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**NEW FEDERAL POLICIES & CHANGES POSE THREATS TO COLLEGE ACCESS
FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR**

Washington, D.C.—Today at a briefing on Capitol Hill, the UCLA Civil Rights Project/*Proyecto Derechos Civiles*, a nonpartisan research center and leading source of information on college opportunity, is releasing five newly commissioned studies demonstrating the threats to college access for students of color imposed by current and proposed policies under the current administration. These new studies document what Project Co-Director Gary Orfield calls “a pattern of closing the college gates and breaking trust with Black, Latino and American Indian students at a time when students of color will soon be the majority of the college-age population in this country.”

The federal government plays a far bigger role in higher education than in K-12 public schools. It is the largest source of student aid and the most important enforcer of civil rights laws; it has a major role in determining who is able to go to college and whether there will be opportunity for all. These five studies -- of minority serving institutions, incarcerated students, for-profit colleges, risk sharing proposals, and the current attack on race conscious admissions show that the Trump Administration and the current Congress have proposed a series of moves that outline a disturbing pattern of increasing college barriers for students of color and cumulative threats to the institutions dedicated to serving them.

Boston College Professor Andres Castro Samayoa [analyzes the President’s proposals for Minority Serving Institutions](#) (MSIs), which serve about 40% of all students of color but are less than a sixth of all U.S. colleges. In both of his budgets President Trump proposed substantial cuts to every single program set up by law to aid these critical institutions, with the largest cut being to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU’s), in spite of an Executive Order and a Presidential meeting that promised priority for those campuses. Congress has, so far, rejected those proposed cuts, showing unique bipartisanship during these very partisan times.

[Research by Erin S. Corbett, EdD and Julie Ajinkya, PhD](#) of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, shows that a successful effort to provide educational opportunities to incarcerated students, so they can later obtain a job and earn a living after their release, is also threatened. Federal data indicates that one-third of black men and one in six Latino males are likely to be incarcerated, the incarcerated rate for women has increased 700% in the past three decades, and there is a direct link between low education and the path to prison. In spite of this, the Congress has proposed to cut off funds for the successful “Second Chance” experiment begun in 2016, which utilizes federal student aid grants to prisoners enrolled in educational courses and offers the students a chance for a better future.

In their [study of for-profit universities](#), University of Virginia Professor Brian Pusser and Graduate Student Matt Ericson focus attention on for-profit 4-year institutions and summarize an array of scholarly research and evidence demonstrating that for-profit 4-year colleges produce blatantly less effective outcomes for America’s students, families, communities and our higher education system than do nonprofit colleges. Using important measures such as completion rates, student indebtedness, loan delinquency, loan default, and the public cost of for-profit institutional failure, the researchers find that

students at these 4-year for-profits fare much worse than those at nonprofit institutions. In spite of this strong evidence, the pending GOP-sponsored bill would roll back reforms instituted over the past three decades that have provided essential protections for students enrolled in for-profit universities, while Education Secretary DeVos is working to expand the for-profit sector.

University of Wisconsin Professor Nicholas Hillman [finds that proposed risk-sharing proposals](#), which require colleges to pay back part of their students' defaulted loans, would likely reinforce racial and economic inequality by disproportionately impacting students of color and institutions that serve them. Hillman's analysis of College Scorecard data shows that the campuses with a higher rate of default have student bodies with average family incomes less than a fourth (\$19,000) of those at the high repayment campuses (\$87,000). This research concludes that such a requirement would put a very great burden on campuses, like the Historically Black Colleges and the predominantly Black Institutions, whose mission is to help those with little chance for a middle-class life without higher education but whose families have very little money, and students who often have not had the good preparation for college that is available in more affluent communities.

In the final paper, Professors Liliana M. Garces, of the University of Texas, Austin, and OiYan Poon, of Colorado State University, [explore and dispel a central argument](#), being pursued by the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ), that Harvard University's long-standing multidimensional affirmative action plan, first upheld by the Supreme Court 40 years ago, is discriminatory against Asian Americans, who now make up 22% percent of the current freshman class. A central premise and justification for the case is that Asian Americans oppose affirmative action, however Garces and Poon's research reports that, in fact, a substantial majority of Asians in two statewide referenda support affirmative action and that a 62% of Asian American undergraduates enrolled at 4-year colleges disagree with efforts to abolish the policy.

"Although these studies show that the current proposals and changes will worsen the already very unequal access to college for students of color, the researchers recommend reforms that would respond to the goals of the various proposals without causing unintended harm to students of color or to the institutions that serve them," Orfield notes. "Today we have started an important dialogue that we must continue."

