

**Joint Committee on Higher Education Bill
Summary**

<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	S.950
<u>TITLE</u>	An Act to advance fairness, integrity, and excellence in higher education admissions
<u>SPONSORS</u>	Senator Payano
<u>SIMILAR MATTERS</u>	H.1425
<u>PRIOR HISTORY</u>	S.1819 and H.3760 of the 2023/2024 Legislative Session were given a favorable report with a redraft by the Joint Committee on Higher Education (see S.2687); S.2687 was sent to Senate Ways and Means; no further action.

SUMMARY

This bill requires four-year degree-granting institutions to report annual data on admissions practices, including the use of legacy preferences, donor-related admissions, and early decision policies. The bill prohibits institutions from considering legacy status or donor relationships in admissions, or in carrying out an early decision plan, unless they contribute a public service fee based on their endowment size, which would be allocated to a newly established Higher Education Opportunity Trust Fund to support public colleges and universities. It also mandates public disclosure of admissions data and enforces penalties for non-compliance.

SECTION-BY-SECTION

Section 1: Inserts Section 5B into Chapter 15A.

(a) Definitions.

(b) All higher education institutions shall submit to the Attorney General's Office (AGO) and the Department of Higher Education (DHE):

- Whether the institution preferred legacy or donor applicants, early decision, and/or early action applicants.
- Percentages of enrolled students by Pell grant recipients, federal loan recipients, legacy students, early decision students, early action students, and regular decisions students, disaggregated by racial subgroups.
- Number of legacy applicants, their admission rate, and percentages and enrollment rates among admitted students.
- Early decision application and admission rates.
- Public service fee amounts contributed to the Higher Education Opportunity Trust Fund.

(c) DHE and AGO shall make this information publicly available.

(d) Prohibits institutions from considering legacy status or donor relationships in applications or conducting early decision admission plans, unless they pay a public service fee.

(e) Institutions which violate subsection (d) must pay a public service fee based on their endowment rate per student (lays out a fee schedule), which will be deposited in the Higher Education Opportunity Trust Fund.

(f) The Attorney General shall establish rules and regulations to carry out this section and may regulate non-compliance penalties.

Section 2: Establishes the Higher Education Opportunity Trust Fund to support certificate and degree attainment at public community colleges and state universities. The fund shall be administered by EOE and DHE and managed by a board of seven trustees.

Section 3: This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.