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# More Americans Disapprove Than Approve of Colleges Considering Race, Ethnicity in Admissions Decisions

*Ahead of Supreme Court decision, wide partisan differences in views of colleges' efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity*

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## How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to better understand Americans' views of colleges and universities weighing applicants' racial and ethnic backgrounds in admissions decisions as a way to increase racial and ethnic diversity. For this analysis, we surveyed 5,079 adults from March 27 to April 2, 2023. Everyone who took part in this survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. [Read more about the ATP's methodology.](#)

Here are the [questions used for the report](#), along with responses, and [its methodology](#).

# More Americans Disapprove Than Approve of Colleges Considering Race, Ethnicity in Admissions Decisions

*Ahead of Supreme Court decision, wide partisan differences in views of colleges' efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity*

Ahead of a closely watched Supreme Court decision that may significantly affect the admissions practices of some of the nation's top colleges, half of U.S. adults say they disapprove of selective colleges and universities taking prospective students' racial and ethnic backgrounds into account when making admissions decisions. Fewer (33%) approve of colleges considering race and ethnicity to increase diversity at the schools, while 16% are not sure.

With the court [nearing the end of its term](#) and [decisions in two related cases](#) involving the private Harvard College and

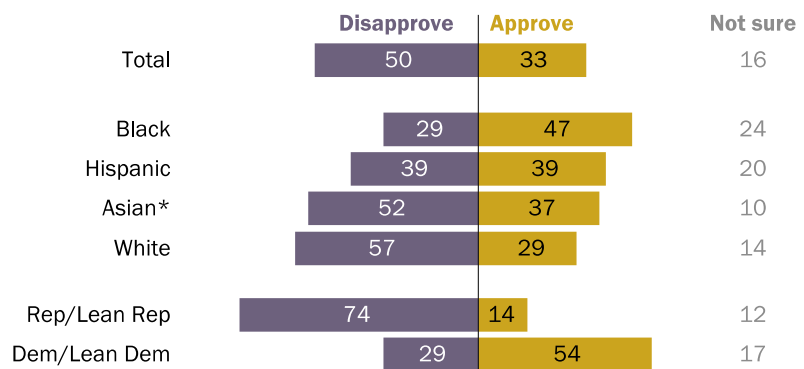
the public University of North Carolina expected to be issued in the next several weeks, a new Pew Research Center survey finds that Americans are nearly three times as likely to say they *strongly* disapprove of colleges doing this (29%) as they are to say they strongly approve (11%).

## Partisans express sharply different views on the consideration of race and ethnicity in college admissions

About three-quarters of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (74%) say they disapprove of these practices, including 48% who strongly disapprove. Just 14% of Republicans

### Half of U.S. adults disapprove of selective colleges considering race and ethnicity in admissions decisions, while a third approve

*% who \_\_\_ of selective colleges and universities taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity at the school*



\*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Black, Asian and White adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. No answer responses not shown. See topline for full question wording.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

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approve of colleges considering students' racial and ethnic backgrounds when making admissions decisions.

By contrast, a narrow majority of Democrats and Democratic leaners (54%) approve of colleges doing this, with 19% approving strongly. Around three-in-ten Democrats (29%) disapprove of the consideration of race and ethnicity in college admissions.

### Substantial differences in views across racial and ethnic groups

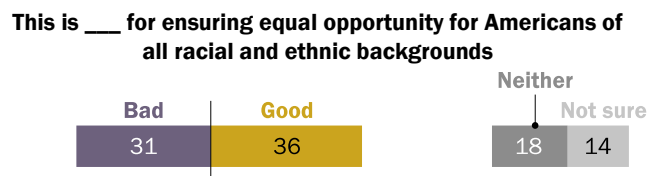
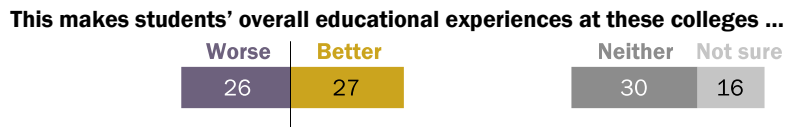
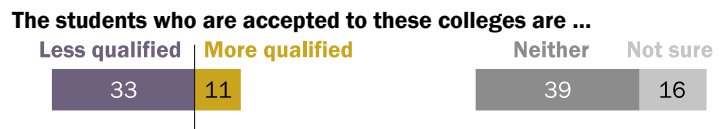
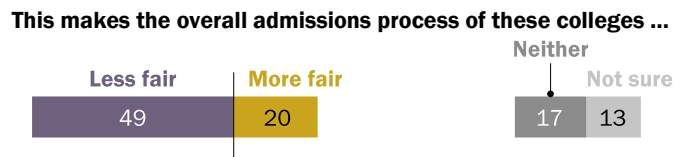
Nearly half of Black Americans (47%) say they approve of colleges and universities considering prospective students' racial and ethnic backgrounds when making admissions decisions, compared with 29% who disapprove (24% are not sure).

Among Hispanic Americans, identical shares approve and disapprove of these practices (39% each). Both White and Asian Americans are more likely to disapprove of colleges doing this (57% of White adults and 52% of Asian adults) than to approve (29% and 37%, respectively).

For more on Asian American attitudes: [Asian Americans Hold Mixed Views of Affirmative Action](#)

### By more than two-to-one, Americans say considering race and ethnicity makes college admissions less fair rather than more fair

*% who say that when selective colleges and universities consider race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown. See topline for full question wording.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

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## **Effects of colleges considering race and ethnicity in admissions decisions**

### *Fairness of the admissions process*

The survey – conducted from March 27 to April 2, 2023, among 5,079 members of the Center’s American Trends Panel – finds that Americans are more than twice as likely to say that the consideration of race and ethnicity in admissions decisions makes the overall admissions process less fair (49%) rather than more fair (20%); 17% say this does not affect the process.

### *Accepted students’ qualifications*

While nearly four-in-ten say that students accepted to colleges that engage in these practices are neither more nor less qualified than they would be otherwise, a third say the students are less qualified. Just 11% say that students accepted to these schools are more qualified than they would be if no consideration were given to prospective students’ racial and ethnic backgrounds.

### *Students’ educational experiences*

Opinion is more closely divided on whether students’ educational experiences are better or worse at schools that consider the race and ethnicity of applicants, with nearly identical shares saying that students’ experiences are better (27%) and worse (26%).

