



BIGLAW, LAW SCHOOLS, MINORITY ISSUES

# Minorities In The Legal Profession Have Increased By Less Than One Percent Since 2000

In 2020, do you think you will be happy about or disappointed by the diversity in our profession?

By RENWEI CHUNG

Dec 4, 2015 at 10:31 AM



*“The whole industry been in shambles / Everybody fugazi, I’m just changing the channel.”*

– [Kendrick Lamar](#)

In 2010, [88.1 percent of lawyers were white](#). In 2000, [88.8 percent of lawyers were white](#). These percentages were taken from the [U.S. Census Bureau reports](#) for 2010 and 2000, respectively. In other words, minorities in the legal profession have increased by less than 1 percent since 2000.

Over this same time period, [minority enrollment](#) in the J.D. programs of ABA-approved law schools increased by 6,752 students, or 1.8 percent (from 20.6 percent in 2000-2001 to 22.4 percent in 2009-2010). What do you predict the percentages of white and minority lawyers will be in 2020?



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students had the [largest drop](#) in law school enrollment – 16 percent. White enrollment dropped 14.8 percent, black law students fell 1.6 percent, and Hispanic enrollment held steady. It would be interesting to discover why there is such a large variance in the change in enrollment.

For a better diagnosis of future diversity in legal areas such as [Biglaw](#), it may be practical to track the shifting demographics among the top 14 law schools and other traditional Biglaw feeder schools. The specific change in demographics among these top-tier schools is likely to be the biggest indicator of potential diversity in [Biglaw](#).

How will the change in the law school population affect the legal industry? I have already noted how diversity [among Biglaw partners](#) doesn't reflect law school diversity. Since the late 1980s, the percentage of minority law school graduates has [more than doubled](#) (going from 10 percent to 23 percent), yet [92 to 94 percent](#) of current Biglaw partners are white.

From 2000 to 2010, minorities in the legal profession have increased by less than 1 percent. Surely, when the 2020 U.S. Census is released, there will be a somewhat better minority representation in the legal profession overall. No doubt, [change at the top](#) will come much more slowly, if at all.

In 2020, do you think you will be happy about or disappointed by the results of the [diversity efforts](#) of our profession during this decade?

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