SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE C	NT.I.F.D	STATES
STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS, INC.,)	
Petitioner,)	
v.) No.	20-1199
PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF)	
HARVARD COLLEGE,)	
Respondent.)	

Pages: 1 through 120

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: October 31, 2022

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6	PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF)
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8	Respondent.)
9		
10	Washington, D.C.	
11	Monday, October 31,	2022
12		
13	The above-entitled matte	r came on for
14	oral argument before the Suprem	e Court of the
15	United States at 12:58 p.m.	
16		
17	APPEARANCES:	
18	CAMERON T. NORRIS, ESQUIRE, Arl	ington, Virginia; on
19	behalf of the Petitioner.	
20	SETH P. WAXMAN, ESQUIRE, Washin	gton, D.C.; on behalf
21	of the Respondent.	
22	GEN. ELIZABETH B. PRELOGAR, Sol	icitor General,
23	Department of Justice, Wash	ington, D.C.; for the
24	United States, as amicus cu	riae, supporting the
25	Respondent.	

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(12:58 p.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument next in Case 20-1199, Students for Fair
5	Admissions versus the President and Fellows of
6	Harvard College.
7	Mr. Norris.
8	ORAL ARGUMENT OF CAMERON T. NORRIS
9	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
10	MR. NORRIS: Mr. Chief Justice, and
11	may it please the Court:
12	Grutter assumed that universities
13	could use race in a narrowly tailored way if
14	they just did it like Harvard. But this Court
15	never had any evidence about Harvard. Now you
16	do, and that evidence proves that none of
17	Grutter's core assumptions were ever true.
18	First, Grutter assumed that race would
19	only be a plus. But race is a minus for Asians,
20	a group that continues to face immense racial
21	discrimination in this country. Asians should
22	be getting into Harvard more than whites, but
23	they don't because Harvard gives them
24	significantly lower personal ratings.
25	Harvard ranks Asians less likahle

- 1 confident, and kind, even though the alumni who
- 2 actually meet them disagree. What Harvard is
- doing to Asians, like what it was doing to Jews
- 4 in the 1920s, is shameful, but it's a
- 5 predictable result of letting universities use
- 6 race in highly subjective processes.
- 7 Second, Grutter assumed that
- 8 applicants would be treated as individuals, not
- 9 as members of racial groups, but Harvard gives
- 10 racial preferences based on the box that
- 11 applicants check, even if they never write about
- 12 race or explain how it influences their views.
- 13 And for competitive applicants,
- 14 checking the right racial box is an anvil on the
- admissions scale, worth the same as ultra rare
- 16 achievements like winning a national
- 17 championship.
- 18 Third, Grutter assumed that
- 19 universities would seriously consider
- 20 race-neutral alternatives, but Harvard never
- 21 once did so until 2017, three years after we
- 22 sued it. Harvard now refuses to eliminate its
- 23 legacy preferences or boost its socioeconomic
- 24 preferences, even though both changes would make
- 25 Harvard far less white, wealthy, and privileged.

- 1 That's how Harvard uses race, and Harvard is
- 2 supposed to be the model.
- 3 This Court should admit that it was
- 4 wrong about Harvard, wrong about Grutter, and
- 5 wrong about letting the poison of racial
- 6 classifications seep back into education.
- 7 Grutter should be overruled both for public
- 8 schools and for private schools that accept
- 9 federal funds.
- 10 JUSTICE THOMAS: Mr. Norris, would you
- 11 spend a few minutes -- some time on the
- 12 originalism argument that was made at the
- last -- the end of the last case?
- MR. NORRIS: Absolutely. So, in terms
- of the original meaning of the Fourteenth
- 16 Amendment, the best source on this I've ever
- 17 read is the United States' brief on reargument
- in Brown. It painstakingly details the
- 19 legislative history and how the framers of the
- 20 Fourteenth Amendment saw it as a ban on all
- 21 racial classifications.
- 22 Also, the -- everyone knows that the
- impetus for the Fourteenth Amendment was to
- constitutionalize the Civil Rights Act of 1866.
- 25 The Civil Rights Act of 1866 is a series of bans

- on racial discrimination. It's a series of
- 2 color-blind measures and requirements.
- 3 And then one of the earliest cases
- 4 this Court had before it went off the rails in
- 5 Plessy was a case called Strauder, where the
- 6 Court immediately recognized that the purpose of
- 7 this amendment was to eliminate racial
- 8 classifications, no matter whether they
- 9 benefited whites or blacks, because racial
- 10 classifications themselves impose harms.
- 11 That's the affirmative evidence. Now
- 12 I know that the -- the evidence -- the pushback
- is the post-ratification history, but the
- 14 post-ratification history of the Fourteenth
- 15 Amendment is not the best evidence because we
- 16 know there was massive resistance to the
- 17 original meaning of the text of the Fourteenth
- 18 Amendment.
- 19 But it also doesn't prove anything.
- 20 Every measure that's cited in Harvard's brief
- 21 was a remedial measure. It was in response to
- 22 the end of slavery and the position that black
- 23 Americans found themselves in.
- 24 Harvard does not cite a remedial
- 25 measure for what it's doing today. Those same

- 1 measures that it cites would not be
- 2 constitutional today because they would no
- 3 longer serve a remedial purpose and not a shred
- 4 of evidence that anyone back then used race to
- 5 achieve the educational benefits of diversity.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Would you have
- 7 any objection if you do not ask candidates for
- 8 admission to -- to check a box, what their race
- 9 is, but you are allowed to take into
- 10 consideration what an applicant would say in an
- 11 -- in an essay about having to confront
- discrimination growing up and how he or she did
- 13 that.
- 14 You are allowed to take into
- 15 consideration what a faculty recommender said.
- 16 You know, one of the things that, you know, this
- 17 applicant would bring is how to deal with racial
- 18 discrimination in an area or in a school where
- 19 he's part of a very small minority.
- 20 Is there any -- do you have any
- 21 objection to that sort of introduction of -- of
- 22 race on behalf of a particular applicant?
- MR. NORRIS: Absolutely not, Mr. Chief
- 24 Justice. And, in fact, at the end of this case,
- 25 at the end of the trial, it was -- it was -- we

- were -- we discovered that Harvard had amended
- 2 its reading procedures for applications, and
- 3 there had been an amendment that said you only
- 4 should take into account race if someone talks
- 5 about it on their essay or in their -- in their
- 6 recommendation letters. Harvard deleted that
- 7 instruction and said that is not how we use race
- 8 and that should have never been put in there.
- 9 So we really are, in this case, talking about
- 10 the check box.
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: So you agree that,
- 12 with respect to the essays -- I mean, the Chief
- 13 Justice suggested that one aspect of racial
- 14 experience is confronting discrimination. But
- there are also other aspects of racial
- 16 experience. Justice Alito gave an example
- 17 earlier. But you agree that, with respect to
- 18 the essays, whether it's guidance counselors or
- 19 whether it's students -- can -- can express
- 20 whatever views they choose to express about
- 21 their own racial experiences and the relevance
- of that for admissions officers?
- MR. NORRIS: Yes, the -- what Title VI
- 24 bans is race itself as a consideration. And so,
- if a university gives credit to a black student

1 who writes an essay about overcoming discrimination and equal credit to an Asian student who writes an essay about overcoming 3 discrimination, then that is not race itself. 4 JUSTICE BARRETT: But --5 MR. NORRIS: That is over --6 7 JUSTICE BARRETT: Oh, sorry. Finish. MR. NORRIS: I should say that that's 8 overcoming discrimination, which Justice Scalia 9 wrote in Croson is not a racial classification. 10 11 JUSTICE BARRETT: But I quess, you 12 know, in our earlier argument, Justice Kagan 13 pointed out that this gets to be slicing the 14 salami pretty finely. I mean, it's one thing to 15 say, yes, that shows resilience because you've 16 written about overcoming discrimination, and a 17 student could write about any number of 18 obstacles that they've overcome, from physical 19 disabilities on down the line. But what if -- you know, Justice 20 21 Jackson had asked in the last argument, you 2.2 know, about pride. What if a -- what if an 23 applicant wrote an essay about how integral 24 their racial identity was to them as a source of 25 pride and the cultural attributes of the racial

- 1 heritage were very important? Would that be
- 2 okay even if it were all intimately tied up,
- 3 say, with, you know, the traditions of a Mexican
- 4 family? And -- and if the answer is no, that
- 5 can't be extricated from race, why would that be
- 6 different than someone writing about how
- 7 important it was to them to have this passion
- 8 for music in their life, that they loved music?
- 9 MR. NORRIS: I think culture,
- 10 tradition, heritage are all not off limits for
- 11 students to talk about and for universities to
- 12 consider. They can't consider that -- they
- 13 can't read that and say, oh, this person is
- 14 Hispanic or black or Asian, and, therefore, I'm
- 15 going to credit that. They need to credit
- 16 something unique and individual in what they
- 17 actually wrote, not race itself.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I -- I'm -- I'm a
- 19 little confused because this almost sounds like
- 20 a different kind of viewpoint discrimination.
- 21 And under our strict scrutiny standards, we're
- 22 not supposed to discriminate on the basis of
- viewpoint or discriminate on the basis of
- 24 religion. They're considered as sacrosanct, I
- 25 believe, as race.

1 And yet what you're suggesting is that 2 the viewpoint that somehow being a minority that 3 overcomes discrimination in the way you define it as important as overcoming obstacles, that 4 that's okay, but if you're a black person who's 5 6 from an affluent family who may be the only 7 class president ever in a white school's history, that that fact shouldn't feature. 8 9 That's a form of viewpoint discrimination, isn't it? 10 MR. NORRIS: I don't think we're 11 12 saying --13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That that's not 14 overcoming any kind of obstacle? 15 MR. NORRIS: We're not saying that 16 universities have to consider anything or 17 nothing. Universities just cannot consider race 18 itself. 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: But I thought you were 20 saying that both of those essays might be entirely appropriate for the university to 21 2.2 consider, is that correct? 23 MR. NORRIS: Correct. JUSTICE KAGAN: Or did I misunderstand 24 25 what you were saying?

1 MR. NORRIS: No, there is no federal statute about what essays universities consider. 2 3 There's a federal ban on consideration of race 4 itself. JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So -- so why is it 5 6 -- are you just objecting to touching a box that 7 admissions officers can look at? MR. NORRIS: We're objecting to the 8 use of race as either a plus or a minus in 9 10 making admissions decisions. 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But I don't think 12 you -- I think the district court made very 13 clear findings that checking the box alone is 14 not what got anybody in --15 MR. NORRIS: That there's a --16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- that it was a 17 holistic enterprise that looked at everything that that candidate did and race might have been 18 19 one among many factors, because there's a lot of 20 Hispanics and blacks who have higher -- higher 21 GPAs than many whites who don't get admitted. 2.2 So they're not looking at just being 23 black and white. They're rejecting a lot of the 24 10 percent applicants who have higher numbers 25 than, I guess, whites and Asian Americans.

1 MR. NORRIS: Your Honor, there's a 2 finding from the district court in our favor at 3 page 116 of the Petition Appendix that Harvard can award a racial preference based on the check 4 box alone, whether or not an applicant writes 5 about it or otherwise indicates that it's 6 7 important to them. And that is important. That's race itself. 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, that --9 that -- that finding was made in -- in an 10 undisputed finding by the district court that 11 12 race alone did not account for any one admissions package, that it was race among many 13 14 factors. 15 MR. NORRIS: Well, the district court 16 found that race is determinative for 45 percent 17 of blacks and Hispanics who get into Harvard. 18 So, yes, there's 55 percent who would not get 19 in --20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'll let Mr. 21 Waxman debate that because that's not the way I 22 saw that record. It was very clear that the district court found, for example, that being 23 24 Asian or not being Asian wasn't involved

statistically in any amount -- in any of the

- 1 admissions, whether for ADLCs or for non-ADLCs.
- 2 MR. NORRIS: Well, I -- I just want to
- 3 be clear, the 45 percent number is when race is
- 4 determinative for blacks and Hispanics. That's
- 5 the number of applicants who it's determinative
- 6 for.
- 7 Our number was much higher. That's
- 8 not my number. That's Harvard's number in their
- 9 race-neutral alternatives report.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Counsel, if I could
- 11 return a moment to the drafting of the
- 12 Fourteenth Amendment, you said we should ignore
- the post-ratification history, but let's just
- 14 pay a little attention to it for a moment.
- In the briefs, we have discussion
- 16 about the Freedmen's Bureau that -- that -- that
- 17 Congress set up. How is that consistent or
- 18 inconsistent with your position?
- 19 MR. NORRIS: I think it's entirely
- 20 consistent, Your Honor. The Freedmen's Bureau
- 21 for the most part did not draw any racial
- 22 classifications. It was classifications on the
- 23 basis of being a former slave or a refugee. And
- 24 the refugees at the time from the Civil War were
- 25 mostly white.

