

Affirmative action foes court tax rebels

By Kevin Johnson
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Leaders of California's anti-affirmative action movement are tapping a national network of powerful anti-tax groups in a bid to spread their efforts throughout the country.

Berkeley-based academics Tom Wood and Glynn Custred — whose California Civil Rights Initiative would end mi-

nority preferences in hiring, school admissions and government contracts — are meeting with leaders of several citizen tax revolts, said initiative consultant Lou Barnett Monday.

Anti-tax groups are considered potential allies because of their interest in shrinking government. Their support would be valuable because of their proven ability to muster voters.

"These organizations can

bring to bear data bases filled with media contacts and rosters of financial contributors," says Donald Linky, whose Public Affairs Institute tracks the activities of tax and other citizen initiative groups. "If they embrace (the initiative), they will be players," he says.

"The reaction has been stunning," Barnett says. "This thing has loomed so large so quickly that there is a national echo

chamber out there."

Affirmative action is emerging as one of the most divisive issues: Contenders for the 1996 GOP presidential nomination want widespread reform, while the NAACP has vowed to make defending affirmative action a priority.

National anti-tax activist Grover Norquist says anti-tax groups in New York, Florida, Colorado, Massachusetts, Ore-

gon and Washington have expressed interest in targeting affirmative action policy.

Norquist likens enthusiasm for affirmative action reform to the 1978 tax revolt in California sparked by Proposition 13.

"When things go 'boom' in California," Norquist says, "they will not be alone."

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