# Reforming Test Standards to Expand Student Opportunities

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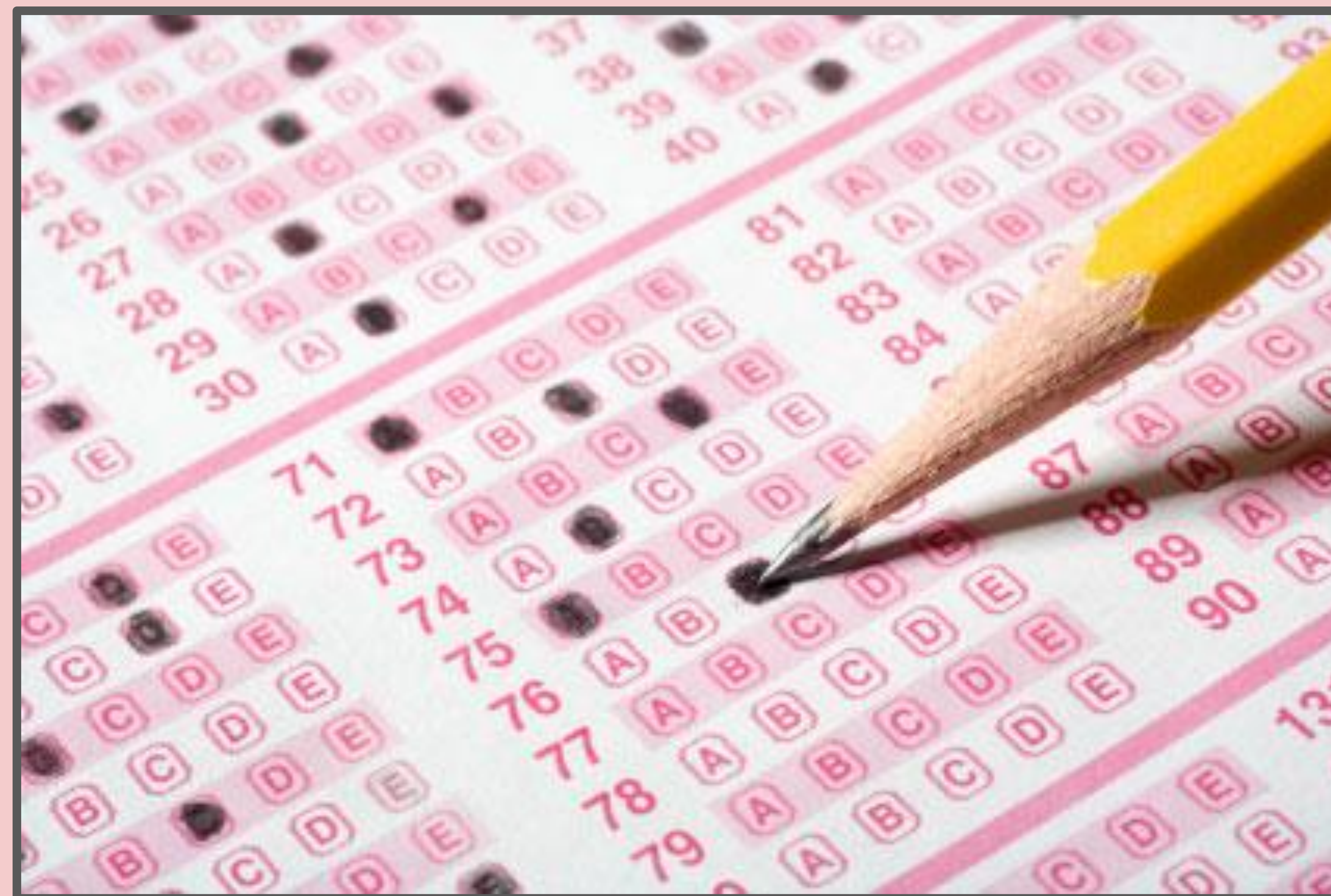
## Problems With Our Current Standards:

Currently, three major problems exist within the realm of ACT testing: lack of representation, systemic bias, and dependency on school funding. First, the ACT is inefficient in predicting college success. It is known that test prep strategies increase test scores, but the expenses from books and tutors prove to be an obstacle for underfunded schools and students. Furthermore, schools not only redirect teaching but also fund opportunities toward preparation of the ACT instead of the education and learning that students need. In a sense, these students are attending school for the sole purpose of taking an exam.

