

Title: Legacy Admission in Universities is Stifling Social Mobility
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While many opposed affirmative action for practices that universities implemented, such as racial quotas, an insidious issue that perpetuates racial and class inequalities was overlooked: legacy admissions. Originating in the 1920's to prevent mostly Jewish immigrants from entering elite educational institutions, this practice occurs in more than half of the United States' top universities today (Kahlenberg). Through legacy admissions, children of alumni are given preferential treatment based on this family tie. Elite universities defend their use of this practice by claiming that it encourages donations from alumni, provides greater assurance that the applicant will attend, and secures their potential loyalty to the institution. However, these legacy quotas signify how universities form and perpetuate an elitist system that excludes underrepresented minorities. One study showed that despite making up 12.5% of total applicants to these universities, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans make up only 6.7% of total legacy applicants (Kahlenberg). This disparity reveals that those who disproportionately benefit from this practice are white, wealthy legacy students. As its demographic is children of alumni, it also prevents first-generation students from receiving this preferential treatment. Therefore, this common practice creates an oppressive cycle that limits many non-legacy students from entering this realm of higher education to join the class of alumni. In doing so, it promotes an educational oligarchy that suppresses social progress and undermines diversity in academia.

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