

CACAGNY Sues New York State Over Education Program

Today January 17, 2024, Pacific Legal Foundation and Legal Insurrection Foundation filed a [Federal lawsuit](#) against New York State on behalf of CACAGNY and 3 other plaintiffs. The lawsuit challenges the New York Science and Technology Entry Program ([STEP](#)) Act for racial discrimination against Asians.

The [New York Science and Technology Entry Program \(STEP\) Act](#) is a New York state law that awards grants to colleges and universities to fund STEM programs for middle and high school students. (There is a similar C-STEP to fund STEM programs for college students; that provision is also part of this lawsuit.)

To be eligible for STEP, students must be either (1) Black, Hispanic, American Indian, or Alaskan native, or (2) of other races, in which case they are required to qualify as low-income. In other words, Asian students must be low-income to apply, while Black, Hispanic, American Indian, or Alaskan native have no income restrictions.

Universities all over the state operate STEP programs for middle and high school students. New York City alone has 25 STEP universities (full list [here](#)), including such elite universities as Columbia, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and NYU. There are 14 more upstate, including Cornell.

STEP provides great opportunities for middle and high school kids interested in STEM. In addition to formally documented academic enrichment in STEM, students receive academic counseling, and could gain valuable contacts. Asian students, however, face the additional income hurdle to be eligible for STEP just because of their race.

Opposing discrimination against Chinese Americans in education is a core CACAGNY mission, and CACAGNY has a solid track record in such activism. From our Discovery Expansion lawsuit against New York City to our numerous *amicus briefs* in *SFFA v Harvard* and *Coalition for TJ v Fairfax County School Board*, CACAGNY has established a reputation as a high-impact civil rights fighter in education. Thus, it is only natural for CACAGNY to take on this lawsuit.

We thank Pacific Legal Foundation and Legal Insurrection Foundation for representing CACAGNY pro-bono. We believe this is an open-and-shut case of anti-Asian racial discrimination, and we will prevail.

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