

THE FUTURE OF FAIR ADMISSIONS

ISSUE BRIEF 5: LEGACY ADMISSIONS IN 2025

James Murphy, Director, Career Pathways and Postsecondary Policy

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This issue brief is the fifth installment of Education Reform Now's The Future of Fair Admissions series, which identifies areas of the college admissions process that demand reform in order to provide a fairer pathway to opportunity for all students. Brief 5 expands on and updates the work of [Brief 2](#) and [Brief 4](#), which also addressed legacy admissions.

The Future of Fair Admissions series is made possible by generous support from the Kresge Foundation. The ideas and arguments made in this brief are intended to reflect only the positions of Education Reform Now.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief is the fifth installment in our [Future of Fair Admissions series](#) and the third in the series on legacy admissions. Analyzing the latest data from the Department of Education and laws passed in four states in 2024, we show that the use of legacy preferences has steeply declined over the last decade. This profoundly unfair practice of passing an admissions advantage in college admissions along family bloodlines may well be on its way to disappearing altogether from higher education thanks to a combination of legislative action and public disgust with the priorities elite colleges and universities feel the need to protect.

KEY FINDINGS

- **The number and share of public and private four-year colleges and universities that consider legacy status are at their lowest since this information began to be collected.**
 - 420 four-year institutions continue to consider legacy status.
 - Just 24% of four-year colleges now consider legacy status, down from 29% in 2022 and 49% in 2015.
- After the Supreme Court banned the consideration of race in college admissions in 2023, 92 colleges have stopped considering legacy status, an 18% decrease from 2022.
- **Since 2015, 452 colleges have stopped considering a legacy status. More than half of the colleges that considered legacy status then do not do so now.**
 - At a majority of these colleges and universities (86%), ending the consideration of legacy status was a voluntary institutional decision, while a minority (14%) were required by state law to end legacy preferences.
- Only 11% of public colleges and universities—62 institutions—consider legacy status in their admissions processes.
 - In 24 states, no public colleges or universities provide a legacy preference.
- 30% of private colleges and universities (358) consider legacy status in their admissions process.
- **Legacy preferences persist most strongly at the wealthiest and most selective colleges and universities. More than half of these colleges still provide a birthright advantage to the relatives of alumni.**



INTRODUCTION

Providing an advantage to the relatives of alumni in the college admissions process is profoundly and obviously unfair. [Three out of four Americans](#), including a slightly larger percentage of Republicans than Democrats, and [seven out of eight admissions office directors](#) do not believe legacy status should be considered in admissions decisions. At highly selective colleges such as Harvard, Cornell, Georgetown, and Princeton, [most undergraduates, including legacies themselves, oppose passing an admissions advantage along family bloodlines](#).

So, it is no surprise that legacy admissions have become an increasingly rare admissions practice. In the past decade, more than four hundred colleges have voluntarily abandoned the outdated and anti-meritocratic practice, and state legislation has ended the use of legacy preferences at almost seventy more. In 2024, four states joined Colorado in banning legacy admissions in some capacity. Several more states are likely to introduce new legislation in 2025 to end legacy preferences. **In total, 452 colleges have stopped considering legacy status since 2015. More than half the colleges that used legacy admissions in 2015 have stopped. Today, not even a quarter of the four-year colleges in the United States consider legacy status**, down from nearly half just ten years ago.

The shame of belonging to this group of colleges that think children of alumni have somehow earned an extra advantage in admissions is likely to push more colleges to drop the practice. This is not a club that most colleges belong to or will want to belong to. In reality, the number of colleges that consider legacy status is almost certainly much smaller than the numbers we share in this report, since many colleges that report considering legacy status do not actually factor it into admissions decisions. [Click here for the full list of institutions that still consider legacy](#).

Still, there are too many colleges and universities where the admissions advantage provided to the relatives of alumni continues to significantly affect who is enrolled, despite its obvious lack of fairness. **In 2025, the practice of providing a legacy preference is most prominently used by old, wealthy, elitist colleges and universities largely concentrated in the Northeast that apparently believe that protecting and preserving the advantages of elites is a core part of their mission**. How else to explain why they cling to this weird relic of a dark past in which elite colleges invented legacy admissions to deny admission to the highly qualified Jews who were earning spots at Ivy League schools, spots that had been reserved for centuries for rich, private school students? While the vast majority of Americans and American colleges and universities believe that admission to college should be based on ability, not on bloodline, these colleges are taking a stand for the aristocracy.

Because these institutions and their values are so out of step with the rest of the nation, it has become increasingly necessary for legislation to force them to do what common decency should have done long ago. Colleges and universities have been given plenty of time to drop a practice that is unfair, unethical, and completely out of line with the values of most Americans. Most of us want to live in a fair society where ability and hard work lead to earned rewards; private colleges believe in protecting birthright privileges because they fear a loss of donations. At a moment when Americans are increasingly wondering about the value of higher education, the leaders of the most selective universities are rejecting normal American values, putting financial interest before fairness.