### *Ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds*

The public is slightly more likely to say that colleges and universities doing this is good (36%) rather than bad (31%) for ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

## **Other important findings from the survey**

### **College graduates hold more favorable attitudes about the consideration of race and ethnicity in college admissions.**

- By almost two-to-one, those without college degrees are more likely to disapprove than approve of selective colleges and universities considering race and ethnicity in admissions decisions (52% disapprove vs. 28% approve). In contrast, college graduates are about evenly split (45% approve, 47% disapprove).
- Black, Hispanic and White college graduates are all more likely to approve of these practices than nongraduates of the same racial or ethnic background.

**There are large differences between White and Hispanic Republicans in views about race and ethnicity as a factor in college admissions.**

- White Republicans overwhelmingly disapprove of colleges considering the race and ethnicity of applicants: 78% disapprove, including 51% who strongly disapprove. A smaller share of Hispanic Republicans (55%) disapprove.
- Among Democrats, differences by race and ethnicity are more modest.

**Most who support considering race and ethnicity in admissions say it is good for equal opportunity, while most opponents say it makes the admissions process less fair.**

- About three-quarters of approvers (73%) say this is good for ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans, and 61% say it makes students' educational experiences at these schools better.
- Among those who disapprove of schools taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions, 78% say it makes the admissions process less fair overall, while narrow majorities (55% each) say it makes the students accepted to these schools less qualified and that it is bad for ensuring equal opportunity.

**Black Americans are more likely than those in other groups to report personal experiences with efforts to increase diversity.**

- About a quarter of U.S. adults (24%) say they have personally been disadvantaged in their education or career by efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity, while about one-in-ten (11%) say they have ever benefited from these efforts.
- Black Americans are more likely to report experiencing both of these: 35% say they have been disadvantaged by these efforts, while 20% say they have benefited (including 11% who say they have been both advantaged and disadvantaged). And while 15% of all Americans say that others have assumed they benefited unfairly from these efforts, 28% of Black adults say this has happened to them.

# 1. Demographic and partisan views about race and ethnicity in college admissions

Views about selective higher educational institutions taking race and ethnicity into account in their admissions decisions differ widely by race and ethnicity, age, educational attainment and partisan affiliation.

## Race and ethnicity

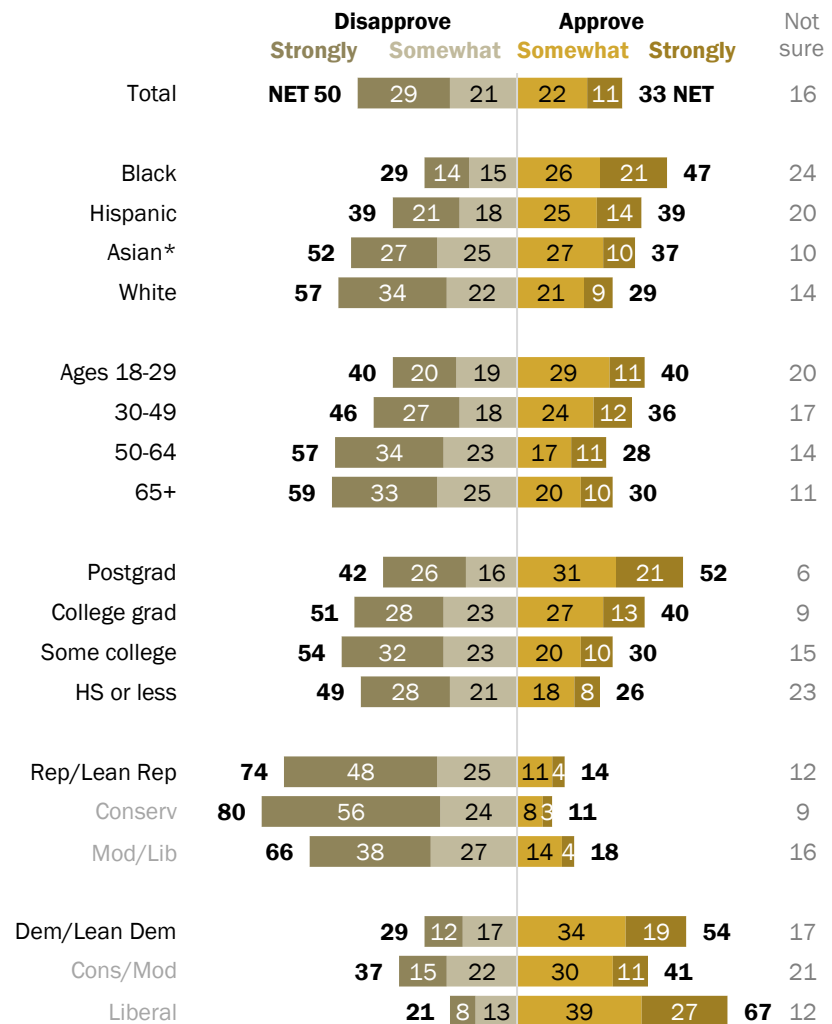
Black adults stand out for expressing more support than opposition to these practices, with 47% approving and 29% disapproving. About a quarter of Black adults (24%) say they are not sure.

Hispanic adults are split in their views: About four-in-ten say they approve (39%) of colleges taking race and ethnicity into account, while an identical share say they disapprove. Two-in-ten say they are not sure.

About half of Asian adults (52%) say they disapprove of race and ethnicity being factored into admissions decisions to increase diversity, while a smaller share (37%) approve.

## Liberal Democrats most supportive of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions decisions

*% who \_\_\_ of selective colleges and universities taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity at the school*



\* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.  
 Note: Black, Asian and White adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. No answer responses not shown. See topline for full question wording.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.



White adults are less likely than those in other groups to approve of these practices, with nearly six-in-ten (57%) disapproving of them and about three-in-ten (29%) approving.

### **Age**

Adults under age 30 are evenly split: 40% approve of colleges considering race and ethnicity in admissions decisions, while the same share disapprove and 20% are unsure. Among adults ages 30 to 49, there is more opposition (46%) than support (36%). Opposition is particularly pronounced among those 50 and older – nearly six-in-ten (58%) of whom say they disapprove of colleges adopting these practices in their admissions decisions.

### **Education**

Adults with a postgraduate degree (52%) are much more likely than adults with a bachelor's degree (40%), some college experience (30%), or a high school diploma or less education (26%) to say they approve of colleges considering race and ethnicity in admissions decisions.

