

Rights initiative in Calif. wins anti-tax allies

By Kevin Johnson
USA TODAY

Some of the nation's anti-tax groups are looking at California's anti-affirmative action initiative as a way to shrink government and ease tax burdens.

Tom Tancredo, president of the Colorado-based Independence Institute, says many anti-tax groups see affirmative action programs as possible reservoirs for government waste.

"There is a significant fiscal impact," Tancredo said. "It should be of interest to the anti-tax groups."

The California Civil Rights Initiative, which eliminates minority preferences in hiring, school admissions and government contracts, is expected to be on the state's 1996 ballot.

In Florida, David Bidduloph of the Tax Cap Committee said his group is "taking a real close, big-time look" at the California proposal.

"This is not a race issue," Bidduloph said. "This is an economics issue, plain and simple. People are seeing that we are throwing money down the rat hole to keep up these programs... We think this is just bad policy."

But even supporters of the California initiative admit that not enough is known about the true costs of supporting affirmative action programs.

Barnett, who works as an unpaid consultant for California Civil Rights Initia-



By Fred Mertz, AP

INITIATIVE CO-AUTHORS: Glynn Custred, left, and Tom Wood

ive, said "nobody has a full understanding of how much it costs."

Nevertheless, the California sponsors have been buoyed by the general enthusiasm for their proposal.

Initiative co-authors Tom Wood and Glynn Custred have become media celebrities. Pictures of the sweater-clad academics have found their way into national publications. Television networks have sought them out to debate national political figures.

"We're not surprised we're getting this attention," Custred said. "We're surprised we're getting this attention so early, considering we have come from absolutely no place."

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