- In fact, when -- when objections were
- 2 made in Congress that this is a racial-based
- 3 law, the -- the people who supported the
- 4 Freedmen's Bureau denied the charge. They
- 5 didn't say yes, but so what. They said no, it
- 6 is not, it is not race-based at all.
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So today a benefit
- 8 to descendents of slaves would not be
- 9 race-based, correct?
- 10 MR. NORRIS: I -- I think that's
- 11 incorrect, Justice Kavanaugh.
- 12 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, how does
- 13 that -- you just said a benefit to former slaves
- was not race-based in the Freedmen's Bureau.
- 15 How is that different now?
- MR. NORRIS: Well, the remedial
- 17 exception that this Court has recognized is
- 18 fairly narrow. It has to be prior --
- 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: The question is
- 20 whether it's race-based.
- 21 MR. NORRIS: Right. Okay.
- 22 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You -- you said --
- you said, I think, to Justice Gorsuch, and I'm
- 24 sorry to interrupt his question, but you said to
- Justice Gorsuch, I think, that the benefit for

- 1 former slaves was not race-based. If that's
- 2 correct, then the benefit for descendents of
- 3 former slaves is also not race-based. There --
- 4 you can make other arguments if you want about
- 5 that, but it does not seem to be race-based
- 6 under what you said to Justice Gorsuch, correct?
- 7 MR. NORRIS: Well, not correct. I
- 8 think there's a difference between the former
- 9 slaves themselves getting a benefit versus
- 10 generations later. I think that's the
- 11 classification on the basis of ancestry, which
- is still problematic under this Court's
- 13 precedents.
- And even if it's not directly
- 15 race-based, I would assume that universities
- 16 are -- are -- and it would depend on the record,
- 17 but universities are drawing that classification
- 18 as a proxy for race in ways that the
- 19 Reconstruction Congress was not.
- 20 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. If I might
- just finish up. The Freedmen's Bureau is on the
- 22 federal side. We have briefs before us that
- also talk about practice on the state side.
- Now we know that shortly after the
- 25 Civil War there were a lot of race-based

- 1 statutes passed by states, and most of them were
- 2 Jim Crow laws that invidiously discriminated on
- 3 the basis of race, but your friend on the other
- 4 side cites two that he says are not, one from
- 5 Kentucky and one from South Carolina.
- 6 Could you address those?
- 7 MR. NORRIS: Yes. So we -- we cite a
- 8 book full of statutes from the same era from
- 9 states that were purely color blind, but they do
- 10 cite two examples, one from South Carolina which
- 11 I believe banned racial discrimination by
- 12 government-licensed entities, and there was a
- 13 finding by that legislature that our
- 14 government-licensed entities were continuing to
- 15 discriminate on the basis of race.
- I think it was a directly remedial
- 17 measure and it made sense in light of, you know,
- 18 the end of the war and the massive racial
- 19 discrimination that was still ongoing.
- Now the Kentucky statute is even
- 21 clearer. It gave benefits -- it wasn't a racial
- 22 classification, but it gave benefits to a group
- of people in Mercer County, Kentucky, who had no
- 24 property, were so injured they could no longer
- work, had no income. I mean -- I mean, I think

- 1 what the statute was talking about were the
- 2 people -- the recently freed slaves in Mercer
- 3 County to which there were many.
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And then I have one
- 5 final question about this. There's also a
- 6 question of whether we should pay attention to
- 7 state practices given the language of the
- 8 Fourteenth Amendment, which doesn't pertain to
- 9 -- whether we should pay attention to federal
- 10 side, sorry, given that the language of the
- 11 Fourteenth Amendment doesn't purport to bar
- 12 remedial measures or classifications by
- 13 Congress, which at that time was in full
- 14 Reconstruction efforts, but that the drafters of
- 15 the Fourteenth Amendment were especially
- 16 concerned about racial classifications at the
- 17 state level because so many of them, everyone
- 18 knew, would be used as Jim Crow laws were to
- 19 discriminate against African Americans.
- 20 MR. NORRIS: I think there's something
- 21 to that, Justice Gorsuch. Justice Scalia
- 22 recounted some of that history I think in Crowsa
- and maybe Adarand where he said there's no
- 24 reason to think that the same distrust of the
- 25 federal government would have been there at the

- 1 time.
- 2 But I -- I -- I don't think any of
- 3 these federal statutes are even particularly
- 4 hard if you assume the equal protection
- 5 principle binds the federal government because
- 6 they are all plainly remedial. None have
- 7 anything to do with diversity. And Harvard has
- 8 not pressed the remedial interests that
- 9 justified those statutes.
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry, but
- 11 many of the civil rights statutes and some of
- 12 the laws pertaining thereto were directed to --
- and directed to being equal to whites, so there
- was consciousness of race in those statutes.
- 15 MR. NORRIS: I -- I -- I think not in
- 16 a relevant sense. Those statutes, this Court
- 17 said in the Jam case in 2019 that that exact
- 18 language is color blind, that whites -- you have
- 19 to have the same rights as whites, which means
- 20 everyone is equal. Now they used raised-based
- 21 language, but the race -- well, what they did
- 22 was they banned racial discrimination.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So what do we --
- MR. NORRIS: That's not race
- 25 consciousness.

1	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: do about all
2	the legislation that was passed that gave
3	benefits not just to former slaves but to free
4	blacks? That was still remedial in your mind
5	because there was inequality, correct?
6	MR. NORRIS: I I believe it was.
7	And it was in response to an entire system that
8	had been built up of de jure discrimination. I
9	think those were remedial statutes as well. And
LO	even the
L1	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, even if we
L2	have de jure discrimination now or segregation
L3	now, Congress can't look at that? Because we
L4	certainly have de jure segregation. Races are
L5	treated very differently in our society in terms
L6	of their access to opportunity.
L7	MR. NORRIS: I I believe that the
L8	remedial exception is still good law. It was
L9	one of the two things that justified the use of
20	race in education that this Court identified in
21	Parents Involved.
22	However, Harvard has not made that
23	argument and has no factual record that you
24	would need to support that argument. It does
5	not justify its use of race based on its own

- 1 prior discrimination against blacks and
- 2 Hispanics.
- 3 JUSTICE ALITO: Are you aware of de
- 4 jure segregation today?
- 5 MR. NORRIS: I am not. I am aware
- 6 that -- that racial preferences on college
- 7 campuses in our belief -- in our view have
- 8 increased racial consciousness, and so there's
- 9 some of this that's happening on campus, but
- 10 it's not -- it's not de jure.
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's not clear
- that there's segregation between there are large
- 13 swaths of the country with residential
- segregation, there are large numbers of schools
- in our country that have people of just one
- 16 race, there are school districts that have only
- 17 kids of one race and not multiple races or not
- white people?
- 19 De jure to me means places are
- 20 segregated. The causes may be different, but
- 21 places are segregated in our country.
- MR. NORRIS: Absolutely. And I -- I
- think the top 10 percent program in Fisher,
- 24 which really got a bad wrap in Fisher II but was
- 25 meant -- solutions like that are meant to

2.2

- 1 account for residential segregation in a
- 2 race-neutral way.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yeah. The problem
- 4 is that they don't. That's what the district
- 5 court found.
- 6 MR. NORRIS: My memory of Fisher II
- 7 was that the top 10 percent program was
- 8 extremely successful at increasing the
- 9 enrollment of underrepresented minorities at
- 10 Texas. There were other solutions. We -- we
- 11 have a very sophisticated race-neutral
- 12 alternative in this case that takes into account
- 13 socioeconomic status and forces Harvard to
- 14 eliminate its preferences for the largely white
- 15 legacies.
- 16 And that is another way -- I mean, our
- 17 numbers -- the number of Asians would increase
- on campus; the number of Hispanics would
- increase on campus; the overall number of
- 20 underrepresented minorities would increase on
- 21 campus.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Blacks wouldn't
- 23 increase.
- MR. NORRIS: Black representation
- 25 would be 10 percent, which is higher than it is

- in the State of Massachusetts. And that number
- 2 is -- is quite low. Our expert testified that
- 3 if Harvard was only willing to consider wealth
- 4 instead of income, then that number would be
- 5 quite a bit better because the main disparities
- 6 we see on the basis of race today is not on
- 7 parental income but on generational wealth.
- 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Harvard -- Harvard
- 9 argues, though, that we have a compelling
- 10 interest in diversity writ large and that this
- 11 Court has deferred to that interest, and among
- 12 the diverse things that we need to have in our
- 13 class are children of large donors -- there's
- 14 evidence about that museum we talked about
- 15 earlier -- children of legacies and -- and the
- 16 squash team. I'm not making it up. It's in the
- 17 record.
- 18 And to what extent should this Court
- 19 be deferring to those interests as part of its
- 20 compelling interest analysis?
- MR. NORRIS: Not at all, Your Honor.
- 22 I don't -- I think strict scrutiny means you
- 23 need to -- you need to be able to reject
- 24 race-neutral alternatives because they don't
- 25 satisfy the compelling interest, and the

- 1 compelling interest is overall broad-based
- 2 diversity, not declines in our -- our fencing
- 3 status, not drops in five points on the U.S.
- 4 News and World Report, but it's diversity.
- 5 And Harvard -- it's a little ironic in
- 6 case, Harvard is not diverse at all. Besides
- 7 its racial statistics, 9 percent of incoming
- 8 freshman at Harvard are conservatives. Harvard
- 9 is 82 percent wealthy. There's 23 rich students
- 10 for every one low-income student on campus. It
- is not diverse in hardly any other way. And so
- 12 I think the compelling interest that you
- 13 recognized in Grutter is not what's actually
- 14 being pursued on Harvard's campus.
- 15 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You heard --
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: But, Mister --
- 17 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Go ahead.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm sorry. Go ahead.
- 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Uh-uh.
- 20 JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean, are you saying
- 21 now that there is an interest and a compelling
- 22 interest in racial diversity among other kinds
- of diversity? I mean, putting Harvard's -- you
- 24 know, whether Harvard should be more
- 25 socioeconomically diverse, it probably should

- 1 be. But putting that -- I mean, is there an
- 2 interest in racial diversity?
- 3 MR. NORRIS: I agree with my
- 4 colleague, not a compelling interest that could
- 5 justify a racial classification, but racial
- 6 diversity is not a bad thing. It is a great
- 7 thing. It is something --
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, but the whole
- 9 premise of this, right -- and, you know, we can
- 10 talk about whether these programs are narrowly
- 11 tailored, whether the universities have done
- 12 enough to -- in -- in the -- with the use of
- 13 race-neutral criteria, but the premise of your
- 14 argument is that even if race-neutral criteria
- 15 could not achieve the object, Harvard can't use
- 16 race-conscious criteria.
- 17 And that must be because you think
- 18 it's just not important enough, isn't that
- 19 right?
- 20 MR. NORRIS: I don't think that's
- 21 right. So we have very detailed record evidence
- 22 here that if Harvard just turned off race on its
- 23 admissions process, it would still have
- 24 6 percent African Americans, I believe it's
- 25 9 percent Hispanics, so 15 percent

- 1 underrepresented --
- 2 JUSTICE KAGAN: So you think good
- 3 enough? But how about if it were 2 percent? I
- 4 mean, the nature of your argument is that it
- 5 doesn't matter. That's what the nature of your
- 6 argument is.
- 7 MR. NORRIS: I disagree, Justice
- 8 Kagan. It does matter because, if you're below
- 9 those numbers, then Harvard's probably
- 10 discriminating in some sense and it should stop.
- 11 Or it's not reaching underrepresented minorities
- in the way that it should. Perhaps it should
- 13 not --
- 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, that's just
- 15 fighting the -- the question. I mean, the
- 16 question is, you know, is there a limit beyond
- 17 which you would say, oh, yes, if -- if you can't
- 18 achieve that level of diversity with
- 19 race-neutral criteria, then you're allowed to
- 20 use race-conscious criteria?
- 21 MR. NORRIS: I don't think there's any
- 22 level that justifies explicit racial
- 23 classifications. But I'm going to fight the
- 24 hypothetical one more time if you'll let me
- 25 because race-neutral alternatives --

JUSTICE KAGAN: No, I don't think I 1 2 So let me just go on and ask you a couple 3 of other things, I mean -- I mean, because this is -- you know, to me, this is -- a lot of the 4 argument here is about a university has a -- a 5 6 compelling interest in collecting a diverse 7 class, including along racial dimensions and maybe especially along racial dimensions given 8 9 the kinds of challenges that our society faces, in the exact same way that all the other 10 11 institutions of our society does. 12 So I'm just going to ask you some questions about that. If -- if -- if 13 14 you're a hospital and you serve a diverse group 15 of patients, is it super-important to you to 16 have a diverse set of doctors? 17 MR. NORRIS: I -- I don't know that 18 the -- that the evidence about the diversity of 19 doctors and patients or anything about the medical field in that sense --20 21 JUSTICE KAGAN: It wouldn't matter? 2.2 Yeah, okay, or maybe it would. You don't know. 23 If you're a police department and you serve a 24 diverse community, is it super-important to you 25 to have a diverse set of police officers?

2.8

1 MR. NORRIS: I mean, I believe that's 2 important if there's good evidence that that -that a racial classification was needed. 3 has nothing to do with the educational benefits 4 of diversity in universities. 5 That's the 6 interest that Grutter upheld. 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: Do you think that if you're a law firm or if you're a judge, if 8 9 you're a judge and you want to have a diverse 10 set of clerks, do you think a judge can't think 11 about that in making clerkship decisions? 12 MR. NORRIS: Absolutely can think about it. The Court's decision in Feeney says 13 14 knowledge of race is not the violation. It is 15 using it as a factor to distinguish --16 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm using -- let's say a judge says I want a diverse set of clerks. 17 18 That's -- you know, I want clerks who would --19 you know, great on any number of criteria, but I 20 also want a diverse set of clerks. So, over the years, people will look at that and they'll say: 21 2.2 There are Asian Americans there, there are 23 Hispanics there, there are African Americans there, as well as there are whites there. 24 25 Can a judge not do that?

MR. NORRIS: I mean, I think that's a 1 2 -- that's a -- that is a admirable goal. 3 don't think a judge could implement that goal by putting a thumb on the scale against Asian 4 applicants or giving a big preference to black 5 and Hispanic applicants. I think you need to 6 7 treat people equally based on race just as you're not going to hold my race against me in 8 9 judging the quality of my arguments. 10 I think race -- racial diversity is 11 important because it's a good metric to make 12 sure our -- our -- our institutions are equally 13 open. You can certainly be concerned about 14 that. But the question is using racial 15 classification, telling people that you didn't 16 get the clerkship because of your race. 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: Yeah, but the point 18 here is, look, everybody would rather achieve 19 all our racial diversity goals through 20 race-neutral means. Everybody would rather 21 that. And that's certainly what our cases say 2.2 you have to do. 23 The question is, when the race-neutral 24 means don't get you there, are you prevented 25 from taking race into account in all those ways

- 1 that I said? And I could add a dozen more.
- 2 Businesses who find it necessary, you know, in
- 3 order to achieve their economic objectives to
- 4 have racially diverse workforces. I mean, I
- 5 could go on and on and on.
- 6 And the question is, when race-neutral
- 7 means can't get you there, don't get you there,
- 8 when you've tried and tried and they still won't
- 9 get you there, can you go race-conscious?
- 10 MR. NORRIS: I don't believe so,
- 11 Justice Kagan. And I think your -- this Court
- 12 has already said in Parents Involved that racial
- diversity is not a compelling interest. It is
- the overall diversity of all kinds on college
- 15 campuses.
- 16 And I don't -- I mean, this is not --
- this doesn't have to be hypothetical. We
- 18 presented an alternative to Harvard that would
- 19 achieve socioeconomic diversity for the first
- 20 time, that would boost underrepresented minority
- 21 representation, that would lower the number of
- 22 white students on campus. And so we're talking
- 23 not about no diversity and diversity. We're
- 24 talking about 10 percent black representation or
- 25 14 percent black representation.