Those with some college experience or less education are more likely than those with a college degree or more education to say they are unsure of their opinions about these practices (20% vs. 8%).

### **Partisanship and ideology**

Some of the widest divides on this issue are seen by political party: Roughly three-quarters of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents (74%) say they disapprove of the consideration of race and ethnicity in the college admissions process, while 14% say they approve and 12% say they are unsure.

While majorities of both conservative (80%) and moderate and liberal Republicans (66%) say they disapprove of these practices, this view is more widespread among conservative Republicans, who also are more likely to *strongly* disapprove of this than moderate and liberal Republicans (56% vs. 38%).

By contrast, more than half of Democrats and Democratic leaners (54%) say they approve of selective colleges and universities taking race and ethnicity into account when making admissions decisions, while 29% say they disapprove of this process and 17% say they are unsure.

Liberal Democrats are particularly supportive of considering race and ethnicity as a factor in college admissions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school: Two-thirds say they approve of this, while 21% disapprove. Conservative and moderate Democrats are divided on

this question: About four-in-ten conservative and moderate Democrats (41%) say they approve of these practices, while a similar share (37%) express disapproval and 21% are unsure.

## Within both parties, racial and ethnic differences on considering race and ethnicity in college admissions

### Republicans

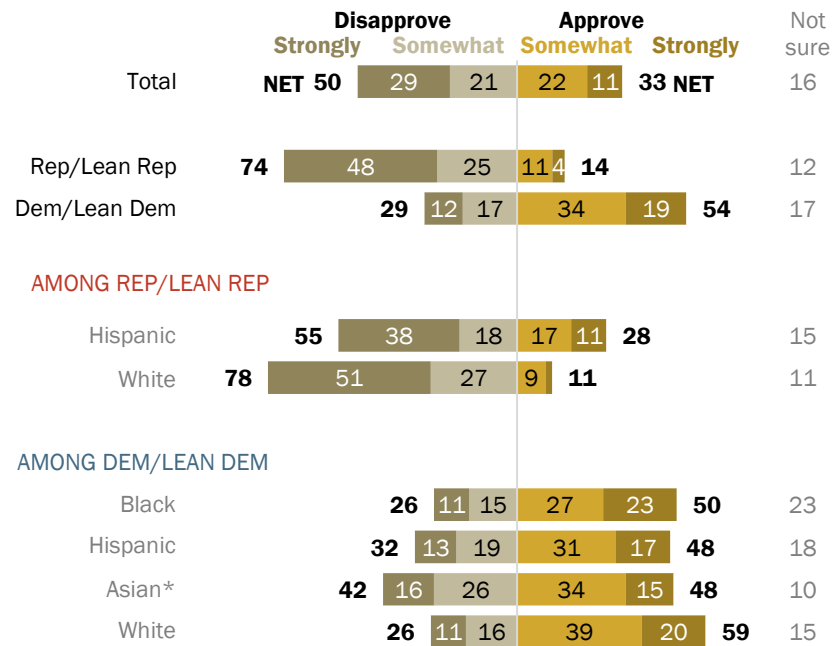
Majorities of both White and Hispanic Republicans disapprove of selective educational institutions taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity at the school. However, this view is more prevalent among White Republicans (78% disapprove, 11% approve) than Hispanic Republicans (55% disapprove, 28% approve).

### Democrats

Roughly six-in-ten White Democrats (59%) approve of race and ethnicity being considered in college admissions decisions, while about a quarter (26%) oppose this. An identical share of Black Democrats express opposition to these practices, while half express support. Black Democrats are more likely than White Democrats to say they're unsure (23% vs. 15%).

### Wide partisan gap in opinion about race and ethnicity being considered in college admissions, with some racial and ethnic differences within partisan groups

*% who \_\_\_ of selective colleges and universities taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity at the school*



\* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.  
 Note: Black, Asian and White adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. Black Republicans and Asian Republicans not shown due to insufficient sample size. No answer responses not shown. See topline for full question wording.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

About half of Hispanic Democrats (48%) say they approve of race and ethnicity being considered in college admissions decisions. Views among Asian Democrats are fairly divided: 48% say they approve of these practices, and 42% say they disapprove.

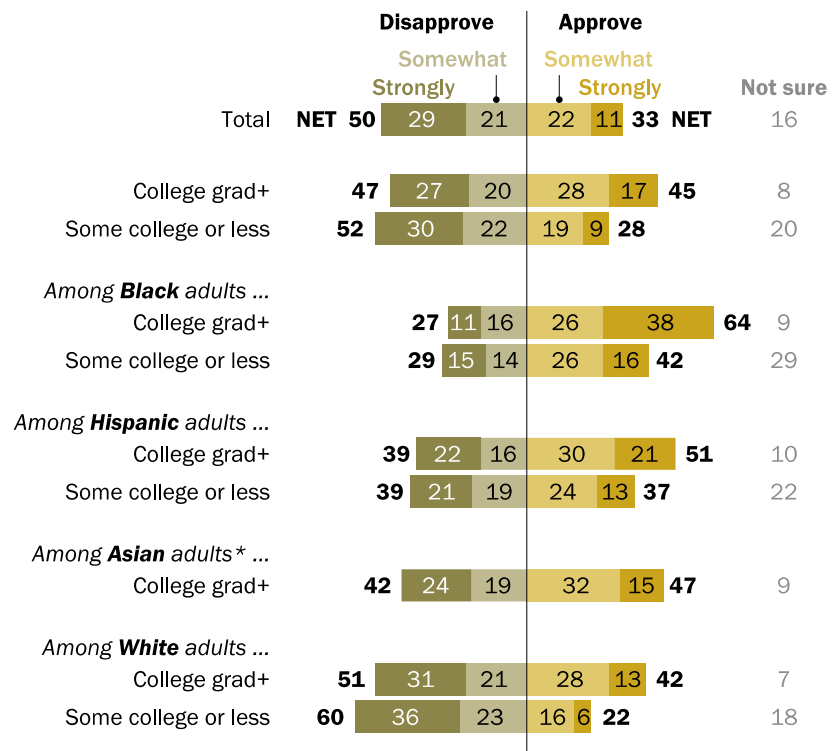
## College graduates more likely than others to approve of considering race and ethnicity in college admission processes

Across racial and ethnic groups, adults with a bachelor's degree or more education are more likely than those without a bachelor's degree to approve of the consideration of race and ethnicity in college admissions. And regardless of educational level, Black adults are least likely (and White adults most likely) to oppose these practices.