It is not just these college presidents and their boards who need to embrace American values of fairness and meritocracy. Powerful political leaders in some states also need to stand with the people, not with elite institutions. In every single state where legacy bills have received a vote, they have passed easily, even unanimously. **The main barrier to legacy bills that have been proposed in the Northeast has been the refusal of legislative leaders to let the bill get a vote**. As advocates for legacy bans continue to push these outliers to do the right thing, it will be important not only to answer the falsehoods that are thrown up in defense of legacy preferences but also to be honest about the impact removing legacy admissions will have. After a discussion of the current state of affairs for legacy preferences, this report will debunk three defenses elites make about legacy preferences.

THE DECLINE OF LEGACY ADMISSIONS

In the past five years, the number of four-year colleges and universities that provide an admissions advantage to the relatives of alumni has steeply declined, according to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Survey (IPEDS). In 2015, according to the Common Data Set survey, almost half of the public and private bachelor's granting institutions in the United States considered legacy status in their admissions process. **In 2025, less than a quarter of four-year colleges and universities provide a legacy preference.**

The Decline of Legacy Admissions over the Past Decade

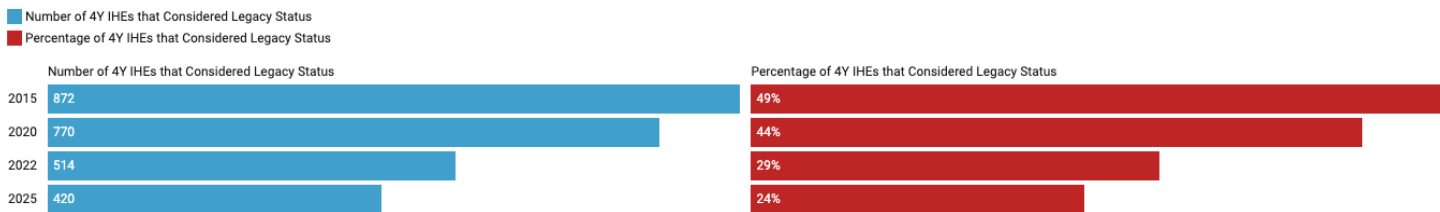


Chart: James Murphy, ERN • Source: CDS 2015, 2020; IPEDS 2022, 2025; State laws 2025 • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 1

The number and percentage of four-year colleges and universities that consider legacy status are at their lowest point since this information began being collected. Between 2022 and 2023, 92 colleges stopped considering legacy status, an 18% decrease. That decline was likely driven in part by the Supreme Court decision banning the consideration of race in admissions. Many colleges released public statements saying they remained committed to campus diversity and were examining their admissions practices to remove barriers to underrepresented students. A much smaller share actually followed through on that commitment. Several highly selective universities, including [Yale](#), [Brown](#), and [Princeton](#), decided that it is perfectly fine for them to keep providing a leg-up in admissions to the children of alumni through legacy preferences, even after research by professors at Brown and Harvard showed that [the single biggest driver of the richest one percent's enormous advantages at Ivy Plus colleges comes from legacy preferences.](#)

The Supreme Court decision does not get all the credit for the decline of legacy admissions, however. The number of institutions who think that the children of alumni deserve an extra boost in the admissions process has been dropping for a decade. **Since 2015, 452 colleges have stopped considering legacy status, a 52% decrease.** At a majority of these colleges and universities, eliminating the consideration of legacy status was a voluntary, institutional decision, while a minority were required to end legacy preferences by state law.

