

UC unfairly admitted well-connected students

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Body

Sep 23, 2020(CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) ;;; Good morning, California. It's Wednesday, September 23. State audit slams UCStudents walk across the UC Berkeley campus on Sept. 6, 2019. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters The debate surrounding admissions to California's most prestigious university system just got a lot more heated.Four University of California campuses 'unfairly admitted' 64 applicants, including 22 'falsely designated' athletes, between the 2013-14 and 2018-19 school years based on their connections to wealthy donors and university staff, according to a scathing report released Tuesday by California's state auditor[1]. The news comes less than two months before voters will decide whether to overturn the state's affirmative action ban via Prop. 16[2], allowing public universities to consider race, gender or ethnicity in admissions decisions.

(It would also affect public hiring and contracting.) Most of the unfairly admitted applicants to UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC San Diego and UC Santa Barbara were white and at least half came from families with incomes of \$150,000 or more, CalMatters' Mikhail Zinshteyn reports[3]. The majority were admitted to UC Berkeley. Michele Siqueros, a Yes on Prop. 16 Ballot Measure Committee member[4]: 'This audit proves what we already know: There has always been preferential treatment for the wealthy and well-connected.'UC President Michael Drake[5]: 'I take the findings and recommendations very seriously and will do all I can to prevent inappropriate admissions at UC. Unethical means to gain admission, as rare as they may be, run contrary to our longstanding values of equity and fairness.' The report, which comes a year after a national college admissions scandal that ensnared UCLA and UC Berkeley[6], among dozens of other elite universities, reignites fierce debate[7] over how to make college admissions more equitable.Supporters of Prop. 16 say affirmative action would boost Black, Latino and Native American enrollment in the UC system, where all three groups are underrepresented. Critics say it would limit Asian American and white attendance. Prop. 16 appears to be facing an uphill battle. About 47% of likely voters said they would vote against it, compared to 31% for it and 22% undecided, according to a recent survey from the Public Policy Institute of California[8].Whether the audit's findings will make a difference remains to be seen._____The coronavirus bottom line:As of 9 p.m. Tuesday night, California had784,324 confirmed coronavirus casesand15,071 deathsfrom the virus, according toaCalMatters tracker[9].Also:CalMatters regularly updates this pandemic timeline tracking thestate's daily actions[10]. And we'retracking the state's coronavirus hospitalizations by county[11].From CalMatters' Ben Christopher[12]: Here's how Ted Cruz, the president's son and the National Republican Congressional Committee helped turn a bill that supporters said would tackle LGBTQ discrimination into a QAnon-tinged campaign issue in California races. Advertisement <https://byebyemattress.com/>Other stories you should know 1. Nail salons can reopen indoors statewide A Vista nail salon operates outside on Aug. 1, 2020. Photo by Simone Hogan via iStock Adding to California's encouraging coronavirus news[13], nail salons can now reopen indoors with modifications, 90% of test results are coming back

