

Reviewer	Round 1 Rating	Round 1 Comments	Round 2 Rating	Round 2 Comments	My reactions
1	Very good	Law school “administrator” disclaiming expertise, says work appears strong and is undoubtedly important. Two concerns are uncertainty of national component of research, and value of a more conspicuously balanced research team. These two ‘minor’ concerns “prompt me to rate the proposal ‘very good’ rather than ‘excellent’.	Not asked.		Since we specifically addressed both of this reviewer’s concerns, he/she would presumably have rated the proposal “excellent” this round, if asked.
2	Fair	Most critical reviewer, and member of panel. (1) why are bar outcomes important/informative? And why is bar score more useful than pass/fail outcomes? (2) no control for income effects; (3) elite schools prepare students less for bar, so measures are biased.	Poor	Resubmission “hightens” concerns about the work: (a) no control for who selects into the Cal Bar; (b) other selection issues are “brushed aside”; (c) NSF should not cross line between science and “advocacy”; (d) Vik lacks sufficient social science training to bring objectivity to the team. No explicit commitment by team to submit work to peer-review journals, and “a little late in the game” to make such a commitment.	Most of our edits last January sought to address this critic’s earlier comments (quite effectively, we thought). But it’s really obvious now that this person is overtly political and simply wants to kill the project.
3	Excellent	Very enthusiastic: project has “very clear” intellectual merit, strong methodology, ‘enormous value in advancing knowledge on this difficult subject.’ Concerns: (a) don’t rely on pass/fail outcomes, and (b) address interaction effects.	Excellent	“Revised proposal has been strengthened in multiple ways.” Addition of Vik ‘especially noteworthy’, happy to see interaction of race and gender addressed, as well as SES and other effects.	Probably the most knowledgeable and objective evaluator in either round, since the reviewer has command both of the literature and specific social science methodology issues.
4	Excellent	“I have rarely seen a research proposal that more clearly merited funding.” Uniformly supportive	Excellent	Briefer, but still uniformly supportive. “An excellent project of great social significance.”	A very sound review, but might well be coming from an affirmative action critic.
5	No rating	Other panel member (along with 2). A fairly meandering review that punts in	Not asked, apparently		

		the end.			
6	n/a		Good/fair	“Highly qualified” team, but (a) unclear why funds are needed; (b) model could be better specified; (c) uncertain of securing data; (d) Prop 209 test seems wrong.	An odd review. Doesn’t seem to have read budget, and clearly misunderstands the Prop 209 analysis.
7	n/a		Very good/Good	“Excellent” lit review, “exciting” elements in research proposed, but “Analysis 2 is all screwed up” and how does Analysis 3 avoid earlier selection bias problems? National component of research too undeveloped.	An economist review. Some interesting suggestions, but apparently did not read proposal carefully.
8	n/a		Fair	Proposal “doesn’t seem different enough from the previous work to really be appropriate for an NSF grant.” “...broader impacts of this debate are significant, but ...our knowledge remains sufficiently limited that NSF needs to tread warily in this area.”	Bizarre.
9	n/a		Excellent	“On intellectual grounds, one of the strongest proposals I have reviewed – either for NSF or for any funding agency.” But (a) ‘the anti-affirmative action orientation of these authors is rather unmistakable and I am ideologically at odds with this orientation.’ And (b) ‘it seems to me the study could be done for less’	An enthusiastic but odd review