Overall, 45% of college graduates approve of considering race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions, while a similar share (47%) disapprove. By comparison, those without a bachelor's degree are nearly twice as likely to disapprove as they are to approve (52% vs. 28%). Those without a college degree are substantially more likely than those with at least a bachelor's degree (20% vs. 8%) to say they are not sure about these practices.

### Black college graduates most supportive of colleges taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions

% who \_\_\_ of selective colleges and universities taking race and ethnicity into account in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity at the school



\* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.  
 Note: Black, Asian and White adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. No answer responses not shown. Asian adults with some college education or less not shown due to insufficient sample size. See topline for full question wording.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

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By more than two-to-one, Black adults with a bachelor's degree or more formal education approve (64%), rather than disapprove (27%), of the consideration of race and ethnicity in admissions decisions for selective colleges and universities. Among Black adults without a college degree, support for these practices edges out opposition by a narrower margin (42% vs. 29%). Black adults without a college degree are about three times more likely to express uncertainty than those with a bachelor's degree or more (29% vs. 9%).

Six-in-ten White adults without a four-year college degree oppose the consideration of race and ethnicity in college admissions, while roughly two-in-ten (22%) support it and 18% are unsure. White college graduates also are more likely to oppose than to support these practices, though by a narrower margin (51% disapprove, 42% approve, 7% say they are unsure).

Among Hispanic adults, those with a college degree are 14 percentage points more likely than those without a degree (51% to 37%) to approve of factoring race and ethnicity into college admissions, while 39% in both groups disapprove of this (22% of those without a degree say they are unsure, compared with 10% of those who have a bachelor's degree or more education).

## 2. Perceived impacts of factoring race and ethnicity into college admissions

While [half of Americans disapprove](#) of taking race and ethnicity into account in college admissions decisions for the purpose of increasing diversity and a third approve, the public offers a mix of positive and negative views about the effects these practices might have.

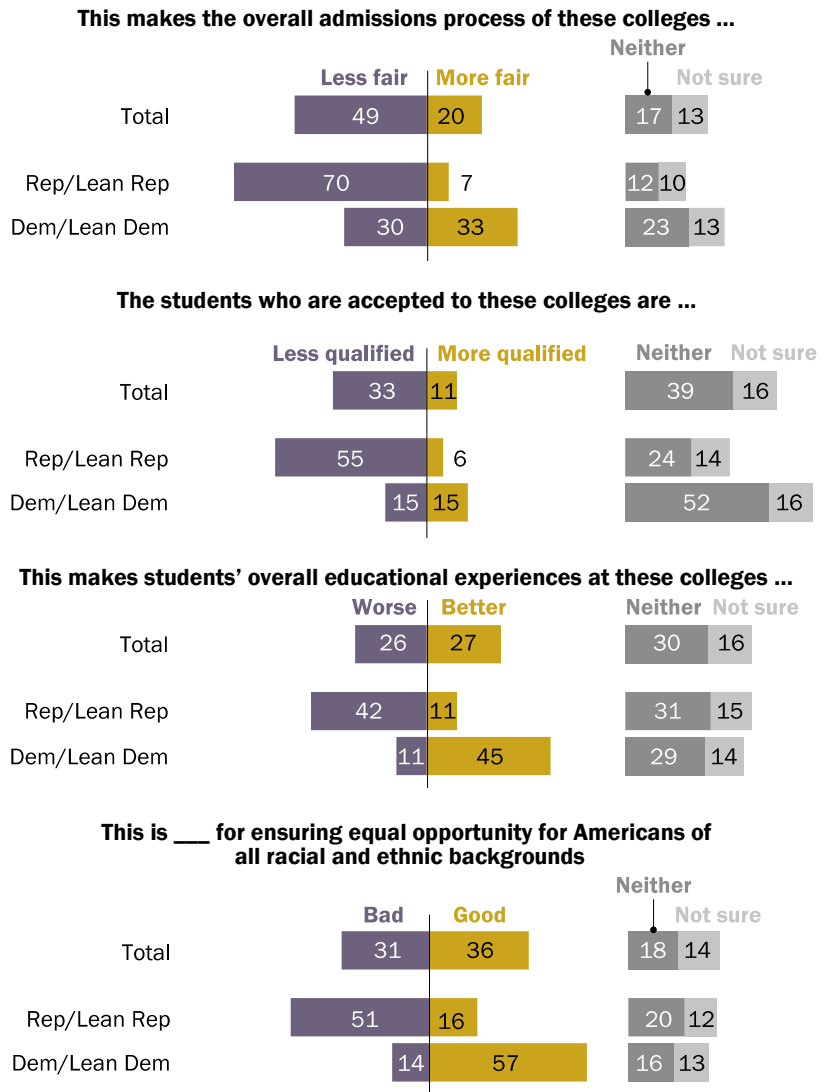
### Partisans differ over the effects of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions decisions

Partisans largely differ in their opinions on how colleges and universities considering race and ethnicity in admissions decisions affects students, the college environment and equal opportunity in the country.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say considering race and ethnicity in college admissions has negative impacts in all of the four areas asked about in the survey.

### Most Republicans say considering race and ethnicity in college admissions makes the process less fair

*% who say that when selective colleges and universities consider race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown. See topline for full question wording. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

**Fairness of the admissions process**

Republicans and those who lean to the GOP are particularly likely to hold the view that these practices make the overall admissions process less fair: 70% say this, while just 7% say they make the process more fair (22% say either that they do not have an effect or that they are not sure).

By comparison, Democrats and Democratic leaners are about equally likely to say considering race and ethnicity in college admissions makes the process more fair (33%) as they are to say it makes the process less fair (30%); 37% say either that it doesn't impact the fairness of the process or that they are not sure.

**Ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds**

Democrats view the effects of considering race in admissions decisions more positively. A majority (57%) say it is good for ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of racial and ethnic backgrounds, a view held by just 16% of Republicans.

**Students' educational experience**

By about four-to-one, Democrats say that considering race and ethnicity in college admissions makes students' educational experiences at these schools better (45%), rather than worse (11%). Republicans' views are the inverse: 42% say these practices make educational experiences worse, while just 11% say they make the experiences better.