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in under 48 hours, and all Californians can access a test regardless of symptoms, the state's top health official said Tuesday. Meanwhile, nine counties moved to less restrictive reopening tiers, allowing them to reopen more businesses, CalMatters' Ana Ibarra reports[14]. No counties moved backward to more restrictive tiers — easing concerns that San Diego County would file a lawsuit against the state[15]. Twenty-five counties are now in the most restrictive purple tier, 19 in the red tier, 11 in the orange tier and 3 in the least restrictive yellow tier. 2. Newsom faces pushback over oil and gas permits Oil pumpjacks near the Cuyama Valley on Sept. 6, 2020. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters Amid Newsom's pledge to accelerate California's response to climate change[16], a national environmental organization on Monday threatened to sue the governor unless he stops issuing new permits for oil and gas wells, the Los Angeles Times reports[17]. The Center for Biological Diversity pointed out that Newsom's administration has issued nearly 50 new hydraulic fracking permits since April — despite the governor's 2019 pledge that he would ban permits for such projects until they were independently reviewed by scientists. The state maintains that the approved projects underwent independent environmental review. The potential lawsuit comes just days after a Palm Springs Desert Sun and ProPublica investigation[18] found that companies have profited to the tune of millions of dollars from inland oil spills threatening California workers, residents and ecosystems — despite the state declaring such spills illegal in 2019. Hollin Kretzmann, an attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity: 'it's completely obscene that oil companies can cause an oil spill and then profit off it.' State Oil and Gas Supervisor Uduak-Joe Ntuk: 'We are greatly reducing the problem. We continue to make progress, but more work is needed.' 3. Western Joshua tree gets temporary endangered species status Joshua Tree National Park. Image via iStock In an ironic turn of events, California on Tuesday granted the western Joshua tree temporary endangered species status due to the ravages of climate change — the same day it granted 15 solar energy farms permission to remove Joshua trees in the way of their projects, the Desert Sun reports[19]. The California Fish and Game Commission's vote marked the first time a species has been granted protections due to climate change under the state's Endangered Species Act. It also underscored the complex reality of addressing climate change: In order to help the state meet its goal of 100% renewable energy by 2045, officials approved green energy projects that can only be built by razing plants threatened by climate change. Next year, state officials will decide whether to formally list the western Joshua trees as an endangered species. If they do, wildlife managers would be required to form a recovery plan, which could limit development on private property across thousands of acres in southeastern California, according to the Los Angeles Times[20]. Advertisement <https://www.socalgas.com/vision> CalMatters commentary CalMatters columnist Dan Walters[21]: California's gig-worker bill is a lousy way to make law — pass a sweeping decree and then exempt a few favored interests. Ethnic studies should be high school requirement: It would empower students to work toward the American ideal of fair opportunity, argue Assemblymember Jose Medina, a Riverside Democrat, and Laura Gómez, a UCLA professor[22]. Newsom should sign police reform bill: It would significantly boost civilian oversight of sheriff departments, writes Raphael Sonenshein of CSU Los Angeles[23]. Other things worth your time California is now battling five of the six largest fires in state history. // Sacramento Bee[24] He fought wildfires while imprisoned. California reported him to ICE for deportation. // The Guardian[25] Los Angeles County's program to house homeless in hotels is ending after falling short of goal. // Los Angeles Times[26] Fewer students attending California community colleges, early fall numbers show. // EdSource[27] California Republican lawmaker said his party asked for state pay cuts. It didn't. // Sacramento Bee[28] California marijuana taxes won't go up for a year under bill signed by Newsom. // Sacramento Bee[29] Thirty-two percent jump in gunfire recorded in San Francisco in 2020. // San Francisco Chronicle[30] The Bay Area's small business closure crisis is already here. // Mercury News[31] See you tomorrow. Tips, insight or feedback? Email emily@calmatters.org [32]. Follow me on Twitter: [@emily_hoeven](https://twitter.com/emily_hoeven) [33] Subscribe to CalMatters newsletters [here](#) [34]. Follow CalMatters on Facebook [35] and Twitter [36]. CalMatters is now available in Spanish on Twitter [37], Facebook [38] and RSS [39]. [1]: <http://auditor.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2019-113.pdf> [2]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-16-affirmative-action/> [3]: <https://calmatters.org/education/2020/09/state-auditor-uc-admissions-process/> [4]: <https://calmatters.org/education/2020/09/state-auditor-uc-admissions-process/> [5]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-09-22/uc-fails-prevent-admissions-fraud-state-audit> [6]: <https://calmatters.org/education/2019/03/california-college-admissions-scandal-uc-legislature-sat-athletes/> [7]: <https://calmatters.org/education/2020/09/affirmative-action-uc-admissions/> [8]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/09/will-californians-amend-prop-13/> [9]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/03/california-coronavirus-by-the-numbers-cases-testing-masks-hospital-beds/> [10]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/gavin-newsom-coronavirus-updates-timeline/>

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emily@calmatters.org [33]:

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