NAACP Legal Defense Fund Appeals District Court Ruling in Alabama Desegregation Case

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) today appealed to the 11th Circuit a district court’s April ruling that allowed the predominately-white city of Gardendale, Alabama to secede from the more racially diverse Jefferson County school system, despite finding that the secession would harm the county school system and that Gardendale’s secession was motivated by an intent to discriminate based on race. LDF is joined in its appeal by local counsel the Honorable U.W. Clemon, a retired federal judge.

“The District Court agreed that Gardendale’s bid to form its own school district was designed to exclude Black schoolchildren,” said Chris Kemmitt, LDF’s Senior Counsel. “In filing this appeal, we are simply asking the Circuit Court to follow that finding to its logical conclusion and prohibit Gardendale from creating a separate, segregated school district at the expense of the broader community.”

“Too often, school secession is yet another method of racial discrimination allowed by state and local governments,” Kemmitt continued. “Public schools are one of the few institutions that facilitate the integration of all children. Public officials must follow suit and fulfill their responsibility to ensure that no child be denied this opportunity to coexist and learn together.”

Read the full brief here.

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.