



Legacy Preferences in Connecticut

Legacy Preference is the admissions practice of giving a weighted advantage to college applicants with family members who are alumni.

It is discriminatory and perpetuates racial and socio-economic inequities.

It's time for it to end.

National research shows that legacy applicants are more than three times as likely to be admitted as their non-legacy peers.¹ Legacy students are also more likely to be both wealthy and white than their peers.²

Legacy preference is a clear example of systemic racism because it confers a structural advantage to these students. By comparison, it disadvantages prospective college students who weren't born with a hereditary privilege—such as first-generation college students, immigrants, and students from historically underserved communities (e.g. students of color and students from low-income families).

National Trends on Banning Legacy Preference:

- 2014 - Johns Hopkins University ended legacy preference.³
- 2017 - Pomona College ended legacy preference.⁴
- 2021 - Amherst College ended legacy preference.⁵
- 2021 - Colorado banned legacy preference in all public colleges and universities.⁶
- 2023 - Wesleyan (CT) ended legacy preference.⁷
- 2022 - Connecticut - considered, but did not pass, legislation banning legacy preference.⁸
- Current - Congress has begun to weigh multiple bills to address concerns about legacy preference, spearheaded by legislators including U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR, U.S. Senator Todd Young (R-IN), and U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA).⁹
- Current - Neighboring states considering legislation: Massachusetts¹⁰ and New York¹¹.

¹ Hurwitz, M. (Economics of Education Review, 2007). "The impact of legacy status on undergraduate admissions at elite colleges and universities." Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).

² Arcidiacono, P., Kinsler, J., Ransom, T. (2020). "Legacy and Athlete Preferences at Harvard." Retrieved December, 2021 [here](#).

³ Daniels, J. (Atlantic, 2020). "Why We Ended Legacy Admissions at Johns Hopkins." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

⁴ Murphy, J. (Atlantic, 2021). "College Admissions Are Still Unfair." Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).

⁵ New York Times (2021). "Amherst College Ends Legacy Admissions Favoring Children of Alumni." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

⁶ NPR (2021). "Colorado Becomes 1st State To Ban Legacy College Admissions." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

⁷ New York Times (2023). "Wesleyan University Ends Legacy Admissions." Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

⁸ HB 5034: An Act Prohibiting An Institution Of Higher Education From Considering Legacy Preferences In The Admissions Process. (2022). Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

⁹ See e.g.: H. R. 4900 (2023), To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit institutions of higher education participating in Federal student assistance programs from giving preferential treatment in the admissions process to legacy students or donors. Retrieved December 2023 [here](#); and The Merit Act (2023). Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

¹⁰ MA S.821: An Act Banning Legacy Preferences in Higher Education (2023). Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

¹¹ NY Senate Bill S4170A. An act to amend the education law, in relation to prohibiting legacy admission policies at higher education institutions in this state. Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

Why CT Must Legislate an End to Legacy Preference in Public and Private Colleges:

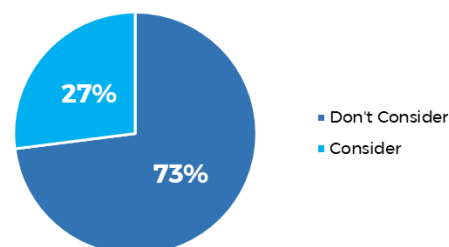
- (1) Legacy preference is **discriminatory** and perpetuates socio-economic inequities across generations.
- (2) Several private institutions of higher education in Connecticut **expressly and unabashedly engage** in this practice.
- (3) Even though some schools have opted out voluntarily, they are **not legally prevented from reversing** that position.

Background on Efforts to End Legacy Preference in Connecticut

In 2022, Connecticut's Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement raised and advanced legislation to prohibit the use of legacy preference in college admissions.¹² Although that bill did not pass, several Connecticut institutions of higher education have proactively made progress in eliminating the use of legacy preference.

