NEWS BULLETIN 24/7
Publicado em 25/04/2022 - 08:11

Opinion – Sou Ciência: Preventing fraud and guaranteeing the rights of the Quota Law

The racial quota policy for access to Brazilian public universities has been a fundamental instrument for the social inclusion of the black population, which is the majority in the country, as we have already shown here.

However, since the enactment of the Law (2012), it has been possible to follow news of repeated fraud in the systems. Candidates with a white phenotype declare themselves to be black, brown or indigenous, making improper use of the right to places reserved for admission to public institutions of higher education.

To curb this behavior and verify the racial status of candidates, most federal universities have instituted heteroidentification committees or boards, with the function of verifying whether the self-declaration of color, race and ethnicity of candidates in the admission process actually matches their physical characteristics.

From the beginning, the Quota Law required only the self-declaration of candidates, which often allowed for the lack of supervision or the consent of the institutions in the face of evident cases of fraud.

Over time, public institutions were pressured to establish boards of racial heteroidentification before the enrollment processes, both to guarantee the rights of policy beneficiaries and to provide legal certainty in filling their vacancies.

These commissions have also investigated complaints regarding those who managed to circumvent the admission process, before the newsstands, and improperly occupied the reserved places in undergraduate and graduate courses – usually in the most competitive universities.

The existence of this recent university body stems mainly from the struggle and demand of black students for inspection and control of the usufruct of the right to quotas, a role that made them transcend from a position of “object of policy”, to occupy the place of formulators academic policies and institutional engagement.

An advance to be celebrated by the whole society, taking into account the principles of a critical and reflective education, aimed at the exercise of full citizenship and social participation.

In the case of universities, the composition and conduct of the work of the heteroidentification boards have been carried out with the active collaboration of black professors and administrative technicians.

The most evident effect of this work has been the high rate of absence of self-declared black, brown and indigenous candidates in the heteroidentification procedure. This fact indicates the effectiveness of this instance to curb fraud, especially in popular courses, ensuring that the public policy effectively reaches its recipient.

Heteroidentification mechanisms have a pedagogical role within institutions, as the processes of conquest of these instances are permeated by heated debates between defenders and opponents of these measures, as well as throughout society, since they guarantee the purpose of the legal norm. and constitutional.

It is also necessary to remember that the allegations of fraud after admission, when verified and proven, do not have a retroactive effect that allows the return to black and indigenous populations of vacancies unduly occupied. In some cases, these proofs only occur after the completion of the course, implying the cancellation of the student’s diploma who defrauded the admission system. A huge individual loss and for the entire Brazilian society.

May we enjoy more of this teaching from the Quota Law, ensuring its continuity!

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Veículo: Online -> Site -> Site News Bulletin 24/7

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