2023 has been a productive year for all of us at the Californians for Equal Rights Foundation (CFER). Our work in policy monitoring, voter education, rigorous research, local organizing, legal advocacy and coalition building has generated positive results and impact, facilitating the continued fight for equality and merit. We have compiled this annual report to highlight some of CFER’s most notable projects and initiatives in 2023.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It has been three years since CFER was established. In 2023, we have continued to fight in a convergence of arenas, challenging the invasion of radical ideologies in various local school districts, pushing back against critical race theory (CRT) and exposing harms of critical ethnic studies (CES). Our relentless efforts have been built upon a timely realization about the nature of the culture war, which led to changes to CFER’s website. On one hand, CFER carries on its regular operations in policy monitoring, voter education, rigorous research, legal advocacy, and media outreach to promote equal rights and oppose racial discrimination.

On the other hand, we focus on local organizing at the school district level as a strategic move for winning the culture war. CFER’s local organizing work is anchored around providing assistance to local parents and stakeholders so that they can build their own “Queen” organizations. With this in mind, we have put CFER’s strategic analysis into practice and helped Poway Unified parents establish PUSD Community Watch. Since its recent founding, this authentic local watchdog group consistently organized parents to advocate for student success, transparency, and parental rights, built trust in the community and acquired hundreds of email subscribers. At the same time, CFER has accumulated more real-time information about the school district and more valuable experience. CFER President Frank Xu gave a comprehensive summary of our strategy at our 2023 annual conference. We expect to expend more resources to help more parents and community members build their own groups in 2024.

This has also been a year of conflict, uncertainty and turbulence across the world. America is in the middle of rising divisions and polarization as a result of the omnipresent invasion of far-left ideologies. The Hamas-Israel War has provided a silver lining by exposing the dangers of ideologies such as CRT and CES and promoting a societal consensus to revive traditional American values. A crisis can turn into an opportunity for positive change, as we hope that more Americans will wake up and embrace equal rights. Changing people’s hearts and minds so that more stand up against racial discrimination, identity politics and preferential treatment has been CFER’s goal all along. We are fighting the good fight!

Looking forward, CFER will keep on keeping on in all our main areas of operations, raising public awareness on radical proposals threatening our culture and democracy, while facilitating local organizations’ work to promote the good values. As a statewide watchdog, we are also closely monitoring ACA-7, a legislative proposal that would effectively repeal Prop. 209. CFER is mostly funded by grassroots donations. This year, CFER board members have contributed over $60,000 to our operations, which costs about $250,000 annually to cover staffing, events, research, legal fees and administrative expenses. Will you consider donating $50 today to help us close CFER’s current deficit of $36,000?
POLICY MONITORING

Legislative Analysis & Digest
Every year, CFER monitors thousands of new bills proposed in the California Legislature. In 2023, we identified 45 new state bills in education, labor, government, health and safety. These new proposals perpetuate racial preferences, attack merit and double down on far-left ideologies. You can check out CFER’s 2023 legislative report here and a shorter legislative digest of 13 problematic bills here. CFER has been recognized by the California Legislature as the main organized opposition against AB359, AB447, AB672, AB731, AB735, AB789, AB1078, AB1701 and ACA7.

The California Math Framework

Through action alerts, research collaboration, and awareness building, we have carried on the important initiative to expose the anti-merit and anti-science nature of the 2023 California Mathematics Framework. While the State Board of Education adopted the problematic framework, CFER will continue to monitor the framework and focus on individual school districts’ adoption processes.

UC Ethnic Studies Proposal
We have collaborated with our partner groups in opposing liberated ethnic studies. As a result of the collaborative efforts, the UC BOARS voted 6 to 5 to stop a proposal that would have added UC-approved ethnic studies to its A-G undergraduate admissions requirements.
Public Employment

At the state level, CFER has opposed a racial equity plan by the California State Water Resources Control Board, which would introduce racial balancing in public employment at the agency. In the same light of advancing equality and merit, we issued a statement criticizing the Biden Administration’s nomination of Julie Su for the U.S. Labor Secretary. Su has not been confirmed for the position.

