

Major research associations submit Supreme Court amicus brief in support of race-conscious admissions practices

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The American Educational Research Association (AERA) and six other leading research associations have submitted an [amicus brief](#) to the U.S.

Supreme Court in support of narrowly tailored race-conscious admissions practices at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina. Joining AERA on the brief were the American Anthropological Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Political Science Association, the American Sociological Association, the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and the Linguistic Society of America.

This fall, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc., v. President & Fellows of Harvard College*, and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc., v. University of North Carolina, et al.* A Supreme Court ruling against the universities could upend decades of legal precedent supporting the right of higher education institutions to consider [student](#) body diversity in making their admissions decisions.

"It is critical, as the [court](#) weighs these cases, to rely on a substantial body of high-quality, rigorous research and an impressive scientific consensus," said AERA Executive Director Felice J. Levine. "The research is clear: It is in the best interest of [students](#) and the nation for the court to reaffirm the compelling governmental interest in student body diversity and to affirm the lower court judgments upholding the admissions policies at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina."

In 2003, the Supreme Court cited significant studies when it ruled in *Grutter v. Bollinger* that promoting student body diversity is a compelling interest that can justify race-conscious admissions policies. The [scientific literature](#) supporting the diversity interest was already well-established nearly two decades ago and has grown even more expansive since *Grutter*.

This body of research shows that student body diversity leads to important educational benefits, including improvements in intergroup

contact and increased cross-racial interaction among students; reductions in prejudice; improvements in cognitive abilities, critical thinking skills, and [self-confidence](#); greater civic engagement; and the enhancement of skills needed for professional development and leadership.

Research also supports the argument that admissions policies typified by the Harvard and University of North Carolina programs are narrowly tailored to the interest in student body diversity, complying with the standards set in the Supreme Court precedent Grutter and Fisher cases. Records demonstrate that both Harvard and the University of North Carolina have engaged in extensive analyses and reviews of their admissions policies, as well as alternatives to race-conscious admissions, and have tied those analyses to complying with the Grutter and Fisher standards.

Provided by American Educational Research Association

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