**Accepted students' qualifications**

Over half of Republicans (55%) say that when colleges consider race and ethnicity in college admissions, the students who are accepted to these schools are less qualified; 6% say they are more qualified, and about four-in-ten say either that these practices result in no change or that they are not sure.

By contrast, about half of Democrats (52%) say that the students who are accepted are neither more nor less qualified when race and ethnicity are taken into account. Just 15% say students are less qualified, equal to the share saying they are more qualified.

## Racial and ethnic differences

While Black adults' assessments of the effects of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions are consistently more positive than negative and White adults' evaluations are more negative than positive, Asian and Hispanic adults' assessments are more mixed.

Asian adults are more likely to say including race and ethnicity as a factor in college admissions decisions is good for ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds than they are to say this is bad (47% vs. 29%).

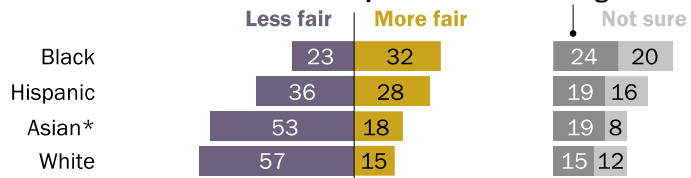
However, Asian adults also are more likely to say considering race and ethnicity makes the overall admissions process of these colleges less fair than to say it makes it more fair (53% vs. 18%).

Asian adults are also more likely to say the students accepted to schools that take race and ethnicity into account in admissions decisions are less qualified (36%) rather than more qualified (17%). About a third (34%) say accepted

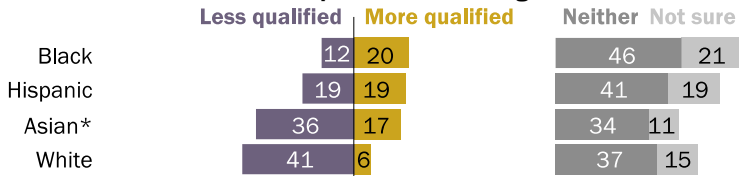
### On effects of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions, Asian and Hispanic adults offer the most mixed assessments

% who say that when selective colleges and universities consider race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school ...

This makes the overall admissions process of these colleges ...



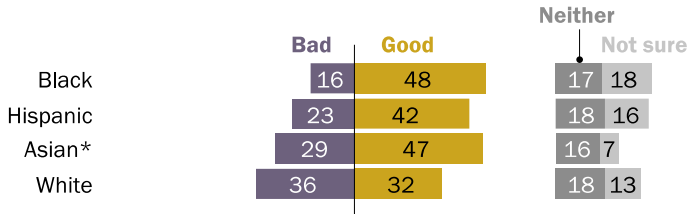
The students who are accepted to these colleges are ...



This makes students' overall educational experiences at these colleges ...



This is \_\_\_ for ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds



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 Note: Black, Asian and White adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic adults are of any race. No answer responses not shown. See topline for full question wording.  
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

students are neither more nor less qualified.

*For more on Asian Americans' views on this topic: [Asian Americans Hold Mixed Views of Affirmative Action](#)*

Hispanic adults, on balance, view factoring race and ethnicity into college admissions as having a positive impact on ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds (47% say it is good, while 23% say it is bad).

But Hispanic adults are more divided over the effect on the fairness of the admissions process (36% say it makes the process less fair, 28% say it makes the process more fair) and the impact it has on the qualifications of admitted students (19% say it results in less-qualified students, while an identical share say it results in more-qualified students).



## Educational differences

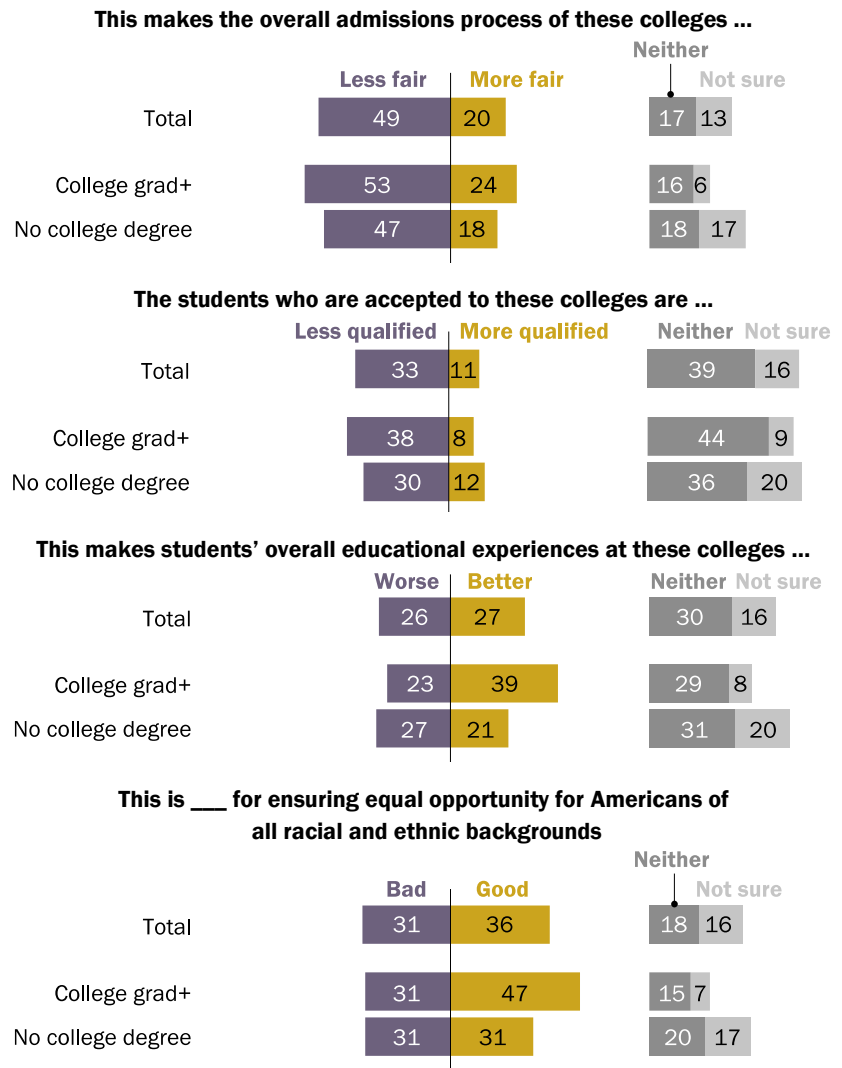
Those with bachelor’s degrees or more formal education are generally more likely to offer an opinion on what the effects are of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions decisions, and their responses are generally more positive.

