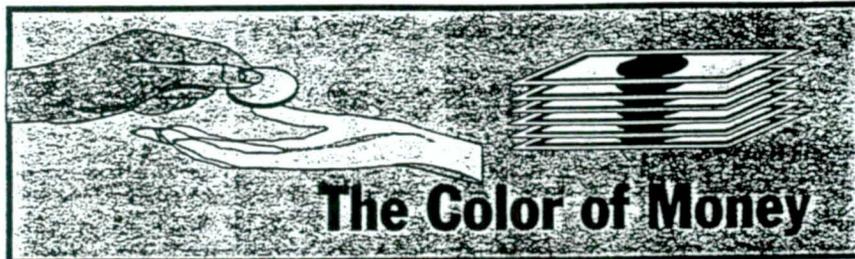


March 12, 1995

Chamber of Commerce to defend affirmative action

The African American Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia intends to defend affirmative action, as political opposition against the tool to redress the effects of past discrimination continue to mount in legislative bodies across the country.

The African American Chamber of Commerce has announced it will contact about 500 business advocates in Southeastern Pennsylvania, including African American business owners, leaders of other regional chambers of commerce, elected officials and CEO's at more than 300 of the largest corporations doing business in the area.

Particularly, the chamber of commerce is opposed to the bill recently introduced by State Representative Ronald Gamble that would eliminate affirmative action throughout the Commonwealth.

According to chamber president Dennis Baxter, African American businesses pay about \$32 million in taxes per year as well as employ more than 5,500 workers whose combined wages yield an estimated \$3.9 million in wage taxes.

Baxter also said his organization planned to compile a comprehensive list of companies in the region that support Pennsylvania's current affirmative action statutes

for forwarding to members of the General Assembly and to other elected officials.

"Despite the recent political attacks on the concept," said Baxter, "we believe affirmative action has produced measurable economic benefits for African Americans, for other minority business owners and for the state-wide economy.

"It would be tragic if a concept that has produced so many jobs and so much economic expansion were to fall victim to political demagoguery. We believe that business leaders in the Greater Philadelphia area will be able to see through the rhetoric and recognize the solid potential affirmative action has always represented for continued economic expansion. We also believe that now would be a good time for the friends of African American businesses and of African American workers across the state to make their voices heard on this issue."

The African American Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia is the leading private sector advocate for black-owned businesses in metro Philadelphia.