BREAKING: The Supreme Court finds Harvard University and the University of North Carolina’s race-conscious admissions policies unconstitutional, turning back the clock on racial justice and making uncertain the future of multi-racial access to institutions of higher education.

Today, the United States Supreme Court continued its assault on years of settled precedent by prohibiting colleges and universities from considering race as one factor among many in the college admissions process. As Justice Sonia Sotomayor explains in her dissent, the Court’s ruling “cements a superficial rule of colorblindness as a constitutional principle in an endemically segregated society where race has always mattered and continues to matter.” The decision is just the latest in a series of longstanding efforts by conservative forces determined to preserve socioeconomic and racial hierarchies and stifle the pursuit of racial and social equity across all sectors of our society.

To be clear, the Court’s decisions in SFFA v. Harvard and SFFA v. UNC will lead to a dramatic decrease in the number of Black and Brown students who are admitted to colleges and graduate schools across the country, depriving those students of critical educational opportunities and diminishing the racial and ethnic diversity that the Court itself has recognized as essential for a robust multi-racial student body to flourish.

America’s long history of racist de jure and de facto restrictions on access to education for people of color, in combination with discriminatory policies around policing, housing, and access to public goods and services, have led to deep educational disadvantages for Black, Brown, Native American, Asian and other students of color. In its search for a “logical end point” to the consideration of race in the admissions process, the Court ignores the deeply rooted nature of white supremacy in this country and undercuts the important reparative steps taken by colleges and universities to combat the resulting structural inequalities, rendering the future of racial diversity in higher education—and the health of our society more generally—precarious at best.

By obscuring the primary purpose of race-conscious admissions policies—namely, to begin to redress the ongoing harm caused by this country’s shameful treatment of communities of color throughout its history—and suggesting that considerations of race are no longer appropriate, the Court engages in classic gaslighting. But make no mistake: oppression by any other name is still oppression. As Justice Jackson noted so powerfully in her dissent, “With let-them-eat-cake obliviousness, today, the majority pulls the ripcord and announces ‘colorblindness for all’ by legal fiat. But deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life.”

It is exactly because race continues to matter that the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law denounces this decision and will continue to advocate alongside communities of color in the fight for racial equity in education and beyond.