For instance, college graduates are more likely than those without a degree to say that the consideration of race and ethnicity has positive effects on students’ educational experiences (39% vs. 21%, respectively) or ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans (47% vs. 31%).

However, in their assessments of the fairness of these processes, similar shares of those with a college degree or more education (53%) and those with some college experience or less education (47%) say considering race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions makes the overall admissions process less fair.

### Views of the effects of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions differ by education level

*% who say that when selective colleges and universities consider race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school ...*



Note: No answer responses not shown. See topline for full question wording. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

## Supporters and opponents of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions highlight different areas of impact

Those who approve and disapprove of considering race and ethnicity in college admissions have starkly different evaluations of the effects of these practices. Opponents are particularly likely to see this practice as making admissions less fair, while supporters are particularly likely to see it as having a positive effect on ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans.

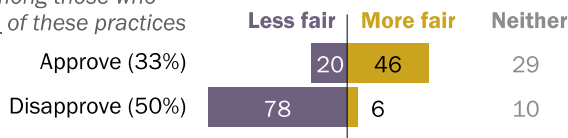
Those who disapprove of the consideration of race and ethnicity in admissions decisions overwhelmingly (78%) say this makes the overall admissions process less fair. Views about the effect on the fairness of admissions are more mixed among those who approve of taking race and ethnicity into account: By more than two-to-one, more say this makes the process more fair (46%) than less fair (20%), while about three-in-ten (29%) say it does not affect the overall fairness of admissions.

### Those who approve of factoring race and ethnicity into admissions say it's good for equal opportunity in the U.S., improves educational experiences; disapprovers say it results in a less fair process, less-qualified students, is bad for equal opportunity

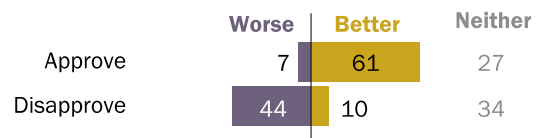
*% who say that when selective colleges and universities consider race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school ...*

**This makes the overall admissions process of these colleges ...**

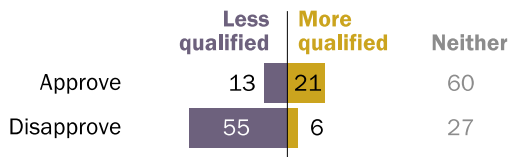
*Among those who \_\_\_ of these practices*



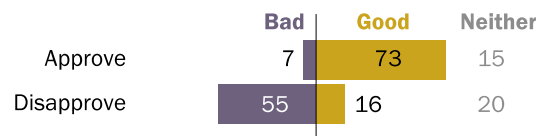
**This makes students' overall educational experiences at these colleges ...**



**That the students who are accepted to these colleges are ...**



**This is \_\_\_ for ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds**



Note: No answer and "not sure" responses not shown. See topline for full question wording. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

A narrow majority of disapprovers (55%) say that the students accepted by schools that consider race and ethnicity in admissions are less qualified than if the schools did not consider this as a factor. Just 6% say they are more qualified, while about a quarter (27%) say there is no difference in qualifications. In contrast, a majority – 60% – of those who approve of taking race and ethnicity into account in selective college admissions say that accepted students under these practices are neither more nor less qualified, while 21% say they are more qualified and 12% say they are less qualified.

Roughly six-in-ten of those who approve of the consideration of racial and ethnic background in admissions (61%) say that students' overall educational experience is better at colleges that do this, while 7% say the educational experience is worse. Among disapprovers, 44% say this makes educational experiences worse, while 10% say this makes it better. About a third of those who disapprove of these practices (34%) and about a quarter of those who approve (27%) say it has neither effect.

Approvers and disapprovers are far apart in their views of whether the consideration of race and ethnicity in selective college admissions contributes to equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Around three-quarters of approvers (73%) say these practices are good for ensuring equal opportunity, compared with 16% of disapprovers. A majority of disapprovers (55%) say it is bad for ensuring equal opportunity when colleges take race and ethnicity into account (just 7% of approvers say this).

## About four-in-ten adults see negatives, no positives from race and ethnicity factoring into college admissions; 30% see only positives

Roughly four-in-ten adults (41%) express negative views and have no positive views of the outcomes that result when colleges consider race and ethnicity in college admissions – meaning they offer at least one negative assessment and no positive assessments across all four survey items about different effects of admissions practices that consider race and ethnicity.

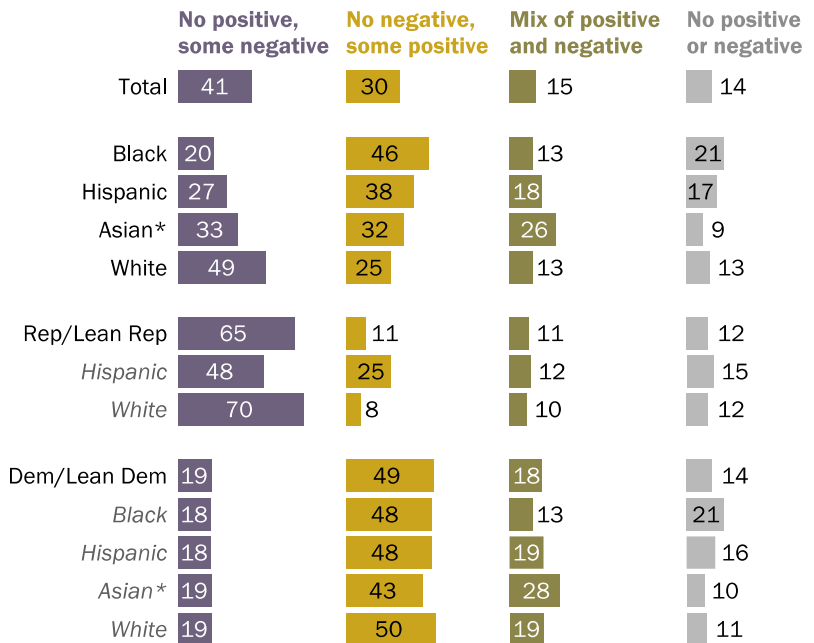
Three-in-ten adults express some positive views and no negative views, while 15% express a mix of both positive and negative and 14% express exclusively neutral assessments (including “neither” and “not sure” response options) on all four items.

