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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Submits A Post-Trial Brief in Lawsuit to Determine Future of Race-Conscious Admissions at Harvard

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. ([LDF](#)) filed proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law, urging the Massachusetts federal court to reaffirm Harvard's right to consider race as one of many components in a holistic admissions process. The filing comes after Harvard College and Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) submitted opposing recommendations about what factual findings and legal conclusions the Court should draw from the testimony and evidence presented at trial in mid-October.

“The lived experiences of many students of color simply cannot be separated from their race. Through their testimonies in this trial, Harvard students, alumni, administrators, and experts consistently demonstrated the vital importance of race-conscious admissions to cultivating the educational benefits of diversity that are essential to a 21st century education,” [said Jin Hee Lee, LDF Senior Deputy Director of Litigation](#). “The court’s decision in this case may affect the ability of college and universities across the country to provide an education enriched by the vibrant diversity that our nation has to offer. Given the pervasive racial inequities in our educational system, the elimination of race conscious admissions would deny educational opportunities to many qualified students of color, which would be a devastating blow to our society as a whole.”

SFFA, an organization led by civil rights adversary Edward Blum, filed this lawsuit in 2014, as part of his longstanding crusade to eliminate the consideration of race, no matter how limited, in college admissions. LDF represents 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations comprised of thousands of Asian American, Black, Latinx, Native, and White students and alumni as amici curiae (or friends of the court) in the lawsuit.

In its latest filing, LDF explains how the educational experience at Harvard is dependent on the rich diversity of its student body in order to enhance critical thinking skills, break down racial stereotypes, and prepare students to succeed in an increasingly diverse, global workforce. In many ways, the student and alumni organizations represented by LDF make the educational benefits of diversity a reality by supporting students of color and fostering the cross-racial dialogues that

benefit the entire Harvard community. Moreover, racial disparities in educational opportunities in primary and secondary schools are widespread. As a result, colleges and universities like Harvard cannot reap the education benefits of diversity without considering race, as one of many factors, in admissions. SFFA's own expert predicts 1100 fewer Black and Latinx students—and a reduction of Black students by one-third—if race is entirely eliminated from Harvard's admissions process.

LDF is 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 advocacy on behalf of Black students as amicus curiae in [*Fisher v. University of Texas*](#). In *Fisher*, the United States Supreme Court ruled against Edward Blum and Abigail Fisher, reaffirming the Court's longstanding position that, given the critical importance of diversity in higher education, universities may consider race as one of many factors in admissions decisions.

Read the LDF brief and declarations from Harvard student and alumni 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.