1 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That's -- that's 2 your, I would say, narrower argument. I think Justice Kagan's right that you have a broader 3 argument that it wouldn't -- it wouldn't matter. 4 Then you have a narrower argument, as I read the 5 6 submission and hear you, that even under the 7 Bakke-Grutter framework, race-neutral alternatives suffice to achieve the kind of 8 sufficient diversity. 9 10 And I'm going to ask you the same 11 question I asked the Solicitor General, which 12 is, how do you -- how do you measure that on 13 your narrower, as I see it, argument? Maybe you 14 don't want to accept my characterization, but on 15 what I see as your narrower argument, what --16 what is sufficient? What's meaningful, to use 17 the Solicitor General's words, in your view? 18 MR. NORRIS: Well, I think you need to 19 be measuring -- well, I mean, if you just take Grutter's interest as a given, you need to be 20 21 measuring whether your student body is diverse 2.2 on all dimensions. I don't think Harvard is 23 very --24 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No, let me ask it 25 specifically. How do you know whether a

- 1 race-neutral alternative proposed would be
- 2 sufficient, adequate to achieve sufficient
- 3 levels of otherwise underrepresented minorities,
- 4 that you would satisfy what Bakke and Grutter,
- 5 which I know you disagree with, but would
- 6 satisfy what those achieve? And you heard the
- 7 Solicitor General's answer, and I'd be curious,
- 8 your responses to her or your alternative
- 9 submission on that.
- 10 MR. NORRIS: Well, I think the burden
- is on Harvard. And so Harvard would need to
- 12 come forward with evidence about race-neutral
- 13 alternatives that have been presented or that
- it's considered itself and show how, under that
- 15 alternative, it's not getting the educational
- 16 benefits of diversity.
- 17 Now, in this case, Harvard -- the only
- 18 testimony we have is that Harvard doesn't know
- 19 what number it needs to get the educational
- 20 benefits of diversity. It doesn't know what
- 21 evidence to consult to know whether it has that.
- 22 It doesn't know what the evidence would even
- look like, as Dean Fitzsimmons testified, and
- 24 the only evidence is Harvard's report on -- on
- 25 the importance of diversity, which made --

- 1 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But, in looking --
- 2 I'm sorry. Looking at your proposals or looking
- 3 at California or Michigan or Washington, one of
- 4 the big themes, I think, of the briefs is, hey,
- 5 we have these states that have done race-neutral
- 6 alternatives and that's been -- that's been
- 7 effective in achieving diversity, I think. You
- 8 can dispute that characterization, but that's a
- 9 theme I -- I gleaned from the briefs.
- 10 And as I look at that, I want to know,
- 11 what does that mean, effective or adequate?
- 12 What's the measurement? Really, the same
- 13 question I had for the Solicitor General. It's
- asking us to say, yes, that's adequate, but what
- does that -- it's got to say more than that, I
- 16 think.
- 17 MR. NORRIS: Part of the problem, I
- 18 think, is the fuzziness of the interest in
- 19 Grutter itself, but --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No, no, no. No.
- 21 Accept the interest.
- MR. NORRIS: Okay.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Sorry to
- 24 interrupt. Accepting that the interest,
- 25 race-neutral, this is the back half of your --

- 1 back part of your brief, race-neutral
- 2 alternatives are adequate.
- 3 And I -- I just want to know, okay,
- 4 well, California, Florida, great. That's
- 5 adequate because?
- 6 MR. NORRIS: The --
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And that could be
- 8 translated to Harvard because?
- 9 MR. NORRIS: The University of
- 10 California system is the most racially diverse
- 11 elite institution in the world. Whites are the
- third most represented group on campus. So, if
- 13 racial diversity has these educational benefits,
- 14 then they've achieved them.
- I think that they studied their
- 16 undergraduates on your racial consciousness and
- 17 your cross-racial understanding. They get
- 18 really high scores at Berkeley. Berkeley and
- 19 all the UC system tells prospective students
- 20 that we have a very diverse student body and
- 21 that the educational benefits were -- that you
- 22 would expect to get from that are present. It's
- 23 the top ranked public university in the country.
- 24 It's great.
- 25 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And your point

- 1 then, the necessary add-on point is, and that
- 2 could be translated to Harvard in essence or
- 3 something sufficient could be translated to
- 4 Harvard, and I just want you to fill in the
- 5 blank there. Why?
- 6 MR. NORRIS: I -- I think it can. Our
- 7 race-neutral alternative that we've focused on,
- 8 Simulation D is what we called it, would make
- 9 Harvard go -- it would go from 82 percent
- 10 economically advantaged to 51 percent. You
- would actually have pure socioeconomic diversity
- where it's about 50/50.
- 13 The number of white students would
- 14 decrease. The number of Asian students would
- increase. The number of Hispanic students would
- 16 increase. I think you'd see lots of benefits in
- 17 that.
- 18 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: The number of
- 19 black students would decrease from what to what?
- 20 MR. NORRIS: Would decrease from
- 21 14 percent to 10 percent was the number. And
- 22 our expert testified that that number --
- 23 10 percent is an absolute floor because he
- only -- the number couldn't be higher because
- 25 his socioeconomic preference didn't have the

- 1 sophisticated data that Harvard has.
- I think that's successful on any -- on
- 3 any metric. And I -- I've never heard Harvard
- 4 prove the -- the -- the delta there as being
- 5 necessary for educational benefits of diversity.
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, I don't
- 7 know what to do in a situation like this one.
- 8 If you have perfect scores on every metric,
- 9 you're not guaranteed a spot at Harvard because
- 10 they have enough people with perfect scores of
- 11 every background that exceeds their class limit.
- 12 At some point, something has to break
- 13 the tie. And as we know, top 10 percent
- 14 students of Asian and of black and Hispanic
- 15 backgrounds in academic and extracurricular
- 16 activities are not being admitted to Harvard.
- 17 So it's not as if once we say take
- 18 race out of this that all of the people who are
- 19 -- that you consider super-qualified are going
- 20 to get in. But, on every matrix, there's going
- 21 to be competing applicants.
- 22 And you're saying a school can't look
- 23 at its general diversity figures and say, among
- 24 equal applicants, I might make race a
- 25 tie-breaker if the numbers that I have on that

- 1 matrix seem fairly low otherwise. You're
- 2 saying, no, you can't do that.
- MR. NORRIS: No, you cannot do that.
- 4 That's what Title VI prevents. It doesn't
- 5 prevent --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And that basically
- 7 what you're saying is really race diversity is
- 8 not important?
- 9 MR. NORRIS: Race --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So I don't
- 11 actually see why all the race-based -- because
- 12 all of the alternatives, whether it's the
- 13 10 percent plan, whether it's socioeconomic,
- they're all subterfuges to reaching some sort of
- 15 diversity in race.
- You're touting them as race-neutral,
- 17 but none of them are race-neutral. You're doing
- them because you believe in racial diversity. I
- 19 just don't understand why considering race as
- 20 one factor but not the sole factor is any
- 21 different than using any of those other metrics.
- MR. NORRIS: Well, I don't think those
- 23 are -- those are racial classifications in
- 24 disquise. Harvard's never criticized Simulation
- 25 D that we presented as a racial classification

- 1 in disquise. It criticizes it because it
- doesn't hit Harvard's precise racial numbers.
- It's based on socioeconomic status.
- 4 And I don't think anyone thinks eliminating the
- 5 legacy --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No. It -- it
- 7 reduces SAT score averages. It reduces lots of
- 8 other factors to get to your numbers.
- 9 MR. NORRIS: I mean, I think that's
- 10 our point, that -- that SAT scores would go from
- 11 the 99th percentile to the 98th percentile.
- 12 That's not sacrificing academic excellence.
- 13 That's moving Harvard from Harvard to Dartmouth.
- 14 Dartmouth is still a great school. They get
- 98th percentile SAT scores. We've got to make
- 16 some sacrifices.
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I -- I -- I don't
- 18 -- I -- I actually --
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: There are those who
- 20 love it.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yeah.
- 22 (Laughter.)
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 24 counsel.
- 25 Justice Thomas?

1	JUSTICE THOMAS: Nothing.
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Alito?
3	JUSTICE ALITO: No.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Anything
5	further, Justice Kagan?
6	Justice Kavanaugh?
7	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: One question about
8	the how to think about the 25-year sentence
9	in Grutter and the surrounding discussion.
10	MR. NORRIS: Yeah, absolutely. I
11	think that what people forget about the 25-year
12	mark or the four paragraphs you mentioned before
13	where they explain that racial preferences, they
14	will fail their own acid test unless they make
15	themselves unnecessary.
16	So I think what Justice O'Connor was
17	saying is that in 25 years, if we still need
18	race, it's not that you get another 25 years.
19	It's that we then declare racial preferences to
20	be a failure and call it off and go to race
21	race neutrality and try that instead.
22	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
23	Barrett?
24	JUSTICE BARRETT: But we're not to
25	that 25-year point yet, right? So, if if it

- 1 has its own self-destruct mechanism where it
- 2 says like, hey, Grutter says we've got to call
- 3 it quits because they're just not working, are
- 4 we obligated to give more time?
- 5 MR. NORRIS: Well, Harvard has
- 6 certainly never indicated that in five years it
- 7 will stop using race. Harvard over the 20-year
- 8 span has not decreased its use of race at all.
- 9 And I think the only legal standard
- 10 this Court has ever recognized for when do you
- 11 stop using race in education is in Brown with --
- 12 with all deliberate speed.
- The 25-year mark, we don't -- you
- 14 know, we don't support it from the get-go. But
- 15 we do think it was a prediction from Justice
- 16 O'Connor that has not borne out, and so Grutter
- on its own terms, I think 20 years is enough to
- 18 call it.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 20 counsel.
- 21 Mr. Waxman.
- 22 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SETH P. WAXMAN
- ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- MR. WAXMAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and
- 25 may it please the Court:

1	The evidence and findings in this case
2	confirm what this Court has long recognized,
3	that a university student body comprising a
4	multiplicity of backgrounds, experiences, and
5	interests vitally benefits our nation,
6	stereotypes are broken down, prejudice is
7	reduced, and critical thinking and
8	problem-solving skills are improved.
9	Student body diversity makes our
LO	businesses more innovative and globally
L1	competitive, our scientists more creative, our
L2	medical professionals more effective, and our
L3	military more cohesive.
L 4	Experience has more than borne out
L5	Justice Powell's observation that our future as
L6	a country depends on having leaders who have
L7	enjoyed wide exposure to students as diverse as
L8	the nation itself.
L9	And so, as this Court has consistently
20	held, if necessary to achieve genuine diversity,
21	a university need not blind itself to race,
22	which like the type of high school an applicant
23	attended, their socioeconomic and family
24	background or the part of the country they live
25	in forms a part of who they are

1	Now SFFA attempts to use Harvard's
2	admissions program as some sort of proof that
3	settled constitutional precedent is egregiously
4	wrong, but while SFFA is fully entitled to its
5	own legal arguments, it is not entitled to its
6	own facts.
7	Following exhaustive discovery in this
8	case, the trial court considered the testimony
9	of 30 witnesses and detailed expert analysis and
10	made extensive meticulous findings which the
11	court of appeals robustly affirmed, and those
12	findings, applying strict scrutiny, are that
13	Harvard does not improperly emphasize race in
14	its admissions decisions, it does not engage in
15	racial balancing, it most certainly does not
16	discriminate against Asian American applicants,
17	and it does not yet have a current workable
18	race-neutral alternative.
19	The false narrative to which SFFA
20	clings is no basis to dismantle decades of
21	precedent confirming the constitutionality of
22	limited race consciousness in admissions.
23	And I very much welcome the Court's
24	questions.
25	JUSTICE THOMAS: Mr. Waxman, the

- 1 Petitioner argues that over 80 percent -- that
- 2 actually you could -- you do have available a
- 3 non- -- a race-neutral approach that would yield
- 4 different but excellent results.
- 5 And the argument includes the fact
- 6 that, at least as they argue, that you're over
- 7 80 percent wealthy students, that that's not
- 8 diverse, and that over 30 percent -- or
- 9 30 percent or so of a class is made up of ALDC
- 10 students and that if you were to lower those
- 11 numbers, you could achieve far more diverse
- 12 results without -- along socioeconomic lines. I
- don't think it's arguable that Harvard is
- 14 socioeconomically diverse. But -- at least it
- doesn't appear that way. But it seems -- and
- that would not have a constitutional problem if
- 17 you did it socioeconomically.
- 18 And I'd like you simply to address
- 19 their argument.
- MR. WAXMAN: Yes. Thank you.
- 21 First of all, the numbers that my
- 22 friend is throwing around are not, in fact, the
- 23 numbers that actually reflect, for example,
- 24 socioeconomic diversity at Harvard, where, as it
- 25 stands now, 20 percent of all matriculants pay

- 1 nothing, 70 percent of underrepresented
- 2 minorities pay nothing, and well over half of
- 3 all applicants get substantial financial aid.
- 4 But, as to your point about
- 5 race-neutral alternatives -- and I -- correct me
- 6 if I'm wrong, Justice Thomas, but I think this
- 7 is what you're asking me about -- we have
- 8 exquisitely detailed metrics in this case with
- 9 respect to race-neutral alternatives and
- 10 findings and testimony with respect to the
- 11 so-called ALDCs, which is an acronym that I
- 12 think I was present -- I was actually literally
- present at the birth of, which is a preference
- 14 for children of alumni, children of faculty, and
- staff, athletes, and other people who have found
- themselves on the dean's interest list.
- 17 This -- the data in this case shows
- 18 that if that -- if race were eliminated, you
- 19 couldn't consider race, and you also could give
- 20 none of those preferences, the racial diversity
- of the matriculating class would go down. The
- 22 -- the representation of African Americans, if
- you just stopped considering race, would go from
- 24 14 to 6 percent, but if you also stopped
- considering ALDCs, it would go to 5 percent.

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1 With respect to --
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- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Let's just say
- 3 hypothetically, though, hypothetically, and I --
- 4 I know I'm going to get --
- 5 MR. WAXMAN: I -- I know all the usual
- 6 caveats --
- 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: All right. All
- 8 right.
- 9 MR. WAXMAN: -- and I accept them.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you,
- 11 Mr. Waxman.
- 12 (Laughter.)
- MR. WAXMAN: Yes.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
- MR. WAXMAN: I'm pretty sure, since
- 16 you're asking me, I'm not going to like the
- 17 hypothetical.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: You're not going to
- 19 like it. But let's assume that a very wealthy
- 20 university could pay for everybody to go and
- 21 still increase its endowment. It's a perpetual
- 22 motion machine, Malcolm Gladwell called them.
- Let's say, if it just gave up
- 24 preferences for donors' children, legacies, and
- 25 squash athletes, okay, or maybe those who row

- 1 crew, all of which tend to favor predominantly
- white children, and it could achieve whatever it
- deemed racial diversity, would it then be
- 4 permitted to engage in race consciousness, or in
- 5 that circumstance, would you agree that that
- 6 would not be narrowly tailored?
- 7 MR. WAXMAN: So I'm not claiming --
- 8 I'm accepting your hypothetical as hard as it is
- 9 for me in light of what the evidence in this
- 10 case shows.
- 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I understand that.
- 12 There we go.
- MR. WAXMAN: I -- I am not claiming
- 14 that there is a compelling interest in having
- donors per se, there is a compelling interest in
- 16 your proverbial art museum, there is a
- 17 compelling --
- 18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: There is a
- 19 compelling interest in the art museum?
- MR. WAXMAN: No, no.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: No.
- MR. WAXMAN: These are the claims that
- 23 I'm not claiming.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. Okay. I'm
- 25 sorry.

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1
                MR. WAXMAN: Okay? I'm disclaiming
 2
     all of those things.
 3
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: All right.
                MR. WAXMAN: When you look at a
 4
      so-called race-neutral alternative, the question
 5
      that this Court -- that Justice Powell
 6
     articulated in Bakke and this Court underscored
 7
     and amplified in Grutter and then in Fisher is,
 8
     how does -- is -- does that race-neutral
 9
10
      alternative actually substantially impact the
11
      character of the institution and the education
12
      that's being provided? And here --
13
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: Oh. Now let me stop
14
     you there because -- and I'm sorry to
15
      interrupt -- but, surely, getting rid of those
16
     preferences would substantially impact the
17
     university.
18
               MR. WAXMAN: And -- and --
19
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: But you -- you're
20
      saying they are not a compelling interest for
     constitutional purposes --
21
2.2
                MR. WAXMAN: So, no, what I'm -- what
23
      I'm saying --
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- for the
24
25
     Fourteenth Amendment? Or does the Fourteenth
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1	Amendment make make legacy children and donor
2	
3	MR. WAXMAN: Of course
4	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. So we agree?
5	MR. WAXMAN: Of course not. And the
6	truth of the matter is that if this were a case
7	in which the evidence showed that eliminating a
8	legacy preference made a substantial difference,
9	the district judge who to say that the
10	district judge was applying strict skeptical
11	scrutiny on the narrow tailoring principles is
12	quite an understatement
13	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
14	MR. WAXMAN: might have decided
15	otherwise. What the district court found
16	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
17	MR. WAXMAN: And, Justice Gorsuch, if
18	I can just
19	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Sure.
20	MR. WAXMAN: make one comment about
21	the record which I think responds to at least
22	the gist and spirit of your hypothetical. With
23	respect to race-neutral alternatives, the the
24	simulation, what has come to be called

Simulation D in this Court, the district court

- 1 found that "the Simulation D would require
- 2 'sacrifices on almost every" -- "every dimension
- 3 important to Harvard's admissions process.'"
- 4 Among other things -- and these are
- 5 all recited in the Smith Committee report, they
- 6 are recited in the -- the extensive discussion
- 7 of race-neutral alternatives in both the
- 8 district court opinion and the court of appeals
- 9 opinion -- are that, for example, with respect
- 10 to academic excellence, the academic factor, the
- 11 number of -- of matriculants with -- who score 1
- or 2 on the five-point scale would go down
- 13 17 percent.
- 14 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I'm familiar.
- 15 Mr. Waxman --
- MR. WAXMAN: Yeah.
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- I am familiar.
- 18 I'll follow that along with --
- MR. WAXMAN: So, in other words, it's
- 20 not --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- we go down from
- 22 99 to 98th percentile. I've got it. If I might
- 23 --
- MR. WAXMAN: No, no.
- 25 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- if I might shift

- 1 gears. Okay. I -- I -- I am familiar with
- 2 all those, and I appreciate that, and I
- 3 understand your point. It was a hypothetical.
- What do we do about history here?
- 5 Because one -- one of -- one -- one thing we
- 6 know or we think we know or we're told in the
- 7 briefs at least is that Harvard's move to a
- 8 holistic application approach happened in the
- 9 1920s because it wanted to impose a quota on
- 10 Jewish applicants, but it didn't want to do
- 11 through the front door, so it used diversity as
- 12 a -- as a subterfuge for racial quotas.
- 13 MR. WAXMAN: What the record in this
- 14 case shows, and it's -- it's discussed in some
- detail in the -- I'm going to blank on the names
- of the reports, but the various reports that
- 17 Harvard has done over the years on diversity and
- 18 diverse admissions in the case, one is the
- 19 so-called Rudenstine Report and the other is the
- 20 Khurana Report, both of which are in the Joint
- 21 Appendix, is that Harvard actually even before
- 22 the Civil War has as an admissions policy an
- effort to, in fact, diversify on both viewpoint
- and geography the class.
- Now it is no -- there's no doubt, and

- 1 Harvard acknowledges and is ashamed, that in
- 2 1920, one of its presidents, President Lowell,
- 3 decided that there were too many Jews and that
- 4 they were then going to start asking questions
- 5 on the application that would allow them to take
- 6 into effect character.
- 7 The notion that that bears at all on
- 8 the way that Harvard's current admissions
- 9 process, which uses a 40-person admissions
- 10 committee that meets and decides each
- 11 application en banc, in discussion, has any
- 12 resemblance whatsoever to the racist
- 13 anti-Semitic policy of a single Harvard
- 14 president is insubstantial, as the courts found.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. How do you
- 16 respond then to -- again, we have many briefs on
- 17 this point from Asian American applicants who
- 18 have -- and they say there's an entire industry
- 19 to help them appear less Asian on their college
- 20 applications and that they consider elite
- 21 colleges to have Asian quotas effectively, if
- 22 not in name.
- MR. WAXMAN: I'll say two things, one,
- 24 generally about the amicus briefs, and, two,
- 25 specifically about Harvard, and I -- I certainly

- 1 want to get to number two.
- 2 But there are multiple amicus briefs
- 3 filed by Asian American organizations and one
- 4 that is particularly, I think, powerful, filed
- 5 by 1,240 scholars of Asian American experience
- 6 and Asian ethnicity, all of whom not only opine
- 7 but cite studies showing that Asian Americans as
- 8 a group -- and Asia, of course, represents
- 9 61 percent of the world's population and a
- 10 multiplicity of ethnicities --
- 11 That Asian Americans demonstrably
- 12 benefit from a holistic admissions policy that
- 13 considers race as one factor among many.
- Now, with respect to Harvard, there
- 15 was -- to say that there was evidence in this
- 16 case is quite an understatement. The district
- 17 court found -- I'm citing -- I'm quoting page
- 18 261 of the Joint Appendix, and it's reiterated
- 19 by the court of appeals on page 80 of the Joint
- 20 Appendix -- that there was "no evidence of
- 21 discrimination against Asian Americans
- 22 whatsoever."
- 23 Again, now on page 264, there was
- 24 consistent, unambiguous, and convincing
- 25 testimony that there was no discrimination in

- 1 the administration -- administrative --
- 2 admissions process in general and the personal
- 3 rating in particular.
- 4 The plaintiffs in this case could not,
- 5 after four years of discovery in which they
- 6 hand-picked applications to view in total, they
- 7 could not produce a single witness to testify
- 8 that he or she had been --
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, Mr. --
- 10 MR. WAXMAN: -- discriminated against.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: -- Mr. Waxman, let me
- 12 stop you there because you referred to the
- 13 personal score, and that's a score that Harvard
- 14 gives based on character traits such as
- integrity, courage, kindness, and empathy, but
- the record shows that Asian student applicants
- 17 get the lowest personal scores of any other
- 18 group.
- 19 What accounts for that? Is it -- it
- 20 has to be one of two things. It has to be that
- 21 they really do lack integrity, courage,
- 22 kindness, and empathy to the same degree as
- 23 students of other races, or there has to be
- something wrong with this personal score.
- 25 MR. WAXMAN: That's -- that is -- I

- 1 mean, I want to get to what the evidence was
- 2 there, but that -- that syllogism, with all due
- 3 respect, is wrong. There was, for example, a
- 4 study that was done in 1983 that looked at why
- 5 it was that female applicants to graduate school
- 6 at the University of --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: No, just address this.
- 8 MR. WAXMAN: Okay. Here's --
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: The personal score
- 10 that's given to Asian applicants to Harvard, why
- 11 do they -- why are they given a lower score than
- 12 any other group?
- MR. WAXMAN: Okay. So the answer to
- 14 why they -- as a group, why there is a slight
- 15 numerical disparity with respect to the personal
- 16 rating of Asian Americans, but -- and also a
- 17 slight numerical disparity to the advantage of
- 18 Asian Americans with respect to the
- 19 extracurricular rating and the academic rating
- 20 was the answer that their expert gave with
- 21 respect to the latter two, which is that the
- 22 only way that you can -- the only model that can
- 23 be created to figure out what was going into the
- 24 personal rating couldn't look at almost anything
- 25 that admissions officers look at in those

- 1 ratings.
- 2 It can't -- there's no way that it
- 3 could model what the guidance counselor letters
- 4 said, what the teacher letters said, what the
- 5 essays said, what the interviewers' letters
- 6 said. In other words, what they --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, I thought the
- 8 interviewers did not rate the applicants lower
- 9 than other -- than other applicants based on
- 10 race.
- MR. WAXMAN: There --
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: There was not the
- disparity in what was done by -- what was said
- 14 by the interviewers.
- MR. WAXMAN: The -- with respect to
- 16 the alumni interviewers --
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: The alumni
- 18 interviewers.
- 19 MR. WAXMAN: -- based on -- based on
- 20 the subset that was included here, that their
- 21 subset, by the way, excluded all ALDC
- 22 applicants, that is, even though they
- acknowledged that there was not only no evidence
- of discrimination against Asian American ALDCs,
- but they did better, they eliminated from their

1 -- their model applicants that represent on 2 average 30 percent of the admitted class --JUSTICE ALITO: I -- I -- I still --3 putting aside the teacher recommendations or 4 quidance counselor recommendations, which I'll 5 6 come to, I still haven't heard any explanation 7 for the disparity between the personal scores 8 that are given to Asians. They rank below 9 whites. They rank way below Hispanics and 10 really way below African Americans. 11 What -- and you're talking about 12 hundreds and hundreds of applicants, maybe 13 thousands. What is the explanation for that? 14 MR. WAXMAN: So the explanation that 15 was -- I can't do better than the findings of 16 fact in the trial court as affirmed. And I --17 and I -- but I want to make two points very 18 clear with respect to your question. 19 We -- all of this evidence was -- all 20 of this was on display and in front of the trial 21 court for, this Asian American part of it, for 2.2 well more than a week, maybe two weeks. 23 The district court found, considering all of the evidence, that there is "no credible 24 25 evidence that corroborates the improper

- discrimination suggested by SFFA's
- 2 interpretation of the personal rating, "page
- 3 264.
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, all right. I'll
- 5 try one more time. The district court found "a
- 6 statistically significant and negative
- 7 relationship between Asian American identity and
- 8 the personal rating assigned by Harvard
- 9 admissions officers."
- 10 MR. WAXMAN: That's correct. And what
- she said is the record will not allow a full
- 12 explanation of that because, if the -- the --
- 13 this -- this -- there is -- there was no
- 14 evidence with respect to what teachers said,
- what guidance counselors said, what these
- 16 students wrote -- wrote about.
- But what we can say with respect to
- 18 the allegation of discrimination in this case,
- 19 which was the -- the -- the definition of
- 20 discrimination that was at issue in Bakke and
- 21 Grutter and Fisher and which their expert, which
- their lawyer got up at opening statement and
- 23 said: When we talk about discrimination in this
- 24 case, we're talking about discrimination in
- 25 admissions outcomes.

1 And here again, the district court 2 found and the court of appeals also concluded that there was no evidence of discrimination in 3 admissions outcomes against Asian Americans --4 5 JUSTICE ALITO: If you -- if you --MR. WAXMAN: -- whatever you think 6 7 about the personal rating, which is, after all, simply a number that --8 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice --10 Justice Alito would like to ask a question. 11 MR. WAXMAN: I'm sorry. 12 JUSTICE ALITO: Go ahead. MR. WAXMAN: I'm not trying to 13 14 filibuster you. 15 JUSTICE ALITO: Finish your -- finish 16 your sentence. 17 MR. WAXMAN: Okay. 18 JUSTICE ALITO: Then I will ask one more question on this. 19 MR. WAXMAN: I just -- I -- I want to 20 make one other thing clear to the extent that 21 2.2 it's not clear from the record. The personal 23 rating, like the academic rating and the extracurricular rating and the athletic rating, 24 25 is a number that is put down by a "first

- 1 reader." That is, the file comes in, it's not
- 2 usually complete, and just as a matter of
- 3 triage, one of the 40 admissions officers goes
- 4 through and gives these numerical numbers.
- 5 It is -- the testimony was it is not
- 6 considered in any way once the subcommittees and
- 7 committees meet. It "fades into the
- 8 background." It is not the basis of admissions
- 9 decisions.
- 10 And so not only did the court find as
- 11 fact that those -- that that slight disparity
- 12 was not evidence of discrimination even in the
- personal rating, it had no effect with respect
- 14 to outcomes.
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: It makes no difference
- 16 whatsoever?
- MR. WAXMAN: It's --
- JUSTICE ALITO: It doesn't affect --
- MR. WAXMAN: -- it's not that it makes
- 20 no difference whatsoever. Look at what the
- 21 expert testimony was, and I realize we're --
- 22 JUSTICE ALITO: Does it make a
- difference or doesn't it make a difference?
- MR. WAXMAN: It doesn't make a
- 25 statistical difference in admissions outcomes --

1	JUSTICE ALITO: Then why do you do it?
2	MR. WAXMAN: as both courts found.
3	JUSTICE ALITO: Then why do you do it?
4	MR. WAXMAN: We said I mean, as
5	JUSTICE ALITO: If it doesn't matter,
6	why do you do it?
7	MR. WAXMAN: We do it as a matter of
8	triage. Right now, Harvard is getting last
9	year got 61,000 applications for 1600 slots.
LO	And it is an entirely rational way of figuring
L1	out where how you're going to allocate your
L2	attention to ask an admissions officer, as the
L3	file is being developed, just go through in a
L4	very rough way and rate a particular application
L5	based on what you can see on these four metrics
L6	The fact that Asian Americans got a
L7	marginally, on average, a marginally lower
L8	personal rating score is no more evidence of
L9	discrimination against them than the fact that
20	they got a marginally higher rating than any
21	data can show on academics and extracurriculars
22	It doesn't mean that they're either smarter or
23	people think they're smarter.
24	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
25	counsel.

1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel --2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll get to 3 you in a moment. There's been a lot of talk about 4 African American applicants to Harvard in sort 5 6 of a general indistinguishable way when, in 7 fact, they cover a very broad swath of -- of 8 applicants. 9 MR. WAXMAN: Of course. 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What do you do 11 with respect to an African American applicant, I 12 mean, you're concerned about diversity of 13 viewpoint, let's say his viewpoints tend to be 14 very close to, you know, the white applicants, 15 and he grew up in Groves Point, you know, had a 16 great upbringing, comfortable, his parents went 17 to Harvard, he's a legacy, and yet, under your system, when he checks African American, he gets 18 a tip. He gets a benefit from that. 19 20 Isn't that --21 MR. WAXMAN: So --2.2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- isn't that very stereotypical on -- under the Harvard 23 24 program? 25 MR. WAXMAN: -- I -- I think it's --

- 1 it's -- well, first of all, it is simply not the
- 2 case that every -- every black applicant gets a
- 3 "tip." In fact, I'll direct the Court's
- 4 attention to page 1,811 of the Joint Appendix,
- 5 which includes this beautiful chart which
- 6 represents an undisputed model of the relative
- 7 importance of race on application outcomes.
- 8 And the one that you cannot actually
- 9 even see, to your far right, is race. Race
- 10 explains --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I can't see it
- 12 because it's far away. But, I mean --
- 13 (Laughter.)
- MR. WAXMAN: Nonetheless, you have the
- 15 page reference.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- it is not
- 17 zero.
- 18 MR. WAXMAN: It is very close to zero.
- 19 That is, the testimony in the case was --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, so
- 21 there's only a little racial discrimination in
- the case.
- MR. WAXMAN: Are you asking me whether
- 24 Harvard is -- you're asking me to answer a
- 25 question that assumes that Harvard is

- 1 discriminating on the basis of race? No. I
- 2 can't accept that.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, isn't
- 4 that --
- 5 MR. WAXMAN: What Harvard says is --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- isn't that
- 7 what -- Mr. Waxman, isn't that what the case is
- 8 about, the discrimination against Asian
- 9 Americans?
- 10 MR. WAXMAN: There was a -- Count I of
- 11 the complaint was that Harvard was intentionally
- 12 discriminating against Asian Americans. The --
- 13 the entire evidence in that case, all of the
- 14 plaintiff's proof, was that Asian Americans are
- treated worse than white applicants; that is,
- 16 that there was prejudice, intentional
- 17 discrimination. That could not -- the evidence
- 18 could not --
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What do you do
- 20 with the -- what do you do with the charts --
- 21 MR. WAXMAN: -- more soundly have
- 22 refuted that.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- what do you
- 24 do with the charts in their brief, I think
- 25 they're on page 24 --

Т	MR. WAXMAN: Twenty-four.
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: to 43, the
3	academic decile and the comparative treatment of
4	African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian
5	Americans? You don't see a surprising disparity
6	in that?
7	MR. WAXMAN: So there's a lot to be
8	said about that, but I guess the first thing I
9	would say about that chart is that their own
LO	expert agreed that because that chart is simply
L1	a descriptive statistic, it is "not equal to
L2	evidence of discrimination." It reflects a
L3	pattern which might or might not be real.
L4	Now understand that that chart that
L5	they've displayed for you, they have eliminated
L6	all ALDC applicants. So one-third of the
L7	admitted class, over six years, they're not even
L8	in that chart. They have that chart is
L9	predicated on something called an academic
20	index. An academic index is a formula that
21	looks at two things, high school grades and test
22	scores. The academic
23	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And so people
24	in the different racial categories, they have a
5	different regult based on other factors which

- 1 include race?
- 2 MR. WAXMAN: They -- they have a
- different result because, among the many, many,
- 4 many characteristics of any particular
- 5 individual applicant that Harvard considers, one
- 6 that it does not consider is the academic index.
- 7 That is, the very metric that they're displaying
- 8 for you Harvard doesn't even use.
- 9 The only -- the testimony in the case
- 10 was the only reason that the academic index is
- 11 even calculated is because the Ivy League
- 12 athletic rules require that your recruited
- 13 athlete class, the AA for your -- AI for your
- 14 recruited athlete class not be more than two
- 15 standard deviations below --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay, Mr.
- 17 Waxman, put aside --
- 18 MR. WAXMAN: -- the matriculated class
- 19 last year.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- put aside
- 21 the hypothetical about the African American
- 22 applicant who's a legacy. Take two African
- 23 American applicants in the same category,
- 24 however you want to take it. They both get or
- both can get a tip, right, based on their race.

1 And yet they may have entirely 2 different views. Some of their views may 3 contribute to diversity from the perspective of Asians or whites. Some of them may not. And 4 yet it's true that they're eligible for the same 5 6 increase in the opportunities for admission 7 based solely on their skin color? MR. WAXMAN: So the -- the point is --8 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That was a 10 question. MR. WAXMAN: No, I know. 11 I'm -- I'm 12 attempting to answer your question. There is no doubt that for -- as the 13 14 testimony showed, that for applicants who are 15 essentially so strong on multiple dimensions, so 16 extraordinarily strong on multiple dimensions 17 that they are sort of on the bubble, that they 18 might -- they have a real candidate for 19 admission, African American -- being African 20 American or being Hispanic or in some instances 21 being Asian American can provide one of many, 2.2 many tips that will put you in. 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, people 24 say that, yes, but you will have to concede, if 25 it provides one of many, that in some cases it

- 1 will be determinative.
- 2 MR. WAXMAN: I do. I do concede that.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. So
- 4 we're talking about race as a determining factor
- 5 in admission to Harvard.
- 6 MR. WAXMAN: Race in some -- for some
- 7 highly qualified applicants can be the
- 8 determinative factor, just as being the -- you
- 9 know, an oboe player in a year in which the
- 10 Harvard-Radcliffe orchestra needs an oboe player
- 11 will be the tip.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah. We did
- 13 not fight a Civil War about oboe players.
- MR. WAXMAN: I --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We did fight a
- 16 Civil War to eliminate racial discrimination,
- 17 and that's why it's a matter of -- of
- 18 considerable concern.
- 19 And I think it's important to -- for
- 20 you to establish whether or not granting a
- 21 credit based solely on skin color is based on a
- 22 stereotype when you say this brings diversity of
- 23 viewpoint. It may not bring diversity of
- 24 viewpoint -- viewpoint in a particular case at
- 25 all.

1 MR. WAXMAN: Well, number one, 2 viewpoint diversity, while Harvard values it and 3 seeks it, is not the only reason -- by far the only reason for wanting a genuinely diverse 4 class. We want a diverse class for backgrounds 5 and interests and lots of things other than just 6 7 viewpoint. If we were to use, for example -- the 8 9 example that has been discussed, I believe, for 10 every other advocate that has stood up this morning, you know, and ask what about taking 11 12 race into account if the student writes about it, the fact of the matter is Harvard is 13 14 attempting not to have among it -- among a class 15 of -- that is diverse among many generations, a 16 class that is racially diverse only for people 17 for whom their racial identity and their racial experiences is of such compelling importance 18 that they write about it, right? 19 20 Your hypothetical about the black 21 student who may have very different views than 2.2 the stereotypical -- the stereotype of what a 23 black student will have was, in fact -- is, in fact, the subject of the -- that's discussed in 24 25 the Khurana report.

1	The Khurana report gave in its
2	analysis of the importance and dimensions of
3	diversity an actual example that came from
4	Richard Light's book, published book, which had
5	a particular class. It happened to have three
6	African American students in it. An African
7	American student gave an answer in a discussion,
8	which another African American student said:
9	That is not my view. My view is quite the
10	opposite. And a third one said: I wasn't
11	actually going to say anything, but I have a
12	completely different view.
13	That was an incredible learning
14	experience not only for the non-African
15	Americans in the discussion but for them. And
16	that's what Harvard is trying to get at.
17	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr.
18	Waxman.
19	MR. WAXMAN: I'm sorry for taking so
20	long to get at that.
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, no. I
22	appreciate your answers.
23	Justice Thomas?
24	Justice Alito?
25	JUSTICE ALITO: In in Bakke,

- 1 Justice Powell chose Harvard's admission program
- 2 as a model, and that selection has had an
- 3 enormous effect for the last 50 years. And
- 4 Harvard submitted a brief in Bakke, along with a
- 5 number of other colleges. I went back and I
- 6 looked at it and noticed that the brief talked
- 7 about Harvard's program going back 30 years, but
- 8 it didn't say anything about President Lowell or
- 9 what Harvard had done back in the 1920s.
- 10 So my question is, did Harvard sell
- 11 Justice Powell a bill of goods? Do you think
- 12 Justice Powell would have championed, would have
- 13 held up the Harvard program as a model, as an
- 14 exemplar for the whole country if he knew about
- the origins of the holistic program?
- 16 MR. WAXMAN: Justice Powell used the
- 17 Harvard -- used Harvard's description about its
- 18 admissions process and the limited extent to
- 19 which it was then and for the past 30 years had
- 20 been using race as one factor among many to
- 21 achieve genuine diversity in its student body.
- 22 Harvard -- the Harvard brief --
- 23 Justice Powell didn't take it or not take it
- 24 because, prior to the Civil War, Harvard College
- 25 was a leader in encouraging diversity in its

- 1 undergraduate applications, any more than the
- 2 fact that it had a terrible stain on its history
- 3 a hundred years ago.
- 4 It was taken for what it was presented
- 5 as, and it was -- and it fairly presented how
- 6 the Harvard admissions process worked then and
- 7 works now.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 9 Sotomayor?
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, there are
- 11 two questions that I want to get to that were
- 12 asked of you. The first was Justice Alito's
- about the poor personal rating. It seems to me
- 14 that Petitioner claims that Harvard's
- discriminating against Asian Americans because
- 16 it uses subjective criteria that's affecting the
- 17 personnel ratings. That's how I think I read
- 18 his question, correct?
- 19 So it's not that it's using race in
- 20 admitting people. It's that it's using a
- 21 corrupted personnel rating, correct?
- MR. WAXMAN: Well, I don't want to
- 23 speak for Justice -- I don't want to presume to
- 24 speak for Justice Alito.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I agree.

1 MR. WAXMAN: I think it is -- it is 2 fair to say that the criticism of the -- this --3 the personal rating --4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Right. 5 MR. WAXMAN: -- relates to the "subjectivity" that is involved really in all of 6 7 the ratings but particularly in the personal rating. 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, it goes --9 10 the evaluations that use words like "not a" --"non-leader," "not caring," "not" whatever --11 12 MR. WAXMAN: Yes. Yeah. 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- it applies to all races, correct? 14 15 MR. WAXMAN: Of course. 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All races --17 applicants receive those ratings as well, 18 correct? 19 MR. WAXMAN: Correct. JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I think what the 20 21 expert was saying, the fact that you have these 22 numbers, standing alone don't tell you anything, 23 correct, you have to look at all the input that 24 goes into why --25 MR. WAXMAN: Correct.

Τ	JUSTICE SUTUMAYOR: whether there
2	was discrimination or not, correct?
3	MR. WAXMAN: Correct.
4	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. So the
5	numbers alone tell you nothing.
6	MR. WAXMAN: That's that's right.
7	The numbers can tell you you could you can
8	tote up 100,000 applications and look at what
9	the first reader says scored and measure it
10	against declared race and come up with a feature
11	that says, gee, across these 150,000 or, in this
12	case, 150,000 minus all the ALDCs, it looks
13	like, you know, on average, Asian Americans,
14	self-declared Asian Americans have this number
15	and self-declared whites have this number.
16	It tells you nothing about why that
17	number was given, any more than why
18	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And and I don't
19	want to cut you off but I want to get
20	MR. WAXMAN: No, I need to be cut off.
21	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So it doesn't tell
22	you why, and there was no proof to show why.
23	District court found that that number did not
24	prove discrimination. Correct?
25	MR. WAXMAN: There was actual proof

- 1 that it did not reflect discrimination. There
- 2 was a multi -- there was expert analysis on --
- 3 on -- on multi-dimensionality and that looked at
- 4 the non-academic index that showed that, for
- 5 example, white applicants who got a 1 or a 2 on
- 6 academics and Asian Americans who got 1 or 2 on
- 7 academics, for whatever reason, the latter group
- 8 got lower teacher ratings than the former.
- 9 And the same with guidance counsellor
- 10 ratings. It doesn't tell you why. It doesn't
- 11 permit -- and it certainly doesn't permit an
- 12 inference that Harvard is discriminating. The
- 13 -- the district court could not have been more
- 14 definitive about the absence of any racial
- discrimination or discrimination against Asian
- 16 Americans than it was.
- 17 A finding that the Office of Civil
- 18 Rights in the early 19 -- in -- in -- in 1990
- 19 also found.
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Could you deal
- 21 with simulation D? I think that you were trying
- 22 to explain why the district court rejected that
- 23 stimulation -- simulation.
- MR. WAXMAN: Simulation.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Simulation, I'm

- 1 sorry, simulation numbers as meaningful. Could
- 2 you finish your answer?
- 3 MR. WAXMAN: Yes. And, you know, in
- 4 particular, I'll, you know, I'll -- I'll point
- 5 the Court to -- because I am not going to be
- 6 able to do it as well as the district court, to
- 7 pages 208 to 220 of the joint appendix, which is
- 8 the district court's findings on this, and 73 to
- 9 79, which is the court of appeals, and 1307 to
- 10 1325, which is the Smith committee's analysis of
- 11 this.
- 12 But basically what the district court
- found was, as I said, that simulation D would
- 14 require significant sacrifices -- I don't have
- the quote right in front of me now -- on almost
- 16 every dimension that Harvard values, including a
- 17 substantial decline -- we're not talking about a
- decline in SAT scores or going from the 99th
- 19 percentile to the 98th percentile. We're
- 20 talking about the following things that the
- 21 Court found.
- The percentage of the matriculating
- class that would be academic 1s or a 2s would go
- down by 17 percent. Every other factor would go
- down by at least 10 percent, between 10 and

- 1 22 percent.
- 2 The number of -- of matriculates
- 3 interested in majoring in the humanities, which
- 4 is a major tip that Harvard gives because of
- 5 Harvard's recent inability to matriculate
- 6 excellent students who want to major in the
- 7 humanities would go down by 14 percent.
- 8 The number of African Americans
- 9 admitted would go down from 14 to 10 percent.
- 10 It was the whole confluence of all of those
- 11 consequences that led the district court to
- 12 confirm that it was not a workable, effective
- 13 race-neutral alternative.
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, it seems
- that for Justice Gorsuch, none of those other
- 16 things are compelling interest. And how do --
- MR. WAXMAN: Well --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- you respond to
- 19 that?
- 20 MR. WAXMAN: I'm -- I'm not sure I'm
- 21 ascribing that to Justice Gorsuch.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, I -- I --
- 23 but he seemed to say an art museum is not
- 24 important. So if the matrix shows that those
- 25 interested in the arts falls to -- falls

- dramatically, that might be of concern to
- 2 Harvard. I think it valuable, but --
- 3 MR. WAXMAN: It might very well be a
- 4 concern. Would it -- would it lead -- would it
- 5 lead a judge skeptically applying strict
- 6 scrutiny to say: Oh, it just doesn't work,
- 7 you're not going to have an art museum, or
- 8 you're not going to have a squash team, or
- 9 you're not going to have, you know, alumni
- 10 contributions.
- It wasn't any of those things. It's a
- 12 caricature to say that those were the reasons
- why this particular thing wasn't a race-neutral
- 14 alternative.
- Now, I just want to say if you think,
- 16 notwithstanding the findings, that the district
- 17 court and the court of appeals didn't properly
- 18 apply the kind of strict scrutiny and narrow
- 19 tailoring analysis that it should have, okay,
- that's a remand.
- 21 I don't think the record will bear
- 22 that out. It is not a reason to dispense with
- 23 decades of constitutional precedent that has
- 24 allowed all of these, what this Court has
- 25 properly considered to be a compelling national

- 1 interest in having this kind of learning
- 2 environment.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you.
- 4 Justice Kagan?
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Waxman, there have
- 6 been a lot of questions today, and I take these
- 7 to be important questions, about what is the end
- 8 point.
- 9 If -- if we can achieve racial
- 10 diversity through neutral mechanisms, rather
- 11 than through race-conscious mechanisms, we
- 12 should. We've said that many times.
- 13 So the question is when can we say
- 14 that we can achieve our racial diversity goals
- in that way? And I guess I have a two-part
- 16 question, and -- and then an assumption that I
- want you to bake into the two parts.
- 18 The first is what is Harvard doing in
- 19 an ongoing way to test whether that is true?
- 20 And the second is does Harvard see any progress
- 21 along that dimension? In other words, I think
- 22 it was said by Petitioner's counsel, oh, Harvard
- is doing, you know, is putting this -- is -- is
- 24 -- is using as great a preference as it ever
- 25 did.

1	The question is, over time has Harvard
2	found that it has become less necessary to use
3	race-conscious means or not?
4	Here's the assumption that I want to
5	have you bake into this, which is I take
6	Petitioners to be saying, and I think that this
7	is an important thing, that it doesn't matter if
8	some part of the reason for adopting
9	race-neutral approaches is to achieve racial
10	diversity.
11	I think that they very clearly said
12	that. I am not sure I understand why given
13	their legal arguments but I think they very
14	clearly said that.
15	So assume that you can, you know, sit
16	down and say we're we're we're
17	trying to figure out what race-neutral
18	mechanisms to use, and part of the goal is to
19	achieve racial diversity, what is Harvard doing
20	to answer that question and is it any closer?
21	MR. WAXMAN: I have firmly in mind the
22	second part of your question. If I don't also
23	answer the first, please remind me.
24	The evidence in the case is that for
25	decades Harvard has been taking stens other than

- 1 the conscious -- other than race-consciousness
- 2 to increase the level of diversity, including
- 3 ethnic and racial diversity.
- 4 And these are discussed, actually, in
- 5 the Smith committee report and the -- and Dean
- 6 Smith's testimony and in the findings. It, for
- 7 example, in the wake of Grutter and actually
- 8 before substantially increased the amount of
- 9 resources that it put in outreach, in partnering
- 10 with organizations that -- that assist and, you
- 11 know, advance the educational potential of
- 12 minority and low socioeconomic students.
- 13 It has -- it has achieved some success
- in -- in -- in getting additional applications
- 15 not just from minorities but from minority
- 16 applicants who are actually really qualified to
- 17 attend Harvard.
- It thought about, well, maybe a way to
- 19 increase this is to substantially increase our
- financial aid, and that there's evidence in the
- 21 case, there's actually a beautiful chart that
- 22 shows how the level of financial aid went up at
- 23 various points over two decades and what
- 24 happened with respect to the racial diversity of
- 25 the applicant class and the matriculating class.

Т	and what the testimony showed and the
2	findings was, it made a difference to a point.
3	After a certain point, it no longer
4	made any difference. Harvard tested the
5	proposition that its early action program, it's
6	it's not early decision in the way that most
7	schools are because you're not committed to it,
8	but that by admitting a significant percentage,
9	I don't know, 20 or 25 percent of its class for
LO	people who applied, you know, early, early on in
L1	the academic year, it was disadvantaging
L2	minority applicants and applicants from low
L3	socioeconomic circumstances because they didn't
L4	have the kind of resources, guidance counselors
L5	and test prep and all that sort of stuff, to be
L6	able to take advantage of it.
L7	They they they ended it and
L8	asked other universities to do the same thing.
L9	With two exceptions, no one else did. And what
20	they found at the end of five years was that it
21	had the opposite result; that is, it made it
22	more difficult for them to recruit and
23	matriculate underrepresented minorities.
24	And there were there were a bunch
25	of other things in the record about things that

- 1 Harvard has done, some of which have had
- 2 substantial success. And so the notion that
- 3 Harvard is doing things the same way and is
- 4 always going to do the same things the same way
- 5 is just wrong.
- 6 Harvard is -- Harvard completely
- 7 recognizes and endorses this Court's statement
- 8 in Grutter that "there are serious problems of
- 9 justice connected with the idea of preference
- 10 itself." That's why it holds itself -- why it
- is attempting to achieve all of the compelling
- 12 benefits of -- of a genuinely diverse student
- body in the most race-neutral way that it can.
- 14 And in terms of -- I don't know if
- 15 this is the first part of your question, but
- 16 Harvard is actually attempting -- is measuring
- 17 how it is doing in terms of diversity and the
- 18 benefits of diversity and what needs to be done
- 19 and what other things can be done in a
- 20 race-neutral way on a very regular basis.
- 21 And I can give you the data on -- you
- 22 know, with respect to either, but, for example,
- 23 Harvard -- there is a -- Harvard said, committed
- itself, in 2018 that it would, you know,
- 25 continue to look for race-neutral alternatives

- 1 and have another systematic review, you know,
- 2 systematic, statistically, you know, rigorous
- 3 review about how it is doing.
- 4 That committee has been formed and has
- 5 already met for the five years that will -- you
- 6 know, that will transpire next year. Yes, we
- 7 are trying. Yes, we have tried other things
- 8 that have helped. Are we there yet? No. And
- 9 that's the reason why the 45 percent, the
- 10 district court's finding of 45 percent. That's
- 11 what it shows. It shows --
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Thank you.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr.
- Waxman.
- 15 Justice Gorsuch?
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah. I -- I just
- was hoping to get an answer to the second half
- 18 of the question --
- MR. WAXMAN: Oh, okay.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- which was when --
- 21 when does Harvard anticipate this will end?
- MR. WAXMAN: Yeah.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Grutter spoke of it
- being a 25-year window, as you're well aware.
- 25 Harvard could tomorrow do without federal funds

- 1 and continue to discriminate on the basis of
- 2 race however it pleased. I'm sure that would be
- 3 a hardship. But what -- what is -- what is
- 4 Harvard's view on how long this will take?
- 5 MR. WAXMAN: So Harvard, like the
- 6 Solicitor General and like UNC, understood all
- 7 four paragraphs of what Justice O'Connor wrote
- 8 in her opinion and takes it to heart. What
- 9 Justice O'Connor said was it's been 25 years
- 10 since Grutter, there's evidence that our society
- is changing, it is -- we expect that 25 years
- from now the use of racial preferences will no
- longer be necessary.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So Harvard agrees
- 15 with that?
- MR. WAXMAN: And --
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Does Harvard agree
- 18 with that?
- 19 MR. WAXMAN: I don't -- I -- Harvard
- does not currently, based on its data, expect
- 21 that in 2028 it will have achieved -- been able
- 22 to use a -- only race-neutral alternatives.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So --
- MR. WAXMAN: But what this --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So --

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1
               MR. WAXMAN: -- but what I do agree
 2
     with --
 3
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- what -- what are
      -- what are Harvard's --
 4
               MR. WAXMAN: -- if I -- if I may --
 5
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: I'm just -- I'm just
 6
 7
      -- just -- it's a real simple question. If
     Harvard doesn't have an answer, that's fine, but
8
     does Harvard have some view about when?
 9
10
               MR. WAXMAN: Harvard -- yes, Harvard's
11
     view about when doesn't have a date on it.
12
     Harvard takes to heart Justice O'Connor's
      opinion that "in the context of higher
13
14
      education, the durational requirement can be met
15
     by periodic reviews to determine whether racial
16
     preferences are still necessary" --
17
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
18
               MR. WAXMAN: -- "to achieve student
19
     body diversity."
20
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
21
               MR. WAXMAN: And we want to be put to
22
     that strict scrutiny test.
23
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
24
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
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25

Kavanaugh?

1	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I do have two or
2	three questions.
3	First, you're seeking educational
4	diversity, as I understand it, at Harvard, but
5	my understanding, correct me if I'm wrong, is
6	that you don't ask about religion.
7	And why the disparate treatment of
8	religion and race when when evangelical
9	Christians, Catholics, Muslims add to the
10	educational diversity at Harvard and other
11	religious groups add to the diversity and why
12	why not ask about that?
13	MR. WAXMAN: So Harvard greatly values
14	religious diversity. It is extraordinarily
15	proud of the religious diversity
16	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: How can it track
17	it if it doesn't ask about it?
18	MR. WAXMAN: Oh, how can it track it?
19	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: How can it track
20	it in the admissions process? It may happen by
21	happenstance. I'll let you finish.
22	MR. WAXMAN: Okay. Harvard is not
23	tracking it in the admissions process other than
24	to the extent that many, many students indicate
25	what their religion is. Harvard Harvard has

- 1 not provided, thought it necessary, and so far
- 2 as I know, nobody has suggested that Harvard has
- 3 any need to provide a tip for religious
- 4 diversity because the Harvard undergraduate
- 5 population is so religiously diverse.
- 6 There are currently 47 --
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That answers my --
- 8 MR. WAXMAN: -- chaplains --
- 9 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- that answers my
- 10 question.
- MR. WAXMAN: Yeah.
- 12 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I understand.
- 13 Okay.
- MR. WAXMAN: I just -- I just want to
- 15 say that our ministry minister -- ministers to
- 16 27 different religious denominations.
- 17 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: All right. It was
- 18 a factual question.
- 19 Second, I think you agree that the
- 20 baseline in our precedents, operating within the
- 21 confines of our precedents, as you want us to
- do, is race neutrality. And we've allowed,
- though, limited consideration of race in
- 24 educational -- in higher educational admissions.
- 25 As you've heard, two limits on that, as I

- 1 understand it, one, the adequate race-neutral
- 2 alternatives; two, the durational limits, the 25
- 3 years or whatever durational limit you think
- 4 works there.
- I just want to make -- make sure you
- 6 agree with how I set that up. In other words,
- 7 race neutrality is the baseline. There are two
- 8 limits on the consideration of race-conscious
- 9 educational admissions at colleges and
- 10 universities. Adequate race-neutral
- 11 alternatives would be one. A durational limit,
- 12 25 or something else, would be the other. Is
- that how you read our precedents or not?
- MR. WAXMAN: I read your precedent in
- 15 that -- I think you have other requirements too,
- 16 which is it has to be flexible, it has to be one
- 17 factor among many, you know, et cetera, et
- 18 cetera.
- 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Right.
- 20 MR. WAXMAN: But, with -- the only --
- I agree with your two categorizations, except
- that with respect to the durational requirement,
- 23 we understand it to be the -- the --
- 24 consistent with the language from Justice
- 0'Connor's opinion that I quoted the Court --

1	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: OKay.
2	MR. WAXMAN: which is that the
3	narrow tailoring requirement and the
4	race-neutral alternative requirement, strictly,
5	scrupulously, and skeptically applied, will tell
6	us when race-neutral alternative
7	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay. And one
8	last one. This picks up on Justice Kagan's and
9	Justice Gorsuch's questions, I believe.
LO	But, on the adequate race-neutral
L1	alternatives question, it seems that Harvard
L2	would have to sacrifice potentially something
L3	else to achieve what you think would be
L4	meaningful, sufficient racial diversity. And I
L5	think the questions, Justice Gorsuch, were,
L6	well, why don't you have to then sacrifice those
L7	something elses to achieve the if you're
L8	going to otherwise use race-conscious means?
L9	MR. WAXMAN: There's no question
20	that our
21	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: In other words, I
22	think that's a legal question we're going to
23	have to ultimately figure out. Does a
24	university have to sacrifice those other things
5	or not?

