

Harvard's Discriminatory Admissions Practices

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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A personal note. I attended Harvard College, receiving a BA degree in 1956.

In March 2017, my alma mater unwittingly honored me by inclusion in its University Library fake guide to "fake news, misinformation and propaganda."

"Fair Harvard," the university's alma mater, lacks fairness. Its motto "VERITAS" on its seal and class rings belies its establishment and admissions practices.

An ongoing November 2014 federal lawsuit filed by Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) accused Harvard of "employing racially and ethnically discriminatory policies and procedures in administering the undergraduate admissions program" - Asian-American applicants harmed by the practice.

According to the suit, Harvard uses racial "quotas" and "racial balancing" in admitting undergraduates, adding:

The university "uses 'holistic' admissions to disguise the fact that it holds Asian Americans to a far higher standard than other students and essentially forces them to compete against each other for admission."

A study covering 20 years of admissions showed Asian-American applicants scored much better than other racial groups on academic merit, worse on personal attributes evaluated.

Since 2000, Asian-Americans had the lowest admission rate of any racial group despite higher test scores.

SFFA head **Edward Blum** said findings "expose(d) the startling magnitude of Harvard's discrimination against Asian-American applicants," adding:

"We believe that the rest of the evidence will be released in the next few weeks, and it will further confirm that Harvard is in deliberate violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act."

The ongoing lawsuit accused university officials of attempting to suppress data revealing its discriminatory practices.

In June 2013, the Supreme Court upheld race-conscious admissions at the University of Texas by a 4 -3 ruling.

Majority Justices Roberts, Alito, Thomas and Kennedy held that the university's admissions practice didn't violate the Constitution's equal protection guarantee. **Justices Ginsburg, Breyer and Sotomayor** disagreed.

Elena Kagan recused herself for prior involvement in the case as US Solicitor General.

Writing for the majority in *Fisher v. University of Texas*, Justice Kennedy claimed

“(a) university is in large part defined by those intangible ‘qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness,’ “ adding:

“Considerable deference is owed to a university in defining those intangible characteristics, like student body diversity, that are central to its identity and educational mission.”

Treating university applicants (or anyone else) differently based on race, ethnicity and/or religion is clearly discriminatory. Despite the High Court ruling, SFFA plaintiffs continue their pursuit of admissions fairness – despite little likely chance of prevailing following the Supreme Court's ruling, setting a disturbing new millennium precedent.

In the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court upheld the Equal Protection Clause of the 5th and 14th Amendment's, affirming that no state shall deny to anyone under its jurisdiction “equal protection of the laws,” including the right to life, liberty and property – along with adherence to international, constitutional and US statute laws.

Brown v. Board of Education is the basis of ruling racial segregation illegal, the same applying to other discriminatory practices based on race, ethnicity or religion.

In 2013, Harvard's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) found that College admissions policies produce “negative effects” for Asian-Americans – along with advantaging legacy students and athletes over their low-income counterparts.

OIR findings showed Asian-American applicants ranked significantly better in test scores, academics, and alumni interview evaluations.

White students ranked higher only in personal qualities, assigned by the Admissions Office.

In Orwell's novel “*Animal Farm*,” some animals were more equal than others – the way it is at Harvard, in America, other Western countries and most elsewhere.

Discrimination is common practice in most societies, corporate enterprises, academia, and interpersonal relations overall.

It violates the letter and spirit of human and civil rights laws – yet continues widespread anyway.

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Stephen Lendman is a Research Associate of the CRG, Correspondent of Global Research based in Chicago.

VISIT MY NEW WEB SITE: stephenlendman.org (Home - Stephen Lendman). Contact at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

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