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## **PLAINTIFFS EXPAND CLASS ACTION SUIT ALLEGING ILLEGAL ELITE UNIVERSITY CONSPIRACY TO REDUCE FINANCIAL AID**

CHICAGO -- February 15, 2022 -- The students and families who recently filed the antitrust class action lawsuit against 16 of the country's most elite, private universities—for price fixing and reducing financial aid to needy students for almost 20 years—have expanded their allegations in an amended complaint.

The amended complaint first adds Johns Hopkins University as a defendant. In 2021, Johns Hopkins joined the 568 Presidents Group, also known as the “568 Cartel.” The amended complaint alleges that, in joining the Cartel, Johns Hopkins adopted the use of a “Consensus Methodology” (CM) for determining financial aid, which is a central component of the alleged scheme that has artificially reduced the amounts of financial aid the universities awarded to their students. The students and families allege that the conspiracy among the 17 defendants effectively raised the net price of attendance, harming in the aggregate more than 200,000 students from working and middle-class families.

The amended complaint further alleges that all of the defendant universities using the CM—now including Johns Hopkins—failed to follow a need-blind admissions policy and therefore did not meet the terms of a narrow statutory antitrust exemption under Section 568 of the Higher Education Act. That exemption allows only those universities using “need-blind” admissions policies, as defined by the law, for all their students “to use common principles of analysis for determining the need of such students for financial aid.” The amended complaint thus alleges that because all 17 defendants systematically favored wealthy applicants in making admissions decisions, they were not entitled to the antitrust exemption for their conduct.

The amended complaint also presents data showing the enormous growth in the endowments of each of the 17 defendants since the 568 exemption was adopted in 1994, and how such growth has far outpaced the growth in the annual operating expenses for the defendants for which such data is available. These facts, the amended complaint contends, illustrate that the defendants easily had, and continue to have, the financial means to provide more generous financial aid awards to their students—in particular, for low- and middle-income families struggling to afford the cost of a university education and to achieve success for their children—if the defendants were not colluding.

### **Named Defendants**

The Defendants are Brown University, California Institute of Technology, University of Chicago, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Emory University, Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northwestern University, Notre Dame, University of Pennsylvania, Rice University, Vanderbilt University, and Yale University.

The law firms representing the plaintiffs are Roche Freedman, Gilbert Litigators & Counselors, Berger Montague and FeganScott. For a copy of the amended complaint and more information on the litigation, go to [568Cartel.com](http://568Cartel.com).

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