Little Manila Rising provides education and leadership to revitalize Stockton’s Filipina/o American community and advocates for the historic preservation of the Little Manila Historic Site in Stockton. Created by two students who learned about Stockton’s Little Manila in their college ethnic studies classes, Little Manila Rising recognizes the importance and value of college access. Serving local Stockton high school students, the Little Manila After School Program (LMASP) is an Ethnic Studies program focused on Philippine & Filipino American history, culture, politics, art, community responsibility, and college access. Through this program, Little Manila Rising has seen the SAT and ACT act as a discriminatory barrier to college access for students from Stockton’s historically disenfranchised Filipina/o community. Little Manila Rising knows that all of Stockton’s Filipina/o youth have the potential to attend prestigious universities, realize their career goals, and represent the Filipino community. Little Manila Rising believes that eliminating the SAT and ACT will help Filipino/a students access higher education and gain tools to achieve personal success and deepen their understanding of their own history. We also choose to stand in solidarity and allyship with other marginalized communities who are affected by this discriminatory practice.

College Access Plan works to address the gap in college knowledge and matriculation among low-income and college-going students in Pasadena’s public schools. Working closely with counselors and teachers, CAP has developed a comprehensive program that works in partnership with schools to add meaningful and individualized college readiness support that is open to all students. CAP’s opt-in programs prioritize pivotal moments and student-driven relationships to embolden students of all ages to envision themselves with a college degree. Because access to education is a right, not a privilege, CAP never selects students based on limiting criteria like grades, test scores, and legal status.

In addition to its other programs, CAP provides free SAT and ACT test preparation courses to students who attend Pasadena’s public high schools. Because CAP knows that college entrance exams can be stressful for students, our curriculum addresses not only content and question design, but also students’ anxiety about these tests, using metacognitive tools that consider both what students know and what they feel.

Our mission is to help students to succeed in college. While we are proud that our test prep courses have helped students to increase their scores, sometimes dramatically, we know that
these courses are a stop-gap measure that will never erase the inequity posed by these tests for our own students and for students across our state. These tests impede access to higher education even though we know that they are correlated with student wealth, not a student’s ability to succeed. By joining this litigation, CAP seeks to remove a discriminatory obstacle that hinders students from realizing their college goals.

Community Coalition is a social justice organization based in South Los Angeles that helps students reach their full potential and become agents of change. Community Coalition prepares Black and Latinx students for college and success in the 21st century economy, institutions where they’ve historically been denied opportunity. Over the last 28 years, Community Coalition’s youth program – South Central Youth Empowered thru Action (SCYEA) – has trained high school students to push for reforms that disrupt the “school to prison pipeline,” including ones that help young people from South Central Los Angeles access higher education. Through this work, Community Coalition has repeatedly seen that the SAT and ACT impede that access—without providing any meaningful information to the admissions process—and prevent South Los Angeles youth from achieving their potential and realizing their dreams. These admissions tests are a discriminatory and unnecessary barrier to college education for students from South Los Angeles. Community Coalition seeks to remove this obstacle to the advancement of the next generation of young leaders, who are already fighting to transform social and economic conditions in South Los Angeles.

College Seekers is a nonprofit community-based organization whose mission is to improve access to higher education for underserved populations in California. College Seekers serves non-traditional learners, especially those who homeschool, use public independent study, or attend non-traditional schools. Our students include underrepresented minorities, students from lower-income families, and students from remote or underserved communities. We currently have over 2,500 members and we typically add 100-150 new members every month. A high percentage of our students have learning differences or disabilities or have suffered trauma or bullying in traditional high school environments. College Seekers helps create access to postsecondary options through social capital, awareness of college opportunities, and access to accurate information. As the group has grown, so has its ability to offer programming.
One barrier to college access that comes up consistently for our students is the lack of access to standardized testing. The removal of the current admissions testing requirements would significantly change the landscape for our students and open doors for the hundreds of thousands of California high school students who are non-traditional learners.

College Seekers parents have expressed distress, frustration, and concern when facing the ACT and SAT accommodations request process. This is one reason why some parents push their children toward the community college and transfer route; it allows them to avoid the SAT/ACT and the cost, frustration, and confusion of requesting accommodations. Even when they are approved for accommodations, our non-traditional students struggle to find test sites willing to accommodate them if their own schools are not approved test centers. This increased difficulty and expense reduces access to postsecondary opportunities for students with disabilities, particularly those from disadvantaged and underserved backgrounds.

Eliminating the standardized testing barrier to UC admissions will open doors for the students who have struggled to gain equal access to higher education.

Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) is a community-based civil rights organization in San Francisco, California. The mission of CAA is to defend the civil and political rights of Chinese Americans and to advance multiracial democracy. Programs at CAA currently encompass direct services, leadership development, and civic engagement programs that prioritize the needs and aspirations of its low-income, limited-English proficient, immigrant community members. For five decades, CAA efforts in education equity have featured direct work with English language learners and limited-English proficient parents to ensure that all families have equitable access to high-quality public K-12 education and public higher education.

CAA has identified the SAT and ACT as a major discriminatory barrier to college access for its constituents and for all students of diverse backgrounds, including those who are English language learners. In addition, CAA believes that the UC’s SAT and ACT requirement has harmfully skewed the priorities and resources of the families it serves and the schools they attend away from initiatives that would improve high quality and more equitable education opportunities.