SELECT FINDINGS FROM THE STUDIES RELEASED TODAY

[MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS UNDER TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY by Andres Castro Samayoa](#)

- MSIs continue to enroll and confer the majority of undergraduate and graduate degrees to students of color currently enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States; many of these students enter MSIs from under-resourced K-12 experiences. Though they account for less than 15% of all colleges in the nation, MSIs enroll around 40% of underrepresented students (Conrad & Gasman, 2015).
- Over 60% of Hispanic students are enrolled at Hispanic Serving Institutions. HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) educate 11% of Black students in the nation, even though HBCUs represent less than 3% of all postsecondary institutions in the nation.
- President Trump has claimed to be a supporter of these institutions, especially black colleges, but every single program serving MSIs had a reduced budget in Trump's request.
- His administration in its first year asked Congress, for example, to sharply cut federal funding by \$95 million. The largest requested reduction to a single program was for the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges fund (\$465,000).

IN CONSIDERATION OF REINSTATING PELL FOR INCARCERATED STUDENTS by Erin Corbett and Julie Ajinkya

- The prison population is greatly overrepresented (by young) people of color and people with little education, reaching 1/3 of black men and 1/6 of Latinos.
- According to the US DOJ, 41% of federal and state inmates do not possess a high school credential in comparison to 18% of the general population.
- Black people comprise 13% of the U.S. population, but they comprise almost 38% of the incarcerated.
- The incarcerated rate for women has increased 700% in the past three decades.
- The “Second Chance” experiment and enrollment in courses provided by participating 67 colleges surged by 2017; enrollment increased 231% and the number of courses by 124%.
- 954 postsecondary credentials have been awarded to incarcerated students; almost 98% of those are certificates and 2-year degrees.

THE IMPACT OF THE PROSPER ACT ON UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS IN FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES by Brian Pusser and Matt Ericson

- For-profit colleges became a large sector of higher education by active recruitment of students, and by financing the colleges through Pell grants and maximum guaranteed federal student loans. The pending GOP-sponsored bill seeks to remove the cap on federal funds to for-profits.
- For-profits enrolled a disproportionate share of students of color, who took on large student loan debts. 46% of students enrolled in 4-year for-profits were Black or Hispanic.
- Most did not complete BA degrees. For all students at 4-year for-profits, less than a fourth (22.7%) completed a BA degree after 6 years, compared to 66% at nonprofit and 59% at public 4-year universities.
- The outcomes are even worse for Black and Hispanic students at these 4-year for-profits. Six years after enrollment less than a sixth of black students (15.5%) and about a fourth (28.7%) of Latinos obtained degrees. In comparison, 40% of Black students in 4-year public institutions, and 43.5% in nonprofit private institutions obtained BAs in that same time frame. 52.8% of Hispanics in 4-year public institutions graduated in six years, and 61.1% of Hispanics in nonprofit private institutions graduated in that time frame.
- Almost half (47%) of for-profit students defaulted on their loans, creating a huge cost for the federal government and lifetime debts for the students since student loans cannot be cancelled even in bankruptcy.
- The rate of default for students in 4-year institutions was twice as high for students in for-profits compared to public nonprofits, and more than 2.5 times higher than private nonprofits.

RISK-SHARING PROPOSALS IN CONGRESS by Nick Hillman

- The high loan-repayment colleges are very disproportionately white and Asian, with family incomes nearly four times larger. The low repayment colleges have students with family incomes one-fourth the average income in high repayment colleges (\$19,000 compared to \$87,000).
- These risk-sharing efforts would particularly harm Historically Black Colleges, which serve students from low-income families; approximately one in three Historically Black

College and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) are in the group of colleges with the lowest repayment rates.

- The colleges that would face the greatest risk would be Minority-Serving Institutions, which have few resources and could be pressured to screen out students from families without resources to repay.
- Colleges charging high net price and those with large shares of students who borrow or are first-generation, have lower repayment rates.
- Three in four of the nation's lowest repayment rate colleges are for-profit institutions.

[ASIAN AMERICANS AND RACE CONSCIOUS ADMISSIONS by Liliana M. Garces & OiYan Poon](#)

- The latest strategy by opponents attempts to drive a wedge between Asian Americans and other people of color; it purposefully mischaracterizes race-conscious policies in admissions (AKA affirmative action) as quotas and ceilings against Asian Americans.
- Survey and voting data show that a substantial majority of Asian Americans actually support affirmative action (68% in 2012); 62% of Asian American undergraduates enrolled at 4-year colleges/universities disagree with efforts to abolish the policy.
- In California, the state with the most Asian Americans, a substantial majority (61%) rejected the ban on affirmative action there; in Michigan 75% of Asian American voters rejected Proposition 2.

The five research studies and summaries can be found [HERE](#).

About The Civil Rights Project:

The Civil Rights Project/*Proyecto Derechos Civiles* (CRP) is co-directed by Gary Orfield and Patricia Gándara, professors at UCLA. Founded in 1996 at Harvard University, the CRP's mission is to create a new generation of research in social science and law on the critical issues of civil rights and equal opportunity for racial and ethnic groups in the United States. It has commissioned more than 400 studies, published more than 15 books and issued numerous reports from authors at universities and research centers across the country. The Supreme Court, in its 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* decision upholding affirmative action, and in Justice Breyer's dissent (joined by three other Justices) to its 2007 *Parents Involved in Community Schools* decision, cited the Civil Rights Project's research.

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