College Admissions

As a faithful partner to Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) and a consistent advocate for merit-based college admissions, CFER sent an open letter to the U.S. Department of and the U.S. Department of Justice, condemning the two agencies’ recent joint guidance on the Supreme Court ruling regarding college admissions. CFER has also provided assistance to parents and students who have been discriminated against in their college applications.

Public Safety & Law Enforcement

At the local level, CFER has provided analysis and action alerts regarding a dangerous, equity-centered city ordinance in San Diego named “Preventing Over policing Through Equitable Community Treatment (PrOTECT).” Due to the efforts of organizations including the San Diego Police Officers Association and CFER, the policy has not been approved as of November 2023.
2023 Annual Conference at the University of San Diego

On August 12th, 2023, CFER held its second annual conference “Fighting the Cultural War: Connecting Think Tanks with Local Stakeholders” at the University of San Diego. A convention of national experts, esteemed leaders and local stakeholders including parents, school board trustees and concerned citizens, our 2023 conference featured success stories and experiences in the fight against woke ideologies in our schools and communities.

With a theme to brainstorm, connect and change, CFER’s conference program this year featured a keynote speech from SFFA president Edward Blum (interviewed by Professor Maimom Schwarzschild of University of San Diego) and five speaker presentations. We also had two panel discussions from school board trustees and local grassroots leaders, respectively, and one roundtable discussion from seven resource groups.

Parents Defending Education President Nicole Neily, who presented on enemies of public education. Director of California Local Elected Officials at the California Policy Center Mari Barke shared strategies and experiences on leaving the teachers’ union. Pacific Legal Foundation Director of Equality and Opportunity Joshua Thompson discussed fighting against racial preferences through the court system. Transparent California Director of Research Todd Maddison presented on school finances and the importance of following the money in education advocacy. On behalf of CFER, Professor Gail Heriot opened the conference by introducing CFER’s work. CFER President Frank Xu gave a speech outlining our strategy analysis in exposing, confronting and challenging teachers’ unions at the local level. You can watch the recordings of our program here.

This successful annual event was facilitated by the generous support from our sponsors: IvyMax (Platinum), San Diego Asian Americans for Equality (Gold), Pacific Legal Foundation (Gold), Parents Defending Education (Gold), Silicon Valley Chinese Association Foundation (Silver), Heritage Action (Silver), California Policy Center (Silver) and TOC Foundation (Silver).
Proposition 209 vs. ACA 7

As one of the first organizations to identify a state proposal (ACA-7) seeking to circumvent Prop. 209, CFER has led an educational initiative regarding the development via premium OPEDs, position letters, media outreach, and action alerts. Our work is featured by the Wall Street Journal, the National Review, the Southern California News Group, the California Globe and more.

Testimony at the U.S. Civil Rights Commission

On March 24th, 2023, CFER Executive Director Dr. Wenyuan Wu testified at the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in a public briefing on “The Federal Response to Anti-Asian Racism in the United States.” In her testimony, Dr. Wu drew on official crime data and statistical evidence of discrimination to urge the Federal Government to guarantee equal treatment and equal protection as the fundamental civil rights guaranteed to all Americans, including Asian Americans.

Public Education State Policies

With California’ education establishment intensifying its attacks on dissent against woke indoctrination and ideological capture, CFER has stood strong in defense of local control and parental rights in K-12 education. Our news bulletins and action alerts have served to rally parents, community members, teachers and other stakeholders behind academic transparency, accountability, merit and excellence.
LOCAL ORGANIZING

On K-12 education, CFER has practiced the proven strategy of exposing, confronting and challenging teachers’ unions at the local level in order to defeat the other side in the culture war and defend education. We have provided resources and technical support to local queen organizations such as The Poway Unified School District (PUSD) Community Watch, one of several local watchdog organization CFER helped in 2023. We are also active in other local school districts.