In December 2023, the US Department of Education issued a press release indicating that the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) will newly publish data on institutions' use of legacy in college admissions.¹³ The chart on right and table on the following page are based upon that data set.

Federal Data on Use of Legacy in CT 4-Year Colleges (Feb. 2024)



Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, the University of Connecticut, and Wesleyan University have all ended the practice in recent years. In his testimony on Connecticut's 2022 legacy bill, CSCU Chancellor Terrence Cheng also testified before the legislature that, "all four CSU's confirm that they no longer utilize legacy preference."¹⁴

In 2021, the Yale College Council, the university's undergraduate student government, called for the end of legacy admissions at the private school. Its administrative leadership has not yet agreed. Yale is among six private 4-year colleges in Connecticut to engage in the practice.

¹² HB 5034: An Act Prohibiting An Institution Of Higher Education From Considering Legacy Preferences In The Admissions Process. (2022). Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

¹³ USED Press Statement from U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona: Recent Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Collection. Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

¹⁴ Cheng, Terrence (2022). Testimony on HB 5034. Retrieved December 2023 [here](#).

Most Recent Data on Use of Legacy in CT's 4-Year Colleges - Dec. 2023¹⁵

Four-Year College	Public/Private	Considers Legacy Status
Albertus Magnus College	Private	No*
Central Connecticut State University	Public	No
Connecticut College	Private	Yes
Eastern Connecticut State University	Public	No
Fairfield University	Private	Yes
Mitchell College	Private	No
Quinnipiac University	Private	No
Sacred Heart University	Private	No
Southern Connecticut State University	Public	No
Trinity College	Private	Yes
United States Coast Guard Academy	Public	No
University of Bridgeport	Private	Yes
University of Connecticut	Public	No
University of Connecticut-Avery Point	Public	No
University of Connecticut-Hartford Campus	Public	No
University of Connecticut-Stamford	Public	No
University of Connecticut-Waterbury Campus	Public	No
University of Hartford	Private	No
University of New Haven	Private	No
University of Saint Joseph	Private	Yes
Wesleyan University	Private	No*
Western Connecticut State University	Public	No
Yale University	Private	Yes

* Both Albertus Magnus College and Wesleyan University reported using legacy preference in admissions decisions on the 2022-23 IPEDS data set. However, each institution has since officially reported ending the practice.¹⁶

For more information, contact: Amy@edreformnow.org

¹⁵ Data retrieved from the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#), which includes admissions data from the 2022-23 school year.

¹⁶ For Wesleyan's announcement, see: e.g.: Patel, V. (2023, New York Times). Wesleyan University Ends Legacy Admissions. Retrieved February 2024 [here](#). Information about Albertus Magnus' updated reporting is on file with Education Reform Now CT.



LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL ON

Equitable College Admissions

FOR THE CT HIGHER EDUCATION
AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

1. **End Legacy Preference:** Ban *public and private* institutions of higher education from considering an applicant's familial relationship to a graduate of the institution in question.
 - This includes prohibiting institutions of higher education from including among their *admissions documents* any information that discloses where an applicant's relative attended college or university.
2. **Collect and Report Disaggregated Student Data:** Collect data on college applications, admissions, transfers, and completions—each *disaggregated* by race and ethnicity, legacy status, and socio-economic status. (Legacy status to be excluded from this list of disaggregation if the Committee pursues Item #1. Socio-economic status only to be collected at the point of enrollment.) This data policy should include:
 - A requirement that *institutions of higher education* annually collect and report this data to the Office of Higher Education; and
 - A requirement that the *Office of Higher Education* annually receive and *publicly* report this data using an accessible portal, such as Tableau.

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About Education Reform Now CT

The state chapter of a national organization, Education Reform Now CT is a 501(c)(3) that operates as a think tank and policy advocate, promoting great educational opportunities and achievement for all students by increasing equity, protecting civil rights, and strengthening the social safety net.