Why Colleges Stopped Considering Legacy Status

Source: ERN analysis

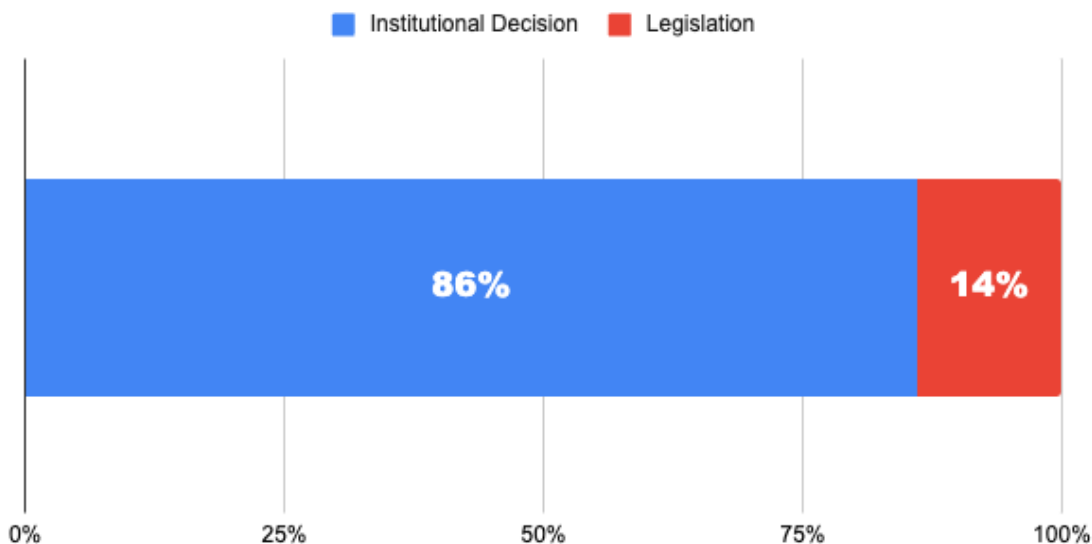


Figure 2

In 2024, four states joined Colorado in banning legacy preferences. Bills banning legacy were introduced in six other states but have not yet gotten a floor vote. It is likely that more states will pass legislation. **It is possible that as Congress explores an expanded endowment tax on the nation's wealthiest universities, it could impose an additional penalty on institutions that continue to provide a legacy preference and reduce the penalty at institutions that increase the enrollment percentage of Pell-eligible students, community college students, and veterans.**

States Where Bans on Legacy Admissions Have Been Introduced

STATE	INSTITUTIONS AFFECTED	CURRENT STATUS
California	Private (No public IHEs provide a legacy preference)	Law passed in 2024 . Will go into effect in fall 2025.
Colorado	Public	Law Passed in 2021
District of Columbia	Public and Private	State Board of Education passes a special resolution calling for the end of legacy and donor admissions preferences in 2024 .
Illinois	Public and Private	Public ban passed in 2024 . Bill to ban legacy admissions in private institutions introduced in 2025 .
Maryland	Public and Private	Law Passed in 2024 .
Virginia	Public	Law passed in 2024 .
Connecticut	Public and Private	Bill amended to require reporting on legacy admissions and passed in the Senate in 2024 . House did not allow a vote on the bill
Massachusetts	Public and Private	Bill advanced by higher education committee in 2024 . The legislature did not allow it to receive a full vote. Bill reintroduced in 2025 .
Minnesota	Public and Private	Introduced in 2024 . No further action taken. Reintroduced in 2025 .
New Jersey	Public and Private	Introduced in 2024 (NJ legislative sessions are two years long).
New York	Public and Private	Introduced in 2023 . Reintroduced in 2024 . No further actions taken. Reintroduced in 2025 .
Rhode Island	Public and Private	Introduced in 2024 . No further action taken.

The use of legacy preferences continues to be unevenly distributed across the nation. Just 11% of public colleges and universities consider legacy status, and **in 24 states, no public institutions of higher education provide a legacy preference.**

Percentage of 4-Year Public IHEs that Consider Legacy Status in Admissions in Each State

