



For Immediate Release
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LDF Statement on Department of Justice Involvement in Harvard Lawsuit

Today, the U.S. Justice Department (DOJ) – the federal agency responsible for enforcing civil rights – [filed a statement of interest](#) in a Massachusetts federal court supporting a lawsuit that seeks to eliminate the consideration of race in college admissions. The lawsuit was brought by Edward Blum, an activist against laws promoting racial equality.

In the [statement of interest](#), the DOJ inexplicably criticizes Harvard’s consideration of race as one factor in selecting students in order to obtain the educational benefits of diversity, even though the Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that colleges may do just that.

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. ([LDF](#)) has been a leading voice in the decades-long struggle for equitable college admissions policies, from its early efforts to desegregate colleges and universities throughout the Jim Crow South to its recent advocacy on behalf of Black students in [Fisher v. University of Texas](#). In *Fisher* – a case also brought by Blum – the United States Supreme Court reaffirmed its longstanding position that universities may consider race as part of a holistic, multi-faceted admissions policy due to the critical importance of diversity in higher education.

[Micheale N. Turnage](#) Young, LDF Senior Counsel issued the following statement:

“Equal access to higher education is an American value supported by decades of legal precedent.

“Trump’s Justice Department has abdicated its responsibility to fairly enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits racial discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance. Instead of enforcing the law, Trump’s DOJ has declared its support for Edward Blum, who is using this lawsuit to impose a policy that discriminates against Black, Latinx, Native American, Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, and other applicants of color while unfairly giving an advantage to their white counterparts.

“We are deeply concerned by these shameful actions of Trump’s Justice Department and will continue to represent Harvard student and alumni groups from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds who believe we must uphold settled law allowing colleges to foster diversity via college admissions.”

LDF is representing 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations that support college admissions policies that foster diversity. Read the [latest amicus brief](#), as well as declarations from the Harvard affiliated organizations [here](#).

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.