CFER worked with local whistleblowers and exposed evidence of collusion, conflict of interest and fiscal wrongdoing in the Cajun Valley Union School District. Without citizen oversight, educrats, unions and self-interested parties can easily hide behind the bureaucracy and expend large sums of taxpayer funds for activities, services and ideologies that do not benefit or even harm our children.

CFER Executive Director Dr. Wenyuan Wu and CFER Advisor Dr. Joe Nalven were invited to speak at a special forum on critical race theory at the Temecula Valley Unified School District. In addition to providing expert testimony, CFER also helped the newly elected TVUSD board organize the event, which was consequently covered by Fox News.

We worked with teachers, parents and an independent board trustee in the Morgan Hill Unified School District to raise awareness about a new ethnic studies proposal. Specifically, we produced a detailed analysis of the proposed curriculum, in comparison to the state-approved model and other curriculums in other California school districts.
CFER supported the Sequoia Union High School District Students First, a grassroots coalition in its opposition to an equity-focused proposal that eliminated ten Honors and Advanced Standing classes. Our action alert and press release helped amplify the voices for education excellence, academic transparency and local education accountability.

Upon being alerted to equity workshops being organized for parents in the San Rafael City Schools, CFER urged the local community to take action. Our call to action included a comprehensive analysis of the workshops as well as a legal analysis. We pointed out that racially disparate training violates the state constitution and federal, state laws.
LEGAL ADVOCACY

Lawsuit Challenging Race-Based Welfare Programs in San Francisco

After issuing an intent to sue letter, CFER and individual San Francisco taxpayers, represented by the American Civil Rights Project, filed a lawsuit on four unconstitutional guaranteed-income programs. The challenge is against the City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Unified School District, the University of California San Francisco and the California Health and Human Services Agency.

SCOTUS Ruling on Race-Based Admissions

As a long-term partner to the Students for Fair Admissions, CFER has deepened our advocacy work for merit-based college admissions. Dr. Wenyuan Wu has contributed a number of commentaries on the topic, making a case against race-based education policies. Our work is featured by national platforms such as the National Review and the Washington Examiner.

Lawsuit Against Race-Preferential Contracting in Alameda

CFER’s 2022 lawsuit against Alameda County regarding two public contracting programs is currently in the appeal stage. While the trial court issued an unfavorable ruling, we will not give up fighting to uphold Prop. 209 and equal protection. Our legal counsel from the Pacific Legal Foundation has filed a reply brief and we will keep you updated.
ALLIANCE BUILDING

Prop. 209 and Equal Protection in California
CFER collaborated with its allies including the Equal Rights for All PAC, the San Diego Asian Americans for Equality, the Silicon Valley Chinese Association and the Bay Area Homeowner Network, to testify against ACA-7. We also submitted a joint position letter with the American Civil Rights Project.

A Coalition for Equal Rights
CFER led a broad-based coalition in a joint letter to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in response to the commission’s public briefing regarding “The Federal Response to Anti-Asian Racism in the United States.” We asked the Federal Government to anchor federal policy responses in the principle of equal protection under the law equal rights as the only civil rights protection that can alleviate discrimination and bigotry against Asian Americans.

Ethnic Studies in K-12 and Higher Education
CFER has continued to educate California parents and communities on the ideological hijacking of California's Ethnic Studies movement. We joined the Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies and the AMCHA Initiative in co-signing open statements against teaching critical ethnic studies in both K-12 schools and the University of California system. We will continue to educate parents, students and communities about the harms of liberated/critical ethnic studies.
MEDIA OUTREACH

In 2023, we have pressed on with our media outreach operations to promote CFER’s cause in the court of public opinions. CFER’s efforts advocating for equal rights and merit have been covered by prominent national and regional news outlets, including the Wall Street Journal, Fox News, the National Review, the Los Angeles Times, CalMatters and more. CFER staffers and advisors have also published nearly 100 commentaries and opinion pieces analyzing timely events pertaining to our cause. We will continue to produce premium press coverage.