Roughly half of White Americans (49%) offer only negative and neutral views, a far higher share than among Americans of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

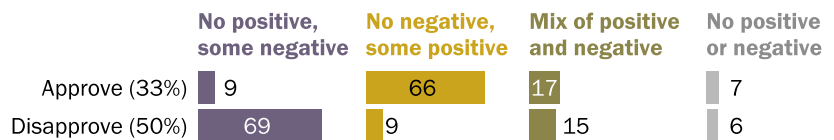
Black Americans are more likely than those in other groups to offer no negative views (46% of Black adults

### About half of White adults see no positive outcomes from considering race, ethnicity in college admissions

*% who hold \_\_\_ views of selective colleges and universities considering race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school*



*Among those who approve/disapprove of selective colleges considering race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school*



\* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Respondents categorized based on positive, negative or neutral responses to four survey items related to the effects of race and ethnicity being considered in college admissions to increase diversity. See Appendix for more details. Black, Asian and White adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. Black Republicans and Hispanic Republicans not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

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provide only positive and neutral responses to all four questions).

Asian Americans are more likely than those in other groups to express a mix of positive and negative assessments of the impact of these practices: 26% of Asian adults have a mix of positive and negative views, compared with 18% of Hispanic adults and 13% each of White and Black adults.

A majority of Republicans (65%) express no positive views on the four items, though there are substantial differences between White and Hispanic Republicans. Seven-in-ten White Republicans express no positive views, compared with 48% of Hispanic Republicans. And a quarter of Hispanic Republicans express no negative views, compared with just 8% of White Republicans.

About half of Democrats (49%) express no negative views of colleges considering race and ethnicity in admissions, with only modest differences between racial and ethnic groups among Democrats.

## Personal experiences with efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity

When asked whether they have ever personally been at a disadvantage in their education, career or job because of efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity, Americans are about twice as likely to say they have *not* ever been at a disadvantage as to say they have (57% vs. 24%).

Republicans are 8 percentage points more likely than Democrats to say they have ever personally been at a *disadvantage* (28% vs. 20%). Within racial and ethnic groups, 35% of Black, 27% of Asian, 23% of White and 20% of Hispanic adults report ever having been at a disadvantage.

About one-in-ten adults (11%) say they have ever personally been at an *advantage* in their education or career due to efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity. Similar shares of Black (20%), Asian (18%) and Hispanic adults (15%) say this, compared with 7% of White adults.

### About a quarter say they personally have been disadvantaged by efforts to increase diversity; about one-in-ten say they have personally benefited

Do you think \_\_\_ in your education, career or job because of efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity? (%)

	You have ever been at a DISADVANTAGE			You have ever been at an ADVANTAGE			People have ever assumed that you benefited unfairly		
	No	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure	No	Yes	Not sure
Total	57	24	18	72	11	16	64	15	20
Black	41	35	23	55	20	24	40	28	31
Hispanic	57	20	21	62	15	21	50	22	27
Asian*	51	27	20	62	18	19	66	13	21
White	62	23	15	79	7	14	73	10	16
Rep/Lean Rep	54	28	17	79	7	14	69	14	17
Dem/Lean Dem	62	20	17	67	15	17	63	16	21

\* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Black, Asian and White adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 27-April 2, 2023.

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Black adults are more likely than those of other racial and ethnic backgrounds to say that other people have assumed they benefited unfairly from efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity: 28% of Black adults say this has happened to them, 6 points higher than the share of Hispanic

adults who say this. Smaller shares of Asian (13%) and White adults (10%) say this has happened to them.

## Acknowledgments

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## Methodology

### The American Trends Panel survey methodology

#### Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from ATP Wave 125, conducted from March 27 to April 2, 2023, and includes an [oversample](#) of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, non-Hispanic Asian adults, and adults who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of these smaller demographic subgroups. These oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population. A total of 5,079 panelists responded out of 5,782 who were sampled, for a response rate of 88%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 4%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 5,079 respondents is plus or minus 1.7 percentage points.

#### Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across

#### American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,502
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	881
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	434
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,116
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,470
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,541
May 29 to July 7, 2021; Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	787
May 24 to Sept. 29, 2022	ABS	3,354	2,869	1,697
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42,894</b>	<b>30,283</b>	<b>12,428</b>

Note: RDD is random-digit dial; ABS is address-based sampling. Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. In 2020 and 2021 another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that did not respond to the online survey were sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults who returned the paper version of the survey were invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults received a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the five address-based recruitments, a total of 23,176 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 20,341 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, one adult was selected and asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 30,283 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 12,428 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.<sup>1</sup> The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

### **Sample design**

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, non-Hispanic Asian adults, and adults who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual were selected with certainty. The remaining panelists were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

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<sup>1</sup> AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling.](#)"

## Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

## Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

## Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was March 27 to April 2, 2023. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on March 27.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on March 27. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on March 28.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

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### Invitation and reminder dates, ATP Wave 125

	<b>Soft launch</b>	<b>Full launch</b>
Initial invitation	March 27, 2023	March 28, 2023
First reminder	March 30, 2023	March 30, 2023
Final reminder	April 1, 2023	April 1, 2023

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## Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center’s researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, five ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

## Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. These weights are then rescaled and adjusted to account for changes in the design of ATP recruitment surveys from year to year. Finally, the weights are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then

calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

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### American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2021 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2021 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	
<i>Additional weighting dimensions applied within Black adults</i>	
Age	2021 American Community Survey (ACS)
Gender	
Education	
Hispanic ethnicity	
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2022 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

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### Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 125

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	5,079	1.7 percentage points
Black	804	4.8 percentage points
Hispanic	937	5.0 percentage points
Asian*	368	7.7 percentage points
White	2,745	2.1 percentage points
Bachelor's degree or higher	2,209	2.5 percentage points
Some college or less	2,852	2.3 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	2,149	2.5 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	2,719	2.5 percentage points

\*Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Note: This survey includes oversamples of Hispanic men, non-Hispanic Black men, non-Hispanic Asian adults, and adults who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

