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EFP Takeaways

Hate Crimes and Black College Student Enrollment

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Background

Since 2010, the number of reported hate crimes across the country have increased and college campuses saw a 25% increase in the number of reported hate crimes after 2015. College applicants belonging to groups targeted by hate crimes may respond to more hostile racial climates by seeking colleges with more welcoming environments.

The Study

This paper explores whether increases in reports of hate crimes in a state are associated with Black students' likelihood of college enrollment in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), a sector designed specifically to serve and support the success of Black students. The paper draws on data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and Federal Bureau of Investigation hate crime data to measure enrollment and hate crimes respectively, among states with at least one HBCU.

Findings

The authors find that increased levels of reported hate crimes in a state are associated with increased enrollments in HBCUs. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in reports of state-level hate crimes predicts a 17-22% increase in Black first-time student enrollment at HBCUs.

Implications

With respect to policy implications, institutions should focus on creating climates that demonstrate a clear commitment to the success of Black individuals if their goal is to increase racial equity in their enrollment. In particular, it is incumbent on non-HBCU campuses to clearly communicate how they are providing support to prospective Black students and their families.

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