

March 3, 2017

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Higher Education for All Californians

Dear Senator Harris:

Having just seen my older brother go through the painful college admission application process of comparing his grades and scores against the profile of the students accepted last year, he is left with few choices where he believes he will have a chance of being accepted. This is due to perceived discrimination against Asian in college admissions. For example, “a 2009 study by the National Study of College Experience shows that an Asian applicant must score 140 points higher than White applicants, 320 points higher than Hispanic applicants, and 450 points higher than Black applicants on the SAT to be viewed in an equal light.” Why has the public and politicians turned a blind eye to the discrimination that Asian applicants face? Is it because we are the model minority? We keep our heads down, work hard, and do not complain? Well as an American, a Californian, and most importantly an Asian American. I think it is time that we broke the model minority stereotype and exercise our civil rights, our first Amendment right to speak up for ourselves.

Although your goals include championing education, I was surprised to discover that your plan does not include higher education, which is very important to me and my family. I hope that you will work to abolish discrimination in the college application process by fully funding the California Master Plan for Higher Education of 1960, which provides for the top one-eighth of graduating seniors would be guaranteed a place at a campus of the University of California tuition-free and the top one-third would be able to enter the University system. I hope you can work to change the college admissions requirements so that it favors Californians as the names of the college systems are University of California and California State University – not that they are in California, but that they are for all Californians.

California should realize that higher education is more than just a promise; it is the first steps to realize the dream of becoming the next innovator, the next senator, or the next educator to help make the world a better place. This means that we need the University of California to fulfill the promise that "anyone from anywhere in California could, if they worked hard enough, get a bachelor's degree from one of the best universities in the country."

While some may think that we need to help those that have been discriminated in the past, I would like to point out that Asian immigrants, who first came to build railways in the late 19th

century, were also mistreated and discriminated in California. These mistreatments are recent and not all that different from the mistreatment suffered by other groups.

I hope that you can correct the racial discrimination against Asians in the college application process.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Yang
Junior, Homestead High School