

AAPI Affirmative Action Facts

As the national voice advocating for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) across a range of issue areas, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC has a large library of documents including legal briefs, issue briefs with analyses and policy recommendations, letters and comments, testimony and statements, special reports, and community-facing fact sheets. The following are facts and talking points extrapolated mostly from the [amicus brief](#) filed by Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice) in *Fisher*. These facts and talking points may be of interest for advocates discussing the impact of affirmative action on AAPIs.

1. AAPIs overwhelmingly support affirmative action. In national surveys conducted in 2016, AAPIs favored affirmative action by 64%.
2. Not every AAPI is the ultra-high-achieving model minority so often portrayed in popular culture. Contrary to the popular and insidious misconception that AAPIs are universally successful in the education context, many Southeast Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander subgroups suffer from school segregation, inadequate preparation for college, and other barriers to higher education. As such, Filipinos, Hmong, Laotian, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, for example, are among those AAPIs who greatly benefit from affirmative action in higher education admission decisions.
3. AAPI students experience direct racial hostility in the forms of racial bullying, racial slurs, and racial profiling, as well as indirect intimidation by witnessing racist acts directed towards other students of color. Studies show that colleges and universities that reach the highest levels of diversity have fewer incidents of racial hostility.
4. Test scores can be increased significantly by participation in expensive test-preparation courses, and are, therefore, socioeconomically skewed in favor of wealthier students who have access to test preparation courses. Because certain AAPI ethnic groups are overrepresented among low-income students, excessive reliance on test scores does not lead to education opportunities.

In addition to the above, the facts below further inform and engage the AAPI community directly:

1. Impact of affirmative action on AAPIs at UT Austin:
 - There was *no* drop in AAPI overall admissions to UT Austin, even after the consideration of race in 2005;
 - There was *no* drop in AAPI *holistic* admissions to UT Austin, even after the consideration of race in 2005;

- Those AAPI holistic admissions included many AAPIs *with below-average test scores*, before and after the inclusion of race in 2005; and
 - The inclusion of race in holistic review in 2005 did *not* cause or increase any existing “test score gap” between AAPI applicants and other applicants.
2. Impact of affirmative action at other universities: In California, when Proposition 209 banned the consideration of race in university admissions, there was a plunge in underrepresented minority enrollments that was not offset by nonracial programs to increase diversity such as target enrollments based on income.
 3. Race conscious admissions are not quotas. A commonly held misperception among AAPIs is that universities use dispositive “racial preferences” that automatically guarantee certain races—but not AAPIs—admission. These, however, were long declared unconstitutional quotas, and no longer exist. Rather, admissions programs vary from school to school, and should be judged individually based on actual evidence.
 4. A commonly held myth is that Asian American applicants need to score higher on standardized tests in order to gain admission into our country’s most selective colleges. In reality, any test score gap between Asian Americans and other students is not related to affirmative action because the same test score gaps exist whether a university considers race in its admissions policy or not.
 5. Forced color blindness is *not* race-neutral because it favors racial groups who have suffered less racial discrimination.
 6. States that have attempted to use nonracial proxies (such as socioeconomic status) in lieu of race to increase racial diversity have found that such proxies fail to wholly eliminate the educational barriers facing many minority groups.