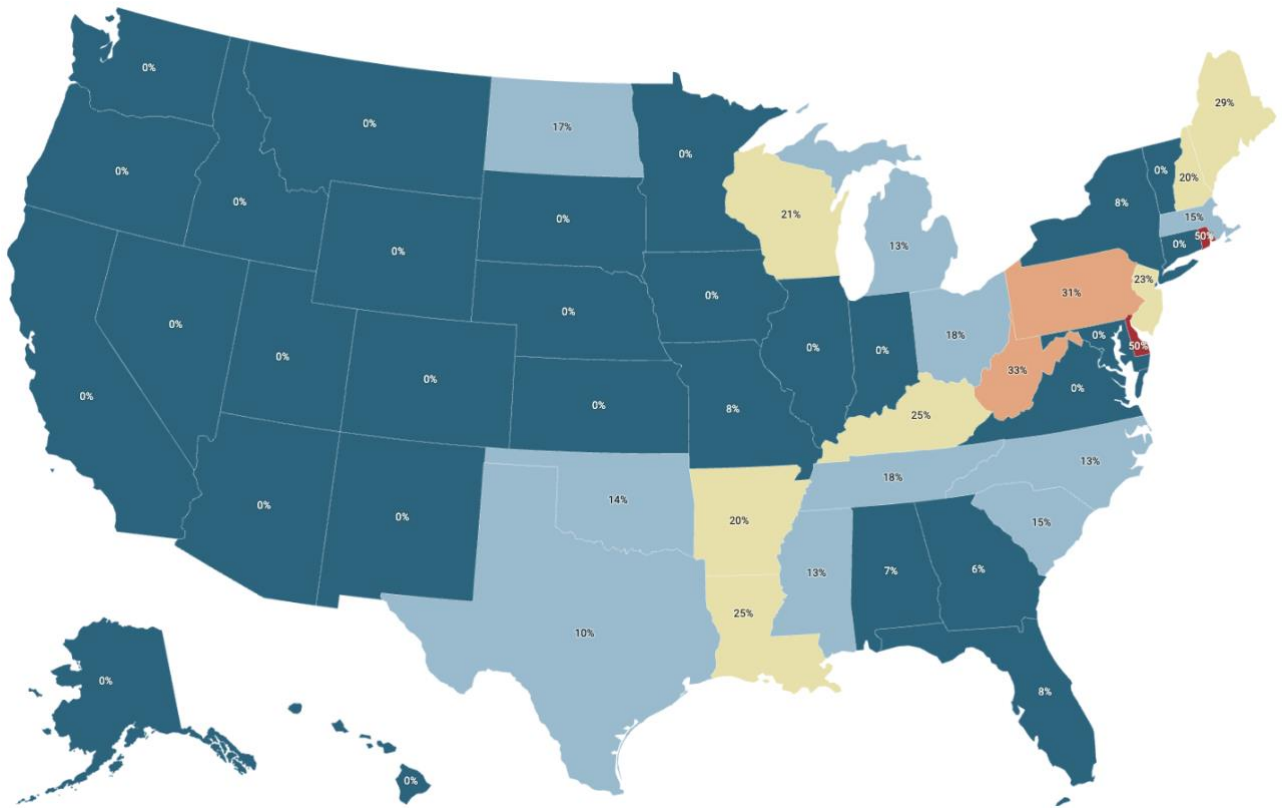


Figure 3

Private colleges account for 85% of all institutions that consider legacy status, but less than a third of them now provide a legacy preference. The colleges that continue to consider legacy status are especially concentrated in the Northeast. **No state has more colleges that provide a legacy preference than New York.** In fact, one out of seven colleges that use legacy admission in the U.S. can be found in the Empire State.

Percentage of 4-Year IHEs that Consider Legacy Status in Admissions in Each State

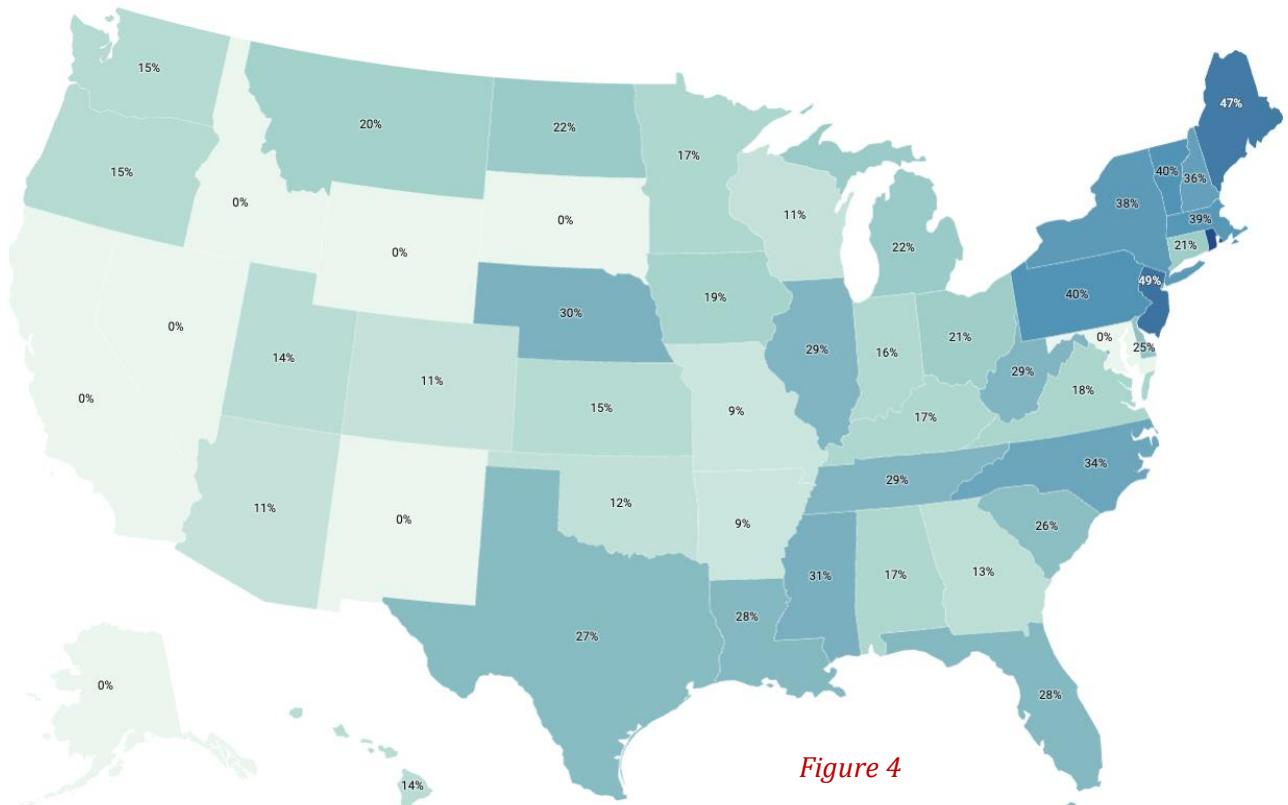


Figure 4

Legacy preferences persist most strongly at the most selective colleges and universities. More than half of the colleges and universities that admit a quarter or less of applicants still provide a birthright advantage to the relatives of alumni.

