

The End to Race-Conscious Admission in the US. What Does This Mean?

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The United States of America is home to numerous competitive students from all places in the world. Known for its continuous pursuit of cultural and ethnic diversity in the college education system, education institutions were actively in progression to enhance racial diversity by applying it in the application system. But this rule was brought into question and was overturned by the Supreme Court. This decision to reverse the race-conscious admission process retrieves decades of paradigm that was developed over the years by the Supreme Court Republicans. What this essentially leads to is the inability of universities, public and private to consider race as a factor in deciphering a qualified applicant to be admitted. Is this fair? Or is this provoking polarization and misconduct?

This issue came to the public's attention without hesitation. The decision in the public's eyes is in fact more mixed and subtle with 60% of the public opinion agreeing with the affirmative action program and others demonstrating less than 50%.¹ This change came to greater awareness and recognition due to its significance in bringing emerging changes in the 1960s to eliminate racial, ethnic and gender segregation. The Affirmative Act was put into place in order to maintain the demographics balanced and equal to a certain degree which would solve the issue regarding segregation. It has held a strong demonstration in the country's attempt to provide fairness and justice in the education system for more than 60 years. Colleges and Universities valued student diversity and held the opinion that it offers benefits to all students until it was brought into a quarrel in 2023. It was not until the 1960s and the 70s, students of minorities began to participate in the education system in schools such as Harvard and UNC. There were two cases in the Supreme Court to determine the validity of race consideration in the admissions process: Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina and Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard.

It was ruled by the Supreme Court, "In a case involving Harvard College and UNC-Chapel Hill, the Supreme Court ruled in June 2023 that race-conscious admissions violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment."² eliminating the race-conscious admission process. It came to the conclusion the college/university application process should solely consider academic merits and race-consciousness pilfers opportunities for qualified applicants. What was once considered an act enforced to eliminate discrimination and bring justice is now being considered a cause of injustice.

This ruling will impact the students, institutions and even other sectors of the economy. It has the potential to hinder cultural variety in the education environment restricting various experiences, talents and growth. This enforcement is said to potentially impact the workforce as well. The schools are banned to consider race as one of the factors to consider in admission and if this does in fact have a significant impact on the demographics,

¹ Nina Totenberg, "Supreme Court Guts Affirmative Action, Effectively Ending Race-Conscious Admissions," NPR (NPR, June 29, 2023), <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/29/1181138066/affirmative-action-supreme-court-decision>.

² "What to Know about Race-Conscious Admissions," The Chronicle of Higher Education, accessed August 16, 2023, <https://www.chronicle.com/package/what-to-know-about-race-conscious-admissions>.

it is very likely this will also lead to a less diverse workforce and an increase in the difficulty to promote equity and diversity.

numerous programs and funding to ameliorate the wealth gap of different race could be hindered and put at risk.³ Any policies and acts regarding racial equity and discrimination have always been a very sensitive topic. Although there are several opposing opinions regarding this new enforcement, the rejection of the Affirmative Act will conduct greater beneficial movements to revert the wrongful methods the institutions considered utilizing the race-conscious admission process. Although the act was initially put into place to provide racial equity, it has become a barrier for some qualified students. When factors not exactly supporting academic merits are considered for an academic institution, this causes greater complications. This contradicts the purpose of the policy itself since an applicant can be denied admission due to their specific race being overly accumulated and unable to satisfy all applicants in order to provide room for other ethnicities. Would it not be fairer to strictly focus on the academic merits and their true talents and capabilities rather than how diverse the pool of applicants is?

For example, every year, numerous competitive applicants apply and one of the largest pools of applicants is known to be Asians. Due to this, the schools have grown to be more “harsh” toward these applicants in comparison to others. It is undeniable that diversity in society is imperative but for the policy to be more “harsh” on one specific race and lenient on another is truly improper and arbitrary. Giving preference and advantages to a specific race simply to support the idea of “diversity” is insufficient in satisfying equity and equal opportunities. It is certainly in my agreement that this reversal of the Affirmative Act implemented will bring positive changes in the education system and will help obliterate the unfairness of the race-conscious admission policy held and put in place for the last few decades.

Several disagreements about this act continue to arise. In a multicultural society such as the US, maintaining diversity in culture and ethnicity is imperative. Many are arguing that the

³ ACLU, “What You Need to Know about Affirmative Action at the Supreme Court | News & Commentary,” American Civil Liberties Union, October 31, 2022, <https://www.aclu.org/news/racial-justice/what-you-need-to-know-about-affirmative-action-at-the-supreme-court>.

elimination of the race-conscious policy will encourage a deepening of the racial wealth gap and will only escalate discrimination among different ethnicities. To attempt to satisfy both sides the government can guide in providing various opportunities for individuals of minorities to seek better education and strive for a more competitive education portfolio. Such as additional funding for government programs for students of minority, more scholarship opportunities, etc. It is important to stimulate engagement and competitiveness in education. Setting all of our backgrounds aside, our culture and ethnicity, what is most crucial in education is our academic merits and our capabilities as students rather than which culture, or ethnicity we belong in. Setting an outline, a guideline to follow in regard to the diversity of the pool of applicants can only satisfy the issues lying on the surface. It is necessary to dig into the root of the cause and make every effort to widen education opportunities for minorities and enhance the academic work environment.

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