1 MR. WAXMAN: And so what this Court's 2 precedents say, you know, Bakke, Grutter, and 3 Fisher, are, of course, race -- you know, there are race-neutral alternatives that may require 4 some sacrifices. A university is not required 5 6 to sacrifice, you know, so much that it changes 7 the essential character. I -- I -- I wish I had the -- this Court's own words, but I think 8 9 that's the test. And that was certainly the test the district court applied. 10 11 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That -- that 12 suffices and you answered it. Thank you. 13 MR. WAXMAN: Thank you. 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 15 Barrett? JUSTICE BARRETT: Mr. Waxman, this is 16 17 not a question about Harvard's history of anti-Semitism, but I do want to go back to the 18 opinion in Bakke and Justice Powell's holding up 19 20 Harvard's application process as a model and 21 then Justice O'Connor in Grutter again referred 2.2 back to Harvard's admissions process. 23 And I want to know whether Harvard's 24 admissions process has meaningfully changed from 25 the time that Justice Powell held it up? I

- 1 mean, what Justice Powell found attractive about
- it, what Justice O'Connor endorsed, was the
- 3 holistic aspect of it and that race can be used
- 4 as a tip. In its essence, is it the same?
- 5 MR. WAXMAN: Yes, race can be used as
- 6 a tip, as one of many, many, many tips in an
- 7 effort to achieve diversity that is across many,
- 8 many dimensions beyond ethnicity.
- 9 JUSTICE BARRETT: And so in the way
- 10 Harvard thinks about its admissions process, it
- is the same now as it was in Bakke?
- 12 MR. WAXMAN: Yes. Harvard is -- can I
- just give a one sentence --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Yeah. Sure.
- MR. WAXMAN: -- explication of that?
- 16 What the Harvard admissions committee
- is attempting to do, with the benefit -- the
- 18 luxury of a pool of applicants that is supremely
- 19 qualified, is to bring together a class of 1600
- 20 matriculants who are best in the judgment of the
- 21 admissions committee and the faculty that
- 22 oversees it, are best able to learn from and
- teach each other as an organic whole.
- 24 JUSTICE BARRETT: So my question is:
- We've been talking a lot about end point. And

1 my question is: So Bakke was, you know, almost 2 50 years ago now. If Harvard's admissions process is essentially the same in the way that 3 it accounts for race and thinking about end 4 points, and I -- I recognize and you described 5 6 some other things that Harvard is doing to try 7 to recruit more minority applicants, but why are we to think that there will be an end point? 8 9 And Grutter is pretty insistent. I 10 mean, Grutter says, the requirement that all 11 race-conscious admissions programs have a 12 termination point, so there has to be one, and 13 if it really hasn't changed much since Bakke --14 MR. WAXMAN: So the system that is 15 we're taking race into account as one factor 16 among many, obviously the extent to which race 17 is race qua race is a factor, is dependent on the extent to which so-called race-neutral 18 19 alternatives have already helped Harvard to matriculate a class that is diverse along this 20 21 dimension and others. 2.2 And Harvard does track its progress in 23 this regard and accommodate the admissions 24 process. For example, in terms of where we are,

when will we get there, you know, the -- the

- 1 record contains, you know, any number of a
- 2 faculty committee study, a working group, a task
- force, all of which made reports about this, but
- 4 it also annually does a comprehensive survey of
- 5 its graduating seniors and asks them questions
- 6 that go to this.
- 7 And the -- the survey in the record on
- 8 the benefits side to -- I think to Harvard's
- 9 great satisfaction showed that two-thirds of all
- 10 of the seniors said that their Harvard
- 11 experience strengthened their ability to relate
- 12 to people of different races, nations and
- religions and 70 percent said that Harvard's
- experience had led them to seriously question or
- 15 rethink their beliefs about a race or ethnic
- 16 group different than their own.
- 17 JUSTICE BARRETT: But that's showing
- the educational benefits of diversity, right?
- 19 MR. WAXMAN: And it shows that -- it
- 20 shows that in terms of are we there yet, you
- know, we're not going to achieve 100 percent.
- 22 Honestly, 70 percent is pretty darn good.
- 23 And it would not have been -- at the
- 24 time that Harvard wrote its brief in the Bakke
- 25 case and at the time Grutter was decided, those

1 were not the statistics. 2 JUSTICE BARRETT: So you think you're 3 getting closer to a termination point? 4 MR. WAXMAN: I -- we are very 5 definitely getting closer to a termination point, both in terms of engineering race-neutral 6 7 alternatives but also achieving a class that is diverse across religious viewpoint, racial, 8 9 ethnic, you know, academic, political -- you 10 know, yes, we are -- we -- we are proud of the 11 progress we made. 12 As Dean Smith said, we still have work 13 to do, including with respect to the way in which we treat students and allow students to 14 15 interact with each other once they get here. 16 JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay, thank you. 17 MR. WAXMAN: Thank you. 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, 19 counsel. MR. WAXMAN: Thank you. 20 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: General Prelogar. Welcome back. 22 23 ORAL ARGUMENT OF GEN. ELIZABETH B. PRELOGAR 24 FOR THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,

SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENT

1	GENERAL PRELOGAR: Thank you Mr. Chief
2	Justice and may it please the Court:
3	The Court has heard hours of argument
4	on the constitutional issues in this case and so
5	I would like to take a step back and focus on
6	the profound consequences of the Court's
7	decision here for the nation that we are and the
8	nation that we aspire to be.
9	Petitioner seeks a sweeping ruling
10	that would harm students at schools and colleges
11	throughout the nation. A blanket ban on
12	race-conscious admissions would cause racial
13	diversity to plummet at many of our nation's
14	leading educational institutions.
15	Race-neutral alternatives right now
16	can't make up the difference, so all students at
17	those schools would be denied the benefits of
18	learning in a diverse educational environment
19	and because college is the training ground for
20	America's future leaders, the negative
21	consequences would have reverberations
22	throughout just about every important
23	institution in America.
24	For the United States military, as
25	I've explained having a diverse officer core is

- 1 a critical national security imperative. For
- 2 corporate America, diversity is essential to
- 3 business solutions. For the medical community
- 4 and scientific researchers, diversity is an
- 5 essential element of innovation and delivering
- 6 better health outcomes.
- 7 Overruling Grutter would have
- 8 devastating effects on our nation's efforts to
- 9 move ever closer to a more perfect union where
- 10 our nation's diversity is a source of its
- 11 greatest strength. And I think the Court should
- 12 not take the destabilizing step of overruling
- 13 precedent here.
- Justice Gorsuch, you asked a series of
- 15 questions about race-neutral alternatives and I
- 16 want to offer the position of the United States.
- 17 I think Justice Barrett, you also asked these
- 18 questions about things like legacy, donors,
- 19 children of faculty and staff.
- 20 And I want to be very clear on behalf
- of the United States that if it could be shown
- that eliminating those kinds of preferences
- 23 would actually enable a university to meet its
- 24 -- its diversity goals and to be able to offer
- 25 the educational benefits of a diverse student

- 1 body, then, yes, we think absolutely that can
- 2 function as a race-neutral alternative. And
- 3 it's incumbent on universities to consider those
- 4 kinds of options as they chart a path forward.
- 5 And so I think to -- to the extent the
- 6 Court has any concerns about that, or thinks
- 7 that the lower court in this case did not apply
- 8 that kind of standard, that would be wrong
- 9 because the Court has made clear that strict
- 10 scrutiny in this context is strict and that
- 11 universities have to undertake continual
- 12 obligations to search for those types of
- 13 alternatives in order to be able to achieve
- 14 diverse student enrollment without taking race
- 15 into account.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Grutter was about
- 17 college admissions, but in your opening
- 18 statement, it seemed to me you want to extend it
- 19 to employment.
- Is that right?
- 21 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, Justice Alito,
- I was trying to make the observation that the
- 23 experience of students in those four years of
- 24 college have effects on the course of their
- 25 life.

1	JUSTICE ALITO: Then why were you
2	talking about corporate America?
3	GENERAL PRELOGAR: Because corporate
4	America, like the United States military, relies
5	on having a diverse pipeline of individuals who
6	had the experience of learning in a diverse
7	educational environment and who themselves
8	reflect the diversity of the American
9	population.
10	We're not asking the Court to extend
11	Grutter in any way here. We're only asking the
12	Court to reject Petitioner's request for the
13	Court to overrule that precedent because I think
14	it would have these destabilizing ramifications
15	in just about every important industry in
16	America.
17	JUSTICE BARRETT: General, if we were
18	talking about the 25-year mark, so let's imagine
19	we fast forward and it's, you know, five years
20	from now and we're considering whether to
21	same question, would it be overruling Grutter at
22	that point to say this is the end point, we're
23	at 25 years, no more race-consciousness in
24	admissions?
25	GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think it would if

- 1 this Court based that decision on the nature of
- 2 the compelling interest here. I just don't
- 3 think it's a tenable way to read Grutter to say
- 4 that the Court was suggesting that 25 years from
- 5 now, poof, the interest in diversity and higher
- 6 education is no longer compelling.
- 7 That is and will remain a compelling
- 8 interest. And Grutter observed that over time,
- 9 it would be possible for schools and
- 10 universities to achieve that interest without
- 11 having to take race into account.
- 12 And I understand the concerns, Justice
- 13 Barrett, that you've raised, Justice Kavanaugh,
- that you've raised about the fact that the arc
- of progress in society has perhaps been slower
- 16 than the Grutter court imagined.
- 17 I think if this Court has those
- 18 concerns, it could emphasize that the narrow
- 19 tailoring requirement remains very strict in
- 20 this case. Universities should be held to a
- 21 high standard and a heavy burden to explore
- 22 those alternatives, to put into practice the
- 23 race-neutral alternatives that currently exist
- and to try to get to the point that the Grutter
- 25 court imagined and that we will eventually reach

- 1 as a nation where it is no longer necessary to
- 2 take race into account.
- 3 JUSTICE BARRETT: But what if the
- 4 structural barriers -- I mean, medial -- there's
- 5 not a remedial justification on the table here.
- 6 Our precedents rule that out.
- What if the structural barriers just
- 8 make it impossible 25 years from now to sit here
- 9 and say that without race-conscious admissions,
- 10 you know, especially if Harvard wants to keep
- 11 everything exactly the same with respect to
- 12 other metrics like SAT scores not dropping at
- 13 all and -- and the museum and the squash team
- and all of that stuff, what if it's just
- 15 impossible?
- And so what if Grutter was grossly
- 17 optimistic in what it thought was achievable and
- 18 perhaps, you know, Grutter as we've talked about
- 19 earlier in the argument, emphasized the risky
- 20 and potentially poisonous nature of race
- 21 classifications, what if there's no end point?
- I mean, could we still say that
- 23 there's a compelling interest in the educational
- 24 benefit of a diverse classroom if it comes at
- 25 the cost of something Grutter itself recognized

1 was very dangerous and corrosive to society? 2 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I do think that, yes, the compelling interest would still exist 3 there. I recognize the force of the point that 4 there are structural barriers that can impede 5 6 progress, but I think it would be wrong to 7 suggest that those barriers are going to exist in perpetuity in all places and with respect to 8 all schools. 9 10 The states are not similarly situated 11 in this regard. There are nine states, as 12 Petitioner has emphasized, that have barred the 13 use of race in college admissions, and many of the universities and colleges in those states 14 15 have been able still to achieve enrollment of 16 diverse student bodies. 17 And I think that it's incumbent on -on every college and university around the 18 19 nation to study from and learn from those 20 examples, and it's not accurate to say that if we look forward into the future in 25 years, 21 2.2 still, all places throughout the nation, it will 23 be necessary to have race-conscious admissions. 24 But I do want to be responsive as well 25 to the point that -- that you made about

- 1 resisting any changes whatsoever and be clear,
- 2 again, on behalf of the United States that we do
- 3 not think that a university could reject a
- 4 race-neutral alternative because it would have
- 5 those kinds of modest impacts on things like SAT
- 6 scores.
- 7 I think that that can clearly be the
- 8 kind of thing that would qualify as a viable or
- 9 workable race-neutral alternative. And if the
- 10 Court has any concerns that lower courts are not
- 11 applying that stringent standard, then I would
- 12 urge the Court to make that clear in a decision
- 13 and -- and provide guidance going forward.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I think that's
- very important, what you just said. So you're
- 16 saying an adequate race-neutral alternative, it
- would be permissible for the Court to say that
- 18 you have to eliminate things like legacy,
- 19 children of donors, if you could obtain a
- 20 sufficient -- meet its diversity goals, was your
- 21 word, by doing so and doing race-neutral
- 22 admissions. Do I have that correct?
- 23 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, that's exactly
- 24 right, Justice Kavanaugh. And I think that
- 25 flows directly from this Court's emphasis --

1	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But I'm sorry, at
2	what point does that become dramatic? Harvard
3	won't be Harvard if it drops from 2200 to 500.
4	GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, and I was
5	speaking
6	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And and or
7	there is a point at which a change is
8	significant or insignificant.
9	GENERAL PRELOGAR: I agree, Justice
10	Sotomayor. And I think that the the lines
11	that the Court has drawn in this context
12	context flow from Grutter itself, where the
13	Court made clear that a university doesn't have
14	to sacrifice its reputation for academic
15	excellence. In other words, it doesn't have to
16	accept those kinds of dramatic changes to the
17	academic quality of the incoming student class.
18	I was speaking to
19	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, your
20	adversary in simulation D says the change was
21	only from it was less than a 40-point change
22	And so he says that's insignificant.
23	Why do you think his point is not
24	valid?
25	GENERAL PRELOGAR: With respect to

- 1 simulation D, in particular, it wasn't just
- 2 changes to SAT scores. I think the most
- 3 substantial reason that the district court
- 4 rejected that as a workable alternative here is
- 5 because it would have had a precipitous decline
- 6 in the number of African American students.
- 7 They would fall by about 30 percent in the
- 8 enrollment of the class. And that was coupled
- 9 with the impact on reductions in the number of
- 10 students who had the highest academic and
- 11 extracurricular ratings who could then be
- 12 admitted in the class. But I don't --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So you are
- sacrificing the essence of Harvard, academic
- 15 excellence?
- 16 GENERAL PRELOGAR: That was what the
- 17 district court found with respect to simulation
- 18 D. But, you know, I guess I would say I think
- 19 that that was a factual finding in this case.
- 20 The First Circuit affirmed it. But as Mr.
- 21 Waxman said, if you do not think the district
- 22 court applied the right stringent standard in
- 23 evaluating that as a race-neutral alternative,
- then that is a basis to send this case back,
- 25 because we agree that strict scrutiny is strict