What Percentage of Four-Year Colleges and Universities Consider Legacy Status in Admissions, by Selectivity

Source: ERN analysis of IPEDS 2023 and state legislation

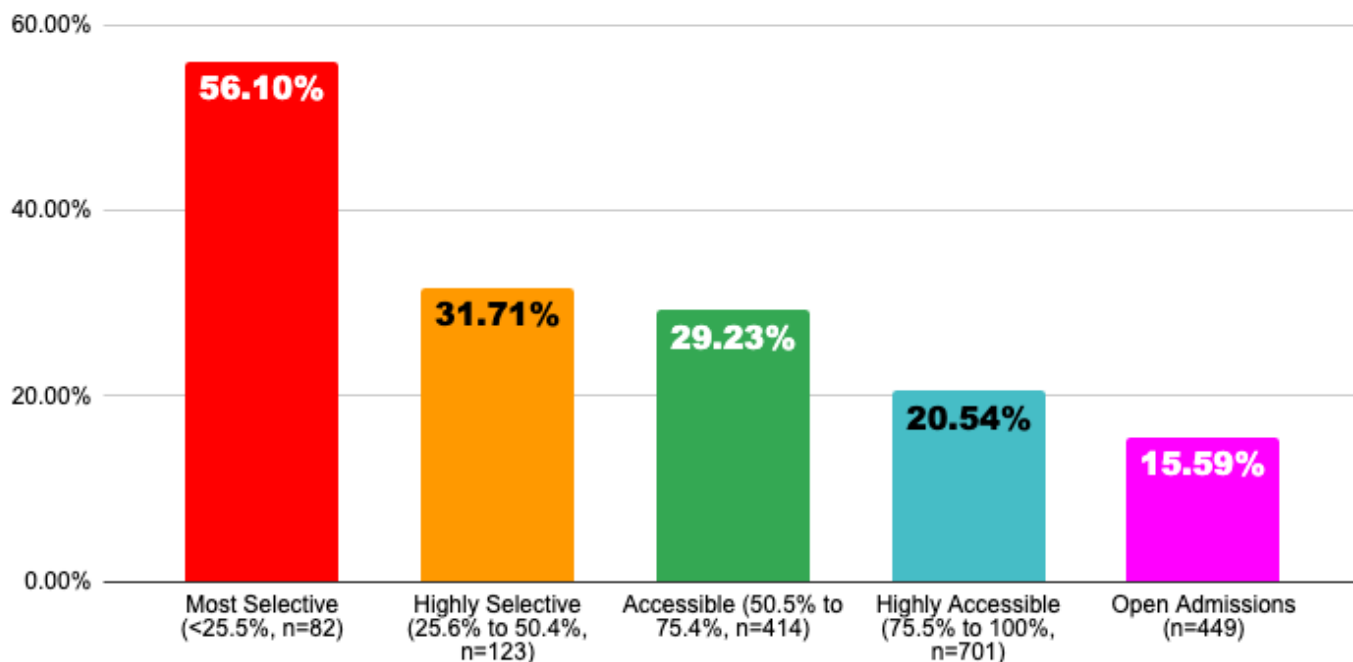


Figure 5

It is highly unlikely that many less-selective colleges that admit more applicants than they deny use legacy preferences in a way that has a significant impact on admissions decisions. Does legacy status really matter at a college like the University of Massachusetts-Boston or SUNY College at Potsdam, which both admit over 80% of applicants? Many accessible colleges have likely answered the question inaccurately out of confusion over what it means to “consider legacy status.”

One source of this confusion is that the Common Data Set and IPEDS have not until recently provided a definition of what it means to “consider legacy status.” If a college admissions officer can see where an applicant’s parent went to college on the application materials they read, does that mean they are considering that information? Thanks to the work of a coalition led by Education Reform Now in 2024, IPEDS now explains that “consider” refers to a component that is included in admissions readers’ materials and used to make admissions decisions. Hopefully this clarification will reduce the overreporting of legacy admissions.

The other likely source of confusion in reporting is the Common Application, which is used by over 1,000 colleges and universities as their primary application. The Common App, as it is commonly called, asks all students applying to college to identify where their parents earned a bachelor’s degree, even though the answer to this question does not matter at more than three-quarters of colleges and universities and should not matter at any of them. As a result, **the Common App is unintentionally aiding and abetting legacy admissions.** It could fix this problem by removing the question about where a student’s parents went to college, in the same way that it removed a question about whether a student had been subjected to school discipline because it created a bias against some applicants. The Common App made that decision as “the first step in a longer process to make college admissions more equitable.” Removing the legacy question, which can unfairly bias the process in favor of an applicant, would be a good next step. If an admissions office thought where a parent went to college was important, it could add that question to its supplemental section.