## Dispositions and response rates

### Final dispositions, ATP Wave 125

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	5,079
Logged on to survey; broke off	2.12	58
Logged on to survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	34
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	605
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	1
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		5
Screened out		0
<b>Total panelists sampled for the survey</b>		<b>5,782</b>
Completed interviews	I	5,079
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	702
Non-contact	NC	1
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,782</b>
AAPOR RR1 = I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)		88%

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### Cumulative response rate as of ATP Wave 125

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	71%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 125	48%
Response rate to Wave 125 survey	88%
<b>Cumulative response rate</b>	<b>4%</b>

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## Appendix

### Categorizing respondents based on views across four dimensions

In addition to their overall approval or disapproval of considering race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions in order to increase racial and ethnic diversity, survey respondents were asked additional questions about four areas of potential impact:

- 1) Whether the consideration of race and ethnicity in admissions decisions makes the overall admissions process of these colleges more or less fair (more fair=positive, less fair=negative, neither/not sure=neutral)
- 2) Whether the students who are accepted to these colleges are more or less qualified (more qualified=positive, less qualified=negative, neither/not sure=neutral)
- 3) Whether this makes students' overall educational experiences at these colleges better or worse (better=positive, worse=negative, neither/not sure=neutral)
- 4) Whether this is good or bad for ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds (good=positive, bad=negative, neither/not sure=neutral)

(See [topline](#) for full question wording.)

In addition to analyzing each of these questions individually, the report includes a discussion of a summary measure.

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### Summary measure of positive and negative views of the consideration of race and ethnicity in college admissions

		<b>% of public</b>
No positive, some negative views	Offered at least one negative and no positive responses to the four survey items	41
No negative, some positive views	Offered at least one positive and no negative responses to the four survey items	30
Mix of positive and negative views	Offered at least one positive and at least one negative response to the four survey items	15
No positive or negative views	Offered only neutral responses to the four survey items	14

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**2023 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL  
WAVE 125 MARCH 2023  
FINAL TOPLINE  
MARCH 27 – APRIL 2, 2023  
N=5,079**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

COLL\_RE      As you may know, some colleges and universities around the country are selective, which means they have many more applicants than they can admit. One of the factors some of these colleges take into account in admissions decisions is race and ethnicity, in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school.

All in all, do you approve or disapprove of selective colleges and universities doing this?

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

<b>33</b>	<b>NET Approve</b>
11	<i>Strongly approve</i>
22	<i>Somewhat approve</i>
<b>50</b>	<b>NET Disapprove</b>
29	<i>Strongly disapprove</i>
21	<i>Somewhat disapprove</i>
16	Not sure
1	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

COLL\_RE2      When selective colleges and universities consider race and ethnicity as a factor in admissions decisions, in order to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the school, do you think...

**[RANDOMIZE ITEMS; SHOW ON TWO SCREENS WITH COLL\_RE2\_STEM ALWAYS AT TOP]**

FAIR      This makes the overall admissions process of these colleges... **[RANDOMIZE ORDER 1-5 and 5-1, WITH 6 ALWAYS LAST]**

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

<b>20</b>	<b>NET More fair</b>
7	<i>Much more fair</i>
13	<i>Somewhat more fair</i>
17	Neither more nor less fair
<b>49</b>	<b>NET Less fair</b>
24	<i>Much less fair</i>
24	<i>Somewhat less fair</i>
13	Not sure <b>[ANCHOR]</b>
1	No answer



**COLL\_RE2 CONTINUED ...**

EXP This makes students' overall educational experiences at these colleges... **[RANDOMIZE ORDER 1-5 and 5-1, WITH 6 ALWAYS LAST, AND IN SAME ORDER AS FAIR]**

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

<b>27</b>	<b>NET Better</b>
11	<i>Much better</i>
16	<i>Somewhat better</i>
30	Neither better nor worse
<b>26</b>	<b>NET Worse</b>
10	<i>Much worse</i>
16	<i>Somewhat worse</i>
16	Not sure <b>[ANCHOR]</b>
1	No answer

HQL That the students who are accepted to these colleges are... **[RANDOMIZE ORDER 1-5 and 5-1, WITH 6 ALWAYS LAST AND IN SAME ORDER AS FAIR]**

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

<b>11</b>	<b>NET More qualified</b>
4	<i>Much more qualified</i>
7	<i>Somewhat more qualified</i>
39	Neither more nor less qualified
<b>33</b>	<b>NET Less qualified</b>
11	<i>Much less qualified</i>
23	<i>Somewhat less qualified</i>
16	Not sure <b>[ANCHOR]</b>
1	No answer

RAEQ This is good or bad for ensuring equal opportunity for Americans of all racial and ethnic backgrounds? **[RANDOMIZE ORDER 1-5 and 5-1, WITH 6 ALWAYS LAST AND IN SAME ORDER AS FAIR]**

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

<b>36</b>	<b>NET Good</b>
15	<i>Very good</i>
21	<i>Somewhat good</i>
18	Neither good nor bad
<b>31</b>	<b>NET Bad</b>
15	<i>Very bad</i>
17	<i>Somewhat bad</i>
14	Not sure <b>[ANCHOR]</b>
1	No answer

**[ROTATE AAPERSDIS AND AAPERSADV BASED ON FORM AND SHOW ON SAME PAGE. SHOW AAPERSDIS FIRST ON FORM 1 AND AAPERSADV FIRST ON FORM 2]**

**ASK ALL:**

AAPERSDIS Do you think that you have ever been at a DISADVANTAGE in your education, career or job because of efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity?

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

24	Yes
57	No
18	Not sure
1	No answer

**[ROTATE AAPERSDIS AND AAPERSADV BASED ON FORM AND SHOW ON SAME PAGE. SHOW AAPERSDIS FIRST ON FORM 1 AND AAPERSADV FIRST ON FORM 2]**

**ASK ALL:**

AAPERSADV Do you think that you have ever been at an ADVANTAGE in your education, career or job because of efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity?

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

11	Yes
72	No
16	Not sure
1	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

AAPERSSTER Do you think people have ever assumed that you benefited unfairly in your education, career or job from efforts to increase racial and ethnic diversity?

Mar 27-  
Apr 2,  
2023

15	Yes
64	No
20	Not sure
1	No answer

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a:

**ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3 or 4) OR MISSING:**PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...<sup>2</sup>

<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
28	28	27	14	2	18	19

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<sup>2</sup> PARTY and PARTYLN asked in a prior survey.