

# CEO PRESS RELEASE

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## **TOO MANY ASIAN AMERICANS:**

### **AFFIRMATIVE DISCRIMINATION IN ELITE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS**

*A new study by the Center for Equal Opportunity finds that elite schools often discriminate against Asian American applicants.*

In recent years, Asian Americans applying to elite colleges and universities have asked whether admissions offices fairly treat submissions by students of Asian lineage. Scholars have found that Asian American applicants are less likely to be admitted compared to whites, African Americans, and Hispanics, even when statistically controlling for other variables including social class, gender, and extracurricular activities. It would seem at least possible that Asian American applicants are being discriminated against.

The Center for Equal Opportunity addresses this subject in a study released today: *Too Many Asian Americans: Affirmative Discrimination in Elite College Admissions*. The study was authored by Dr. Althea Nagai, a research fellow at the Center for Equal Opportunity, and is available on the Center's web site at [www.ceousa.org](http://www.ceousa.org).

*Too Many Asian Americans* presents enrollment data trends for three selective schools--Caltech, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard University.

The study's key points include:

- “Caltech does not have race-based affirmative action in admissions. Over the years there have been more and more Asian Americans admitted and enrolled at the school. Asian-American students routinely constitute more than 40 percent of the Caltech student body.
- “MIT has long used race as a factor in admissions. The number of Asian Americans at MIT was increasing but came to a halt in the 1990s, peaking at 29 percent of the student body. That number has stalled since then at about 26 percent.
- “At Harvard University, which also uses race in admissions, Asian Americans as a percentage of all undergraduates sharply increased to 21 percent and then significantly dropped. It has stayed at roughly 17 percent since then.
- At both MIT and Harvard there seems to be a limit or “ceiling” on how many Asian American applicants are to be admitted. If there were no such ceiling, both MIT and Harvard would probably enroll a significantly larger number of Asian American applicants. As it is, some of

those applicants may conclude they were rejected on account of their race. “That would be discrimination, certainly as a matter of fact,” says the study, “and most likely in a way that is not consistent with the constraints on such discrimination that the Supreme Court has established.”

- The study draws “a complicated picture” that extends nationwide. “The number of Asian Americans at elite schools has risen dramatically, and they are ‘overrepresented’ relative to their numbers in the U.S. population. Yet . . . certain elite schools will only admit *some* Asian American applicants, *but not too many*. And indeed, not as many as their academic achievements would suggest.”

Linda Chavez, CEO’s founder and chairman said, “Too many Asian Americans applying to elite schools are discriminated against on account of their race. That is the message of our new study, and it is past time that schools quit the morally dubious means of using race or ethnicity as ‘a factor’ in selecting their student bodies.”

Terry Eastland, senior fellow at the center, said, “It’s disappointing that preferences persist. They were always advertised as a ‘temporary’ necessity. The Bakke case that greenlighted racial preferences was rendered in 1978. Today is 2018. That’s 40 years of temporariness. The good news is at Caltech, where admissions are colorblind.”

CEO has published studies of racial and ethnic discrimination in admissions to dozens of universities since it was founded in 1995 by Linda Chavez, now its chairman. Roger Clegg is president and general counsel of CEO.

The Center for Equal Opportunity is a nonprofit research and educational organization that studies issues related to civil rights, bilingual education, and immigration and assimilation nationwide.