



Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

Testimony for the
Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement
Sacred Heart University
February 11, 2022

Sacred Heart University opposes H.B. No. 5034: (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FROM CONSIDERING LEGACY PREFERENCES IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS.

I represent Sacred Heart University. This legislation, though well intentioned, allows the state of Connecticut to dictate the admission policies of private institutions of higher education. While we agree that more needs to be done to promote access and opportunity, this is not the answer.

The state would be more effective by investing in need-based aid to help all students achieve their desired educational goals. Sacred Heart's president, Dr. John Petillo, wrote in an op-ed that appeared in *The CT Mirror* on January 28, "Only 28% of eligible Connecticut students received a state need-based grant in fiscal year 2019—11,093 of 39,389 eligible students—and the estimated state grant per undergraduate enrollment, at \$253 per student, sadly trailed the national average of \$688. What's more, the percentage allocated to need-based aid in neighboring states was dramatically higher than here at home. New York invested 15%, New Jersey 23%, Vermont and Pennsylvania tied at 22% and Connecticut lagged significantly at 3%."

Private colleges and universities must be allowed to set their own standards and policies for admittance without government intervention. At Sacred Heart, we are proud that our school has become a tradition, both intergenerational and among siblings, for many alumni families. It must be said, however, legacy status is never the sole basis of acceptance into our institution.

In truth, if this bill passes, it threatens to have adverse effects on students who meet or exceed a school's admission standards but risk being rejected because their parents or siblings attended the same school, and admissions cannot appear to be in violation of the legacy law.

As a result, we respectfully request that the proposed legislation not be passed into law.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Barquinero".

James Barquinero
Sr. Vice President
Enrollment, Student Affairs & Athletics