THREE MYTHS ABOUT LEGACY PREFERENCES

There really is no debate over legacy preferences. It is unfair to give anyone an automatic and unearned advantage based on their parentage. It is doubly unfair when the people receiving that admissions advantage already have so many advantages in terms of financial, social, and cultural capital. The children of graduates from elite institutions are born with so many advantages and continue to gain more as their parents dedicate large amounts of time and money to ensure their children's edge over others. These parents are not, of course, to be faulted for pursuing what is best for their children. All parents should do so. It is the colleges and universities that look at these students and families and think, "You know what? You need some extra help," that bear the shame of trading fairness and integrity for donations.

As the unfairness of legacy preferences has become obvious to almost anyone who is aware that colleges and universities pass an admissions advantage along family bloodlines, the defenders of this practice have become increasingly desperate and bizarre in their attempts to justify the unjustifiable. We debunk them below.

Myth 1: "Colleges Need Legacy Preferences"

There are essentially two versions of the argument that colleges need legacy admissions to carry out their mission: legacies help build a community and legacy admissions help us raise money.

The notion that colleges need legacies to build a sense of community and belonging is impossible to take seriously. There are few institutions in modern society that build a sense of community and belonging as successfully as residential campuses do. The only others that come close are churches and sports teams, which, of course, are also an important component of campus life at many of the institutions using legacy admissions. Go to a University of Iowa women's basketball game or the [Big Game](#) at UC Berkeley and see if you can pick up on a sense of community, despite the absence of a legacy preference at both universities. The truth is that every college has its campus traditions, clothing, rituals, lingo, and shared experiences, whether they are in classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, gyms, or parties, all of which create bonds among students and with the institution. If Yale cannot build that sense of tradition and community without putting a thumb on the scale for the legacies who its dean claims have a "[special bond](#)" with the place, then that's an indictment of Yale. Perhaps Yale could get some advice on how to create a sense of belonging and loyalty by driving up I-91 to the University of Connecticut.

The fact that 76% of four-year colleges successfully foster campus communities without granting an admissions advantage to legacy applicants is indisputable. Even if institutions such as Harvard and Yale believe that enrolling legacy students is essential, it does not follow that they can only achieve this by providing them with preferential treatment in admissions. Legacies do not stop applying when legacy preferences are eliminated, and they do not stop enrolling if they get in on their own merit without any extra help.

If it is difficult to take seriously the claim that ending legacy admissions threatens tradition and community, it is more likely that development offices genuinely fear that donations will dry up without the quid pro quo of legacy admissions. Some research has examined the impact of eliminating legacy preferences on alumni donations. The findings are inconclusive. A [2010 study](#) of 100 highly-ranked colleges found "no statistically significant evidence that legacy preferences impact total alumni giving," but the researchers lacked access to donation records and had to rely on aggregate public data. A [2009 study](#), on the other hand, found that alumni with children gave more and that giving increased as their children approached college application age. Giving declined after the admissions decision had been released and decreased further if the child was rejected.

Here again, we need to recall that **76% of colleges and universities do not provide a legacy preference, including some of the world's wealthiest public and private universities**. The notion that colleges with multi-billion dollar endowments need to trade admissions advantages for money is demonstrably false.

The quid pro quo of legacy admissions also comes at a cost to the public trust and an institution's character. The former dean of admissions at Cornell recently acknowledged that he sent leadership there an email complaining that "[admissions readers were in effect deputized in the fund-raising process](#)." To see wealthy institutions try to claim they cannot afford to give up legacy preferences while so many Americans work hard just to get by only reinforces the growing impression that elite colleges are out of step with the rest of the nation.

Myth 2: Removing Legacy Preferences is Racist

In recent years, some defenders of legacy preferences have argued that people are coming after legacy preferences at the very moment that the children of Black and Brown graduates from elite institutions are applying to college. They look at the effort to ban a birthright advantage for the children of alumni as basically saying, "[Legacy for You, but Not for Me.](#)" The frustration of parents who may have been the first in their family to attend a highly selective college and who expected to get the same unearned advantage for their children that generations had deserves sympathy. It does not, however, deserve to shape institutional practice or state policies.

It is a sign of the disconnect between elites and elite institutions and the rest of the nation that some people, including college [admissions deans, have tried to defend legacy preferences](#) by suggesting that banning legacy preferences is an attack on diversity. Leaving aside the fact that a multiracial coalition has been [trying to ban legacy preferences for decades](#) and that is not in any way a product of colleges becoming more diverse, the basic ethical issue here is that, **if you believe that legacy preferences are unfair, then they are unfair regardless of who benefits from them.** To fix corruption, you must remove it, not get a few more people in on it.

Some defenders claim that ending legacy admissions now, after the Supreme Court banned the consideration of race in admissions, is a mistake, because legacy preferences could help build diversity. This defense of legacy admissions has serious problems. Whether you agree with Chief Justice Roberts's majority opinion or not (I do not), it is the law of the land. At the end of his opinion, Roberts cites a nineteenth century decision as a kind of warning to colleges and universities: "[What cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly. The Constitution deals with substance, not shadows.](#)" In other words, using legacy status alone as a way to provide students of color with an advantage violates the law just as much as considering their racial identity alone would. Using legacy preferences as a way to increase diversity likely exposes an institution to legal risk..

It is also very unlikely to work, because the math just is not there. While it is true that racial diversity did increase on campuses in the Nineties, that was an increase from incredibly low numbers of Asian, Black, and Hispanic students on campuses (the number of Native students has always been and remains incredibly small on highly selective campuses). Most legacies at most institutions are likely to white, so most of the beneficiaries of legacy are likely to white.

Colleges release no data on who receives legacy benefits, so it is difficult to measure who is helped and who hurt by legacy admissions, but one paper has found that **the impact of legacy preferences might be felt most sharply by Asian American students.** A [recent study in the journal Nature](#) found that "Asian American applicants had 28% lower odds of attending an [Ivy-Plus](#) school than White applicants with similar academic and extracurricular qualifications." This gap was even worse for students of South Asian descent, who were 49% less likely to attend Ivy League schools than their white peers with the same qualifications. **Why are students who trace their ancestry to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka half as likely to go to an Ivy as white students? The researchers determined that legacy preferences were the leading culprit,** since "high-scoring White applicants are three to six times more likely to have legacy status than high-scoring Asian American applicants."¹ They also found that high-scoring White applicants are two to three times more likely to have legacy status than high-scoring Black and Hispanic applicants. In other words, however much legacy may help some students of color, most of the benefit is going to white students.

These findings fit with those of a major [study](#) released shortly after the Supreme Court decision. It revealed that students from the top one percent of the income distribution are nearly 60 percent more likely to be admitted to the nation's most selective colleges than are other applicants with the same academic qualifications. Applicants from the richest tenth of a percent are more than twice as likely to be admitted as other applicants with the same test scores. Almost half that advantage comes from legacy preferences. The rest comes from preferences for athletes and for students at private high schools that typically cost more than \$40,000 per year.

The irony of the Students for Fair Admissions case, which culminated in the end of race-conscious admissions, is that it actually clarified why it was important to consider race in the admissions process, which may be why Harvard won initially and on appeal. Since multiple institutional priorities provide an advantage that mainly goes to rich, white applicants, then balancing the scales back in favor of highly qualified students of color becomes necessary in order to create more diverse campuses. It was never the consideration of race that was hurting Asian-American students' chances of getting into highly selective colleges; it was legacy preferences and other priorities that hurt them and most other students. Claiming that legacy preferences can be excused because they might help some students of color

¹ The other major contributor to the bias against Asian students, the researchers found, is the unfair advantage colleges give to some students based on their living in a state that sends fewer students to elite institutions. Getting an advantage in the admissions process simply because you come from Wyoming or Maine has no more to do with merit than does getting one because your parents are alumni.

whose parents attended elite colleges essentially dismisses the legitimate complaints that Asian-American, Black, Hispanic, first generation, and, indeed, all non-legacies have against colleges fixing the odds in the favor of the students with the best odds already.

Myth 3: Removing Legacy Preferences Will not Fix College Admissions

This item is not so much a myth as it is an empty defense made by people who want to protect legacy preferences. It purports that there is no point in removing legacy preferences because doing so will not have a big impact on admissions outcomes, and there are other problems that need to be addressed.

This is foolishness. Of course, solely removing legacy preferences will not make college admissions fair or completely merit-based. This argument only makes sense if colleges had only one option for making their college admissions processes fairer, but that is far from the case. When Johns Hopkins and Amherst dropped legacy admissions, they also boosted need-based financial aid and recruitment of low-income students. Colleges and universities can do more than one thing at a time. **There is no either-or involved in removing legacy admissions. Colleges should both end the practice and do more to make admissions fairer.**

Some highly selective colleges, like Princeton, claim that removing legacy preferences will not heavily impact the admissions process because legacies are among their most qualified applicants and would likely get in anyway. Let's accept the premise for a moment that legacies are indeed well prepared to succeed at elite colleges. Why wouldn't they be? If someone's parents graduated from Columbia or Princeton, they likely enjoyed the financial benefits of their degree, social network, and knowledge of the college application process. Their parents may have paid for private school, math camps, sports clinics, SAT tutors, and a college application consultant. That is precisely why they do not need a thumb on the scale.