## Mission Statement:

Students have a right to receive equal representation and opportunities, especially during the college admission process. In order to guarantee such student rights, our team aims to produce an efficient, standardized alternative and work to promote accessibility and ease of demonstrating student talents.
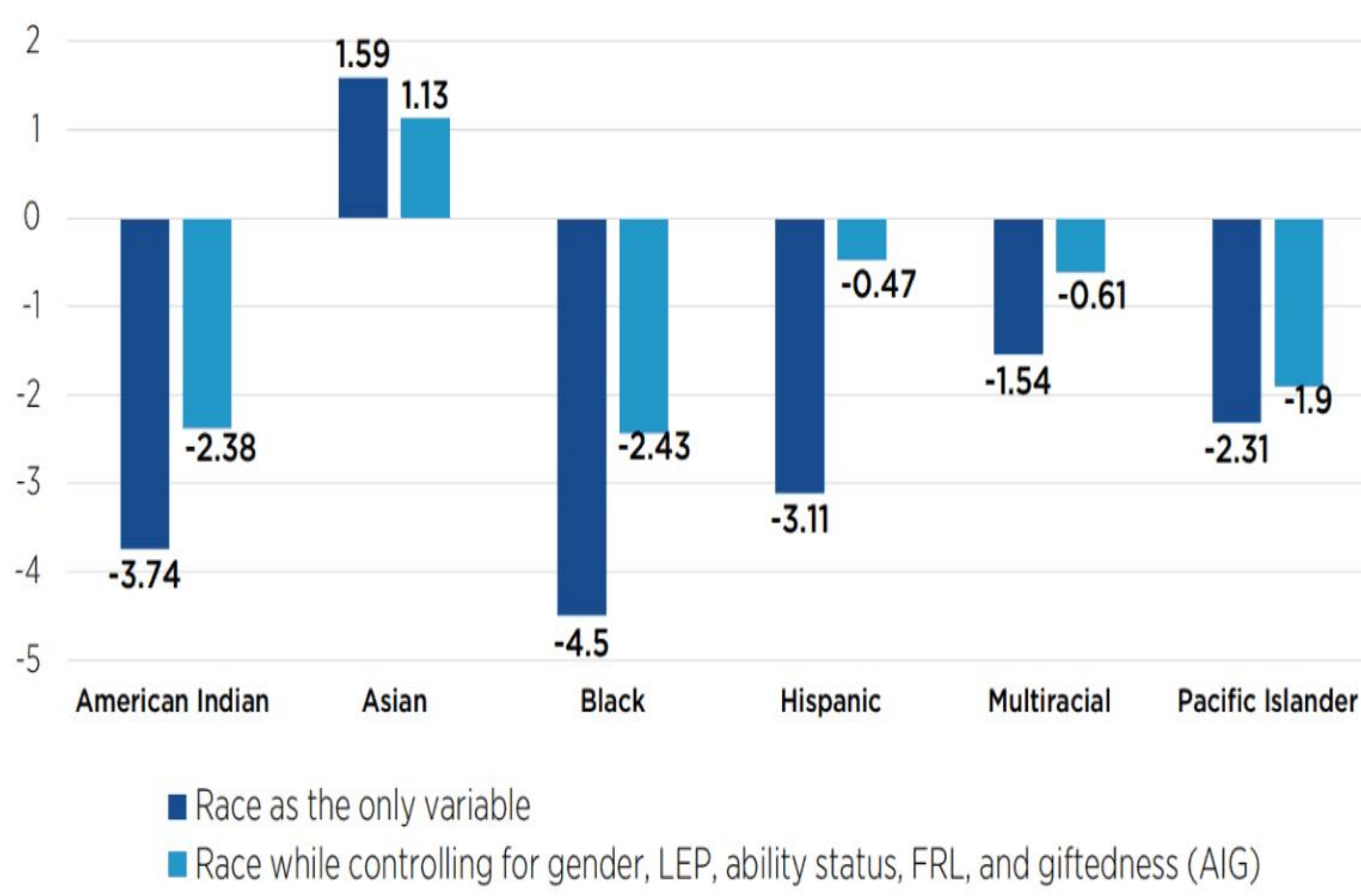
## The Virtues of Aptitude Testing:

As opposed to the achievement-based content of the ACT, aptitude exams like the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) primarily investigate both what a student knows and how they will succeed in the future. In exams like these, both academic content learned in school and applied, vocational content such as mechanics are analyzed in order to best determine which careers and educational paths will fit a particular examinee.

## Applying Aptitude-Style Exams to a College Setting:

It is definitely known that learning institutions are not the same as the US military, but universities could apply aptitude-based examinations to the admissions process. By moving away from achievement-based exams, colleges can more effectively examine the skills and abilities of each individual student and better suit their talents in a neutral manner.

## Potential Drawbacks to Testing Reform:

A reform in testing standards would require changes in the college admissions process entirely. Currently, today's testing companies and programs retain a degree of sway among colleges, so any changes would prove to be a daunting task and would require a rather long period of time to be fully implemented.

**FIGURE 8.2:** Predicted difference in ACT score by race/ethnicity

| Race/Ethnicity | Race as the only variable | Race while controlling for gender, LEP, ability status, FRL, and giftedness (AIG) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| American Indian | -3.74 | -2.38 |
| Asian | 1.59 | 1.13 |
| Black | -4.5 | -2.43 |
| Hispanic | -3.11 | -0.47 |
| Multiracial | -1.54 | -0.61 |
| Pacific Islander | -2.31 | -1.9 |

Whites are the comparison group. Control Variables: Gender, Socioeconomic Status, Language Status, Special Education Status, and Previous Achievement.

Source: EdNC.org, 2019

## References: