

# Legacy Preferences in Connecticut

**Ending the use of college legacy preferences in Connecticut is overdue.**

*Giving an advantage during the admissions process to children with family members who are alumni is discriminatory, and perpetuates racial and socio-economic inequities.*

*At least half of CT's 4-yr colleges use this admissions practice.*

***It's time to make a change.***

## **An example of systemic racism, the practice of legacy preferences should have no place in college admissions.**

It creates a structural disadvantage that harms those who are undocumented, first-generation, immigrants, as well as historically underserved minorities—students who have not been privileged with family connections to institutions of higher education.

- National research shows that legacy applicants are more than **three times as likely to be admitted** as their non-legacy peers.<sup>1</sup>
- Nationally, legacy students are also **more likely to be both wealthy and white** than their peers<sup>2</sup> because they benefit from a hereditary privilege that will remain inequitable until America's college graduates are more representative of the nationwide demographics.
- Legacy applicants receive a boost in the admissions process equivalent to an additional 160 points on the SAT.<sup>3</sup>

## **At least 26% of prospective college students in 2021 will be first generation applicants, putting them at a disadvantage at schools that use legacy preferences.<sup>4</sup>**

- This number (26%) mirrors the national percentage of people aged 22-59 who do not have a college-educated parent but do themselves have a bachelor's degree.<sup>5</sup>
- By definition, first-generation college students cannot benefit from legacy preferences.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Rawls, T.H. (New York Times Opinion, 2017). "College Legacy Admissions: Affirmative Action for Whites." Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> In 2021, 26% of students who took the SAT indicated that their parents' highest level of education was either "no high school diploma" or "high school diploma". (See College Board (2021). SAT Suite of assessments Annual Report: Connecticut. Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).)

<sup>5</sup> Fry, R. (Pew Research Center, 2021). "First-Generation College Graduates Lag Behind Their Peers on Key Economic Outcomes." Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).

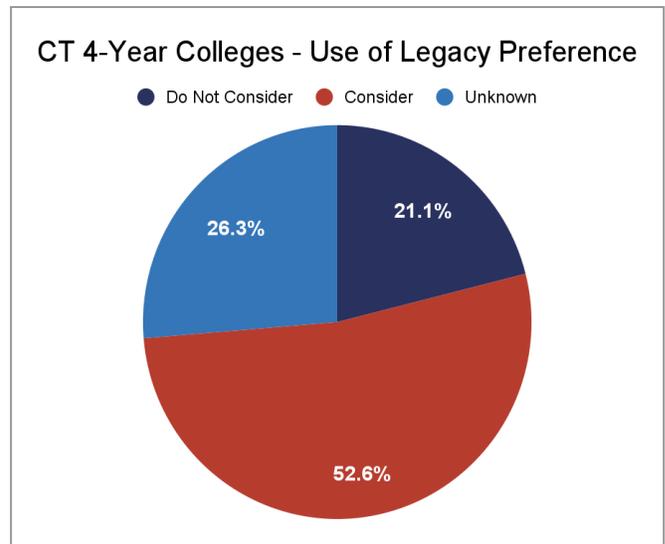
## Colleges don't need legacy admissions to fundraise.

- Research has shown a lack of evidence that there is a statistically significant relationship between legacy preference policies and alumni donations.<sup>6</sup>
- Moreover, giving preferential treatment to students who have family connections does nothing to ensure that they will be more successful at the institution.
- Even if colleges determine a need for gathering alumni data, this can be done after the admissions process is already completed so that it does not create admissions bias.

## More than half of Connecticut's not-for-profit, four-year, bachelor degree granting colleges still use legacy preferences in admissions.

### Connecticut should be part of this national trend to end legacy preferences.

- Colorado banned the practice for all public colleges and universities this year, becoming the first state to accomplish the goal at the state level.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2014, Johns Hopkins ended the use of legacy preference.<sup>8</sup> In 2017, Pomona College also discontinued the practice.<sup>9</sup> Last year, Amherst College followed suit,<sup>10</sup> and the Yale College Council, the university's undergraduate student government, voted to do the same—although Yale's administrative leadership has not yet agreed.<sup>11</sup>
- Connecticut should be next. Recent national polling conducted by Education Reform Now found that 67% of voters support prohibiting the legacy preference at both private and public colleges and universities.<sup>12</sup> A separate, local poll indicates that the majority of Connecticut voters agree.<sup>13</sup>
- Connecticut should use the “power of the purse” to make public and private institutions of higher education ineligible for state grants unless they formally end the use of the legacy preferences during admissions processes.



<sup>6</sup> Coffman, C., O'Neil, T., Starr, B. (Affirmative Action for the Rich, 2010). "An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Legacy Preferences on Alumni Giving at Top Universities." Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> NPR (2021). "Colorado Becomes 1st State To Ban Legacy College Admissions." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

<sup>8</sup> Daniels, J. (Atlantic, 2020). "Why We Ended Legacy Admissions at Johns Hopkins." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> Murphy, J. (Atlantic, 2021). "College Admissions Are Still Unfair." Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).

<sup>10</sup> New York Times (2021). "Amherst College Ends Legacy Admissions Favoring Children of Alumni." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Yale Daily News (2021). "Yale College Council calls for end to legacy preference in admissions, while Quinlan defends practice." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

<sup>12</sup> Education Reform Now Press Statement (2021). "ERN Partners with EdMobilizer to End Legacy Admissions in Higher Ed." Retrieved December 2021 [here](#).

<sup>13</sup> NPR (2021). "Colorado Becomes 1st State To Ban Legacy College Admissions." Retrieved November 2021 [here](#).

CT 4-Year, Not-for-Profit Colleges & Universities	Public or Private?	Alumni/ae Relation Considered in the Admissions Process?*
Albertus Magnus College	Private	<b>Considered</b>
Central Connecticut State University	Public	<b>Considered</b>
Connecticut College	Private	<b>Considered</b>
Eastern Connecticut State University	Public	<b>Considered</b>
Fairfield University	Private	<b>Considered</b>
Goodwin University	Private	Data not published
Mitchell College	Private	Data not published
Quinnipiac University	Private	<b>Considered Important</b>
Sacred Heart University	Private	Data not published
Southern Connecticut State University	Public	Not Considered
Trinity College	Private	<b>Considered</b>
University of Bridgeport	Private	Not Considered
University of Connecticut	Public	<b>Considered</b>
University of Hartford	Private	Not Considered
University of New Haven	Private	Not Considered
University of Saint Joseph	Private	Data not published
Wesleyan University	Private	<b>Considered</b>
Western Connecticut State University	Public	Data not published
Yale University	Private	<b>Considered</b>

*\*Based on most recent, publicly available data from the "Common Data Set."*

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### About Education Reform Now CT

The state chapter of a national organization and affiliate of DFER CT, 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 by increasing equity, protecting civil rights, and strengthening the social safety net.