- 1 in this context.
- 2 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: The other side
- 3 points to the examples, as you've heard
- 4 throughout, of California and Washington,
- 5 Michigan and Florida and other states, and says,
- 6 well, if they just put their effort to it, they
- 7 will be able to use race-neutral alternatives
- 8 and still be able to achieve its diversity
- 9 goals -- I'm going to bracket the fact that "its
- 10 diversity goals" is still pretty vague, but we
- 11 talked about that in the last case -- but would
- 12 still be able to do so.
- Do you want to respond to that?
- 14 GENERAL PRELOGAR: So as I was saying
- to Justice Barrett, I do think it's the case
- that there are some states and certainly some
- 17 institutions today that can fully achieve a
- 18 diverse student body without needing to take
- 19 race into account.
- 20 With respect to California and
- 21 Michigan, in particular, since your question
- 22 referred to them, I would point the Court to the
- amicus brief filed by those university systems
- in those states, which have explained that
- 25 actually they have struggled, despite

- 1 implementing any number of race-neutral
- 2 alternatives, to actually see true diversity
- 3 across all of their campuses, including their
- 4 most selective campuses.
- 5 And University of California, in
- 6 particular, points to Berkeley and UCLA as
- 7 places where there have been these dramatic
- 8 declines in diversity, racial diversity on
- 9 campus.
- 10 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I -- I guess this
- 11 will be repetitive, but you've said "true
- 12 diversity, " "meet its diversity goals." You
- 13 know, I'm not sure exactly what that means and
- 14 that's -- I'm going to have to figure that out,
- 15 I guess, but without any more precise guidance
- on what exactly "meet its diversity goals" means
- as to numbers, it's a little hard to assess, I
- 18 think.
- 19 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, let me try to
- 20 be more precise. I think that the relevant
- 21 compelling interest here comes directly from
- 22 Grutter, where the Court recognized that it is
- 23 student body diversity in all of its many
- 24 manifestations. The Court has made clear it's
- 25 not simple ethnic or racial diversity, and

- 1 that's what creates a lot of guardrails in this
- 2 area, in terms of no racial quotas, no automatic
- 3 awards of points, no separate set-asides or
- 4 separate admissions tracks.
- 5 The nature of the interest in not in
- 6 achieving a precise numerical threshold of
- 7 minority enrollment at a particular university.
- 8 Instead, the Court has defined this as the
- 9 educational goals that derive from having a
- 10 diverse student body along multiple dimensions.
- 11 And that is the -- the ultimate aim of these
- 12 policies.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So -- so a
- 14 university that -- that did use a numerical goal
- or did grant a -- a tip based on race alone
- 16 would be a problem?
- 17 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, I think if a
- 18 university used a numerical goal and that
- 19 functioned as an inflexible goal for the
- 20 university or functioned as a quota system,
- 21 that's plainly unconstitutional. This Court's
- 22 precedents don't countenance that.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: When we --
- 24 GENERAL PRELOGAR: With respect --
- 25 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- when we look at

that -- I'm sorry to interrupt. 1 2 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Okay. 3 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Go ahead and finish. GENERAL PRELOGAR: I just wanted also 4 to try to be responsive to your point about 5 6 using race as a -- as a tip or a preference. 7 And to be clear, that there as well, the Court made clear that that can't be mechanical 8 9 application, so you can't preference every 10 single person automatically or inflexibly. 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. And on -- but 12 -- but what do we -- what is a court, a lower 13 court, all right, faced with, you know, 14 diversity and very hard standards to apply, 15 supposed to do when a university's admissions 16 data with respect to race looks more or less 17 identical every single year? 18 GENERAL PRELOGAR: So I think at that 19 point, the district court needs to probe whether 20 impermissible racial balancing is happening. 21 The Court has made clear that that is not 2.2 appropriate, that the relevant compelling 23 interest here is not in trying to achieve a 24 precise percentage of particular racial or 25 ethnic groups in the class year over year. And

- 1 so if that kind of evidence existed, then I
- 2 think it would be incumbent on the university to
- 3 -- to establish that it is not actually engaging
- 4 in racial balancing.
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I think in this
- 7 case, wasn't it clear there were variations
- 8 among the groups?
- 9 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, that's exactly
- 10 right, Justice Sotomayor. And what the district
- 11 court said with respect to the Harvard facts is
- 12 that there were greater fluctuations with
- respect to the number of students in each group
- who were admitted year over year than there were
- 15 fluctuations in the applicant pool of
- 16 individuals of those particular races.
- 17 And so the -- the district court said
- 18 that runs completely contrary to a theory of
- 19 racial balancing in this case.
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Now going back to
- 21 the earlier argument, Petitioner's counsel in
- 22 rebuttal raised Berkeley's figures. And -- I
- don't remember it exactly, but it was like a
- 24 third white, a third Hispanic, a third this. He
- 25 -- at the end, he mentioned a black population

- 1 that seemed tiny.
- 2 But how do you deal with answering
- 3 Justice Kavanaugh's question of what constitutes
- 4 adequacy?
- 5 GENERAL PRELOGAR: So I --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because he seemed
- 7 to imply, your opponent, opposing counsel, that
- 8 -- that Berkeley was already diverse. It had
- 9 numbers that were close to the population.
- 10 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, Justice
- 11 Sotomayor, I would point to the brief filed by
- 12 the University of California system in this
- 13 case. And they have explained in detail how
- 14 Berkeley has -- has experienced a substantial
- 15 decline in the African American student
- 16 population. I think it's gone down to
- 3 percent. And they further have explained the
- toll that's taken on their ability to offer the
- 19 educational benefits of diversity, as well as
- 20 the glaring sense of racial isolation that those
- 21 students have on the Berkeley campus.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 23 General.
- 24 Justice Thomas?
- 25 Justice Alito?

1	Justice Kagan?
2	JUSTICE KAGAN: General, one of the
3	through lines of the briefs in this case is I
4	think it's actually the first line of the
5	Petitioner's brief or something like it, is
6	is essentially Brown compels the overruling of
7	Grutter.
8	And the Petitioners actually haven't
9	given a whole lot of attention to that argument,
LO	but the idea is, and some of the questioning has
L1	reflected this this idea, is that, you know,
L2	we have this long and horrible history of racial
L3	discrimination, and surely that functions here
L4	to prevent racial classifications or to prevent
L5	race-consciousness of the kind that Harvard and
L6	UNC are using.
L7	And I just thought I would give you an
L8	opportunity to discuss what you think of that
L9	argument.
20	GENERAL PRELOGAR: I think that
21	argument is wrong in just about every respect.
22	There is a world of difference between the
23	situation this Court confronted in Brown, the
24	separate but equal doctrine that was designed to
2.5	exclude African Americans based on notions of

- 1 racial inferiority and subjugate them, which, as
- 2 this Court recognized, the school children
- 3 affected their hearts and minds in a way
- 4 unlikely ever to be undone, a world of
- 5 difference between that and the university
- 6 policies at issue in this case, which are not
- 7 intended to exclude anyone on the basis of race
- 8 or -- or even to benefit particular racial
- 9 groups on the basis of race but, rather, are
- 10 designed to bring individuals of all races
- 11 together so that they can all learn together and
- 12 benefit from that diverse educational
- 13 environment.
- 14 And I think it is profoundly
- ahistorical to say, as Petitioners do, that
- 16 those situations are precisely equivalent and it
- 17 also trivializes the grievous moral and legal
- wrongs of state-sponsored segregation and the
- 19 enormous harms that millions of Americans
- 20 suffered under it.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 22 Gorsuch?
- 23 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Just to return to
- Justice Sotomayor's question to you, you
- indicated, I believe, that -- that percentages

- 1 varied dramatically over the years. I must be
- 2 missing something.
- 3 On page 23 of the Petitioner's brief
- 4 they have the statistics from Harvard from 2006
- 5 through 2018, and the share of Asian American
- 6 students varied between three -- 17 and
- 7 20 percent every year, 17 percent actually being
- 8 the outlier. Am I missing something?
- 9 GENERAL PRELOGAR: No, Justice
- 10 Gorsuch. I think that the point I was trying to
- 11 make is that that band is actually a greater
- 12 amount of fluctuation than was present in the
- applicant pool with respect to the number of
- 14 Asian Americans who were applying to Harvard
- 15 every year.
- But let me just say this --
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Is the same thing
- 18 true with Hispanics and African Americans,
- 19 because the numbers are pretty similar --
- 20 similarly banded for those?
- 21 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes, that's my
- 22 understanding, that the district court's factual
- 23 finding in this regard is that there was
- 24 relative stability with respect to the number of
- individuals in those groups who were applying

- 1 and greater fluctuation with respect to
- 2 admissions decisions.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: No, these -- these
- 4 are -- these -- these are admitted students I am
- 5 talking about here.
- 6 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Yes. And the
- 7 district court was drawing a comparison between
- 8 the -- the -- the bands that you were just
- 9 describing and the bands that exist.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: The point is
- 11 whatever the pool is, every year the percentage
- is the same. And the U.S. government below said
- this manifest steadiness speaks for itself.
- 14 Am I missing something?
- 15 GENERAL PRELOGAR: Well, let me just
- 16 say that the district court made a factual
- 17 finding of no racial balancing. But if you
- 18 think the district court was wrong about that
- 19 and this is clearly erroneous, then that is
- 20 clearly impermissible and -- and the Court
- 21 should send it back.
- 22 That would provide a basis to reverse
- on clear error and we are not here to suggest
- that racial balancing is okay under this Court's
- 25 precedent. Grutter doesn't countenance it and

- 1 the Court could make that clear.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 4 Kavanaugh?
- 5 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I appreciate your
- 6 statement about Brown. I want to ask a
- 7 question. Justice Thomas's opinion in Grutter
- 8 said: "I agree with the Court's holding that
- 9 racial discrimination in higher education
- 10 admissions will be illegal in 25 years."
- 11 And taking that statement it would
- 12 seem that extending it beyond 25 years would
- 13 itself be overruling Grutter. And I just want
- 14 you to have a chance to respond.
- 15 Is that an -- not an accurate
- 16 characterization of the Court's holding in your
- 17 view or -- or what is your response to that
- 18 description of what the Court did? A variation
- on questions you've had before but I wanted to
- 20 give you an opportunity to address that in
- 21 particular.
- 22 GENERAL PRELOGAR: I do think that
- 23 that is not how the Court itself understood the
- 24 language. The Court made clear in the four
- 25 paragraphs that we have been discussing that the

- 1 Court expected that universities would no longer
- 2 be able to justify race-conscious admissions
- 3 policies over time, but that was because the
- 4 Court expected that, due to the rate of change
- 5 in society, they would be able to achieve the
- 6 benefits of student body diversity without
- 7 taking race into account.
- And so I don't think that it's tenable
- 9 to read the majority opinion in that case as
- 10 having determined that there was a -- a 25-year
- 11 clock that would be inflexible. Instead it was
- 12 an expectation about how -- what changes we
- 13 would see in society.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 16 Barrett?
- 17 Thank you, General.
- 18 Rebuttal, Mr. Norris?
- 19 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF CAMERON T. NORRIS
- 20 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- 21 MR. NORRIS: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 22 Justice. Just a few points.
- First, I think what's lost in the
- 24 United States argument and Harvard's argument
- 25 and in Grutter itself is that racial

- 1 classifications themselves have harms. They
- 2 stigmatize their intended beneficiaries, they
- 3 increase racial consciousness, which delays the
- 4 day in which we can move to true racial
- 5 neutrality.
- And they cause resentment by treating
- 7 people differently based on something they can't
- 8 change that's cosmetic and it's irrelevant to
- 9 their ability to get educational opportunities.
- 10 The Court said that in Adarand. It
- 11 said it in Shaw. It said it in Croson. Harvard
- doesn't challenge any of those precedents.
- 13 Secondly, race-neutral alternatives.
- 14 There were a few pleas for remand that I heard
- from my friends, but it's hard to take those
- 16 seriously when Harvard thumbed its nose at
- 17 Grutter for 14 years to not consider
- 18 race-neutral alternatives one time until three
- 19 years after we filed a lawsuit against it.
- 20 I understand Mr. Waxman to say he will
- 21 no longer defend his legacy preferences, but now
- 22 what -- what's at stake in terms of race-neutral
- alternatives are a decline, a slight decline in
- 24 profile ratings, which Mr. Waxman said are not
- 25 that important to the admissions process when he

- 1 talked about Asian Americans, a 3 percentage
- 2 point decline in people who want to major in the
- 3 humanities.
- 4 Students change majors like they
- 5 change socks. I mean, speaking from experience
- 6 there will be people who think that they're
- 7 going to major in the hard sciences and then
- 8 find themselves majoring in the humanities.
- 9 That's not the stuff of strict scrutiny.
- Then we have the 4 percentage point
- 11 decline in black admissions. Our expert
- 12 testified without contradiction that that is an
- 13 absolute floor, that Harvard could get that
- 14 number almost to parity if it considered wealth
- 15 instead of income.
- 16 And Harvard already sacrifices on all
- of these metrics in order to meet its racial
- 18 goals. It should do the same for racial
- 19 equality.
- This Court made schools close to
- 21 comply with Brown, as it should have. Harvard
- 22 should have to sacrifice for the same reasons.
- 23 Lastly, Harvard thankfully does say it
- is ashamed of its history of Jewish
- 25 discrimination. I hope some day it says the

- 1 same about how it's treating Asians. It is undisputed that Harvard -- there 2 is a statistically-significant relationship 3 between being Asian and getting a low personal 4 rating, which is supposed to measure things like 5 confidence, likability and kindness. 6 7 Harvard's witnesses consistently testified that Asians don't deserve lower 8 9 personal ratings in their experience. Harvard 10 didn't submit a model of the personal rating 11 itself, which means I think they probably did 12 study it and realized they couldn't get rid of 13 the disparity. 14 In the model, when you take the 15 personal rating out of an admissions model, it 16 shows a statistically-significant disparity 17 against Asian Americans in admissions decisions. 18 Now, the district court said I believe 19 Harvard that it doesn't discriminate, but we don't typically let people satisfy strict 20 21 scrutiny with just their testimony. Mr. Waxman
- 25 simply not true. That was not ever supported by

said it's attributable -- attributable to

unobservables in the model, but unobservables is

code for Asians really deserve it, and that's

2.2

23

_	any evidence in the record.
2	And we keep saying Asians. These are
3	not Asians. They're not from Asia. These are
4	people who are Americans. They were born in
5	Texas, California, Ohio, Tennessee. They should
6	not be the victims.
7	They were born in 2005, the people who
8	are applying to college now. They should not be
9	the victims of Harvard's racial experimentation.
10	Thank you.
11	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you to
12	all counsel in both cases. The case is
13	submitted.
14	(Whereupon, at 2:55 p.m., the case was
15	submitted.)
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