comply with affirmative action laws.<sup>7</sup>
- **Connerly is getting rich. Connerly has parlayed his anti-civil rights campaigns into a lucrative business.** In 2006 alone, Connerly took home \$1.6 million in salary and speaking fees of the \$2.4 million ACRC and the related American Civil Rights Institute (ACRI) raised that year.<sup>8</sup>
- **Connerly's business practices are troubling even to his own colleagues.** In 2011, Connerly faced accusations from a former ally and employee that he mismanaged, and exploited for his own benefit, donations to ACRI/ACRC. The allegations that he mismanaged funds came from Jennifer Gratz, a former ally and the named plaintiff in a key 2003 Supreme Court case challenging the use of race in admissions to the University of Michigan. In addition, ACRI is being investigated by the IRS and the California Attorney General.<sup>9</sup>

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([ThakurMittal@civilrights.org](mailto:ThakurMittal@civilrights.org); 202/263-2850) with any questions.***

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<sup>6</sup> "A Preference for Deception," by Kimberlé Crenshaw. *Ms. Magazine*, Winter 2008, p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> *The Assault on Diversity*, by Lee Cokorinos. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003. p. 38.

<sup>8</sup> "Contracting Connerly," by Mary Moore and Jennifer Hahn. *Ms. Magazine*, Winter 2008, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> "Affirmative Action Foe Is Facing Allegations of Misdeeds," by Charlie Savage, *New York Times*, January 17, 2012, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/us/ward-connerly-faces-allegations-of-fiscal-misdoing.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/us/ward-connerly-faces-allegations-of-fiscal-misdoing.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all)