Colleges like to claim that legacy is only one element among many in the admissions process that they consider, but the thing about highly selective colleges is that one thing can make all the difference among qualified applicants. No one is admitted to these colleges due to one factor, whether it be test scores, grades, athletic ability, race, or, indeed, legacy status. In order to have a chance of admission an applicant has to have multiple strengths, but even that is not enough. After admissions officers have narrowed down the pool, there are *still* too many highly qualified candidates for a limited number of seats in the freshman class. During a process known as shaping a class, a single factor can make a large difference in a highly qualified applicant's chances of being offered admission over other equally talented students. That explains why, according to [research by Opportunity Insights](#), the children of alumni are nearly four times as likely to be admitted to an Ivy Plus college than non-legacy applicants with the same test scores. It also explains why legacy applicants who apply to more than one Ivy Plus college are three times more likely to get into the institution a parent attended. Furthermore, it explains why [Princeton admits about thirty percent of the legacies who apply](#), even though its overall acceptance rate is just under six percent.

Another version of this argument claims that removing legacy preferences will have little effect on who enrolls at elite colleges because wealthy, highly advantaged legacies will just be replaced with other wealthy, highly advantaged non-legacies. That was not the outcome at [Johns Hopkins](#) or [Amherst](#), which expanded enrollment of Pell-eligible and first generation students after eliminating the opportunity cost of holding seats for the children of alumni. But, even if that is the outcome – a different crew of rich students from Andover and Exeter make it into Princeton and Yale – is it still not better that they do so on their own achievements rather than their ancestry? The fact that education opportunity is tilted so heavily in favor of the wealthy is a large problem, to be sure, but tilting it even more toward legacies is no way to create a level playing field.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the reason to eliminate legacy preferences is not to achieve some other goal. The reason to get rid of them is that they are profoundly unfair and make a mockery of merit. Legacy preferences award some of the most advantaged students an additional advantage in the college admissions process on the basis of ancestry alone. There may be other peripheral benefits to removing legacy preferences, such as increasing diversity on campus, but at the end of the day, institutions and legislators should do the right thing—ending legacy admission either voluntarily or through legislation—because it is the right thing to do.

College presidents and boards tacitly acknowledge that removing legacy admissions is the right thing to do by providing an admissions advantage to first generation students, albeit a smaller one than legacies get. The presidents and boards of these institutions are very aware that having a parent with a bachelor's or graduate degree gives students a leg up and recognize the challenges that first generation students face, so they often use first generation status as a plus-factor in the admissions process. And then they turn around and do the same thing for legacies. **It's this hypocrisy and willingness to put money ahead of merit that make many Americans across the political spectrum wonder not just about the value of higher education but the values of higher education.**

The desire to do the right thing should be motivation enough for the 420 colleges and universities that still provide a legacy preference to end the practice, but if it is not, then self-interest should be. Highly selective colleges currently operate in a hostile environment, and the next four years are likely to make this situation worse. Ending legacy admissions is a way for college and university presidents to show the country that they share our values and that they care about fairness and merit. If that public act of courage is too much, then they should use their influence with state legislators to *encourage* them to proceed with bans instead of working to prevent votes from reaching the floor. Let the legislature take the blame, college presidents, and end the embarrassment of legacy preferences.



METHODOLOGY

For all three Future of Fair Admissions legacy briefs, we looked at all four-year public and private institutions, as identified by the Department of Education’s College Scorecard “Predominant Degree Offered” designation, in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. We found 1,769 institutions in our total data set for this brief. In order to count the number of institutions that did and did not consider legacy status before 2022, we used institutions’ Common Data Set reports on admissions considerations. In December 2022, the Department of Education’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Survey (IPEDS) asked institutions for the first time whether they considered legacy status in their admissions process. The counts of institutions for 2022 and for 2023 rely on the IPEDS reports. If an institution left the field blank, we counted them as not considering legacy status. The institutions that left the response blank have an open admissions process and so, by definition, do not provide a legacy preference or any preferences at all in admissions. The current count reported in this brief also reflects the bans on legacy preferences passed in 2024 in California, Illinois, Maryland, and Virginia, after the most recent IPEDS survey. In California, we identified all private colleges as not using legacy admission; in Illinois and Virginia we did so for public colleges; and in Maryland we did so for all colleges. Finally, we reached out to a few institutions to confirm their response in IPEDS to the question about legacy status because we suspected an error in their report. The University of Central Washington and the University of Minnesota-Duluth both indicated that their IPEDS report was incorrect and that they do not consider legacy status in their admissions process. A complete list of colleges’ and universities’ admissions legacy admissions policies [can be found here](#).





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EDUCATION REFORM NOW

Education Reform Now (ERN) is a non-partisan, nonprofit think tank and advocacy organization that promotes increased resources and innovative reforms in K-16 public education, particularly for students of color and students from low-income families. We seek forward progress in public education—at the federal, state, and local level—developing and advocating for new, bold ideas and mutually reinforcing policies in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education.