On October 31, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States will hear oral arguments for two court cases on affirmative action: Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. Harvard and SFFA v. University of North Carolina. The petitioner, SFFA, is asking the Court to overturn over forty years of established law, which upholds the legal precedent of considering race as one of many factors in a holistic and individualized admissions process for institutions of higher learning. By trying to ban affirmative action in higher education, SFFA attempts to roll back civil rights and further marginalize communities of color despite longstanding and widely acknowledged inequalities in our educational system. And when claiming to represent the interests of Asian American students, SFFA fails to acknowledge the rich diversity within the AAPI community and how all students, regardless of their race, benefit educationally from the diversity of their fellow classmates.

As students at colleges and universities across America, we unilaterally reject SFFA’s arguments on affirmative action. The inclusion of students from all paths of life has and will continue to contribute to the diversity of the student body, which benefits all students by affirming the importance of our histories and experiences, by allowing us to become more thoughtful and critical thinkers, and opening pathways to professional opportunities that have too often been reserved for those with more privileges and resources. We, the undersigned, believe that race-conscious college admission policies support racial equity in education. We collectively call upon our respective institutions to publicly declare their support for affirmative action in higher education. To students, alumni, and other community members at our institutions, we urge you to support our call to action, and put pressure on your individual campuses and administrations to explicitly support affirmative action. Allies must take an active stance against all levels of inequalities in our society through active participation and education.

Students of color are systematically afforded fewer opportunities to amass the traditional credentials valued by universities, but are nonetheless qualified to compete for university admission. Without affirmative action, the number of students of color from marginalized backgrounds will drop drastically: research findings have established that admission rates of Black, Latine, and Native students consistently fall by 50 to 60% after bans on affirmative action policies.

There are immeasurable benefits to attending universities alongside a diverse group of peers. Research in stereotype threat and stigma consciousness statistically shows that academic performance and college graduation gaps shrink between white students and students of color when students study in diverse environments and experience critical mass with communities of color on campus. Three amicus briefs signed by 82 major American businesses and business organizations, in support of Harvard, stated that they highly value the contributions of those educated in a diverse environment. Econometrician and Nobel Economics Prize winner David Card also proved in his 2017 expert report for the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts that Harvard’s admissions process shows no statistical significance or validity with SFFA’s claims that Harvard discriminates against Asian American applicants. It is of the utmost importance to secure a representative student body because a true college education, not to mention personal growth, takes place both inside and outside the classroom—affirmative action helps to do just that.

But our work does not end here: we invite all students to join us for a peaceful protest on the steps of the Supreme Court on Monday, October 31. Educate yourself and your colleagues using this activism toolkit, sign up to receive free mobilization resources by joining the student working group on affirmative action. Join the movement to #DefendDiversity and #AffirmOpportunity today.

To sign this statement, please go to tinyurl.com/aaxnsignon.
Signed,

Angie Shin, Harvard Affirmative Action Coalition, Harvard College Class of 2023
Hannah Lee, Princeton Asian American Students Association, Princeton University Class of 2024
Jennifer Lee, Princeton University, Class of 2023
Princeton Asian American Students Association
Harvard Affirmative Action Coalition
Kelly Su, Cornell University's Asian Pacific Americans for Action, Cornell University Class of 2024
Cornell University's Asian Pacific Americans for Action
Veronica Marshall-Kirk, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Class of 2025
Hans Bach-Nguyen, Harvard College Class of 2026
Andrew Zuckerman
Thuan Tran, Harvard College Class of 2023
Muskaan Arshad, Harvard Affirmative Action Coalition
Woohee Kim, Harvard University, PhD student
Maya Jones
Lorraine Blatt, University of Pittsburgh
Joseph Hernandez
Josh Alpert, Harvard Law School, Class of 2024
Louis Lin, Harvard Law School, Class of 2025
Ellen Teuscher, UT Austin Class of 2020, Harvard Law Class of 2025
Cheyenne Teng
Linhan Shen, Princeton University Dept. of Geosciences
Oliver Ma
Christina Williams, Harvard Law School, Class of 2025
Willem Alleyne, Princeton University, Class of 2026
Jaden Sharp, Princeton University, Class of 2026
Justin Smallwood, Princeton University, Class of 2026
Jason Diego Fuller, Princeton University, Class of 2026
Kit Foster, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Dorothy Chan, Princeton University, Class of 2026
Nazdar Ayzit, Princeton University, Class of 2023
Kurdish Society of Princeton University
Danielle Samake, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Beianka Tomlinson
Emily Paulin, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Thia Bian, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Eesha Agarwal, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Seth Kahn, Princeton University, Class of 2025
James Robinson, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Melvi Agolli, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Brandon Matthew Gauthier, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Hailey Lambert, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Alexander S. MacArthur, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Jessica Wang, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Eleanor Clemans-Cope, Princeton University, Class of 2026
Audrey Royall, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Sam Pathak, Princeton University, Class of 2023
Priyanka Aiyer, Princeton University, Class of 2023
Hiba Siddiki, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Lu Esteban, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Thomas Coulouras, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Samantha Handwerk, Princeton University, Class of 2026
Janice Wong, Harvard University, Class of 2025
Harvard-Radcliffe Chinese Students Association
Fariha Begum, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Sophia Chang, Princeton University, Class of 2025
Janelle Arnold, Princeton University, Class of 2023
Hannah Wallach, Harvard Law School, Class of 2023
Hanako Helton, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Princeton University's Towards an Inclusive Community of Undergraduate Physicists
Lawrence Azzariti, Princeton University, Class of 2024
Phong Nguyen, Stanford University, Class of 2025
Sunny Hu, Williams College, Class of 2024
Williams College's Asian American Students in Action (AASiA)
Isabelle Philip, University of Georgia, Class of 2024
Resty Fufunan, Yale University, Class of 2024
Yale Asian American Students Alliance
Anh Nguyen, Yale University, Class of 2026
Lucy Ton That, Yale University, Class of 2026
Elisa Cruz, Yale University, Class of 2026
Patricia Joseph, Yale University, Class of 2026
Yolanda Wang, Yale University, Class of 2026
Sonam Tenzin Wangchuk, Yale University, Class of 2026