



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Temporary Restraining Order to Stop the Lowering of Desegregation Standards in Hartford**

Late Friday, Superior Court Judge Marshall K. Berger, Jr. announced that he will issue a temporary restraining order that will stop the State of Connecticut from unilaterally altering the existing reduced isolation standard – which is a part of a settlement set to expire on June 30. The State's proposal was an effort to lower integration standards. The order from the court will extend the current desegregation standard for several months as the parties attempt to resolve their disagreements. The current standard calls for magnet schools to aim for student bodies that are no more than 75 percent Black and Hispanic. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc (LDF) commends the work of our co-counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Center for Children's Advocacy, and cooperating attorney Wesley Horton.

“Judge Berger's ruling re-affirms the importance of racial integration in Hartford area schools,” said Martha Stone, Executive Director of the Center for Children's Advocacy. “It prevents the State from tearing apart the progress made by the Sheff programs over many years.”

“For over 20 years, the Sheff magnet schools have offered Hartford-area students the opportunity to be educated in high quality, racially integrated classrooms,” said [Angel Harris](#), Assistant Counsel at LDF. “Today's decision affirms that the State cannot back away from the existing desegregation standards.”

“Connecticut must continue to work with the plaintiffs to meet its responsibility to provide the educational opportunities the law demands,” added Dennis Parker, Director of the ACLU's Racial Justice Project.

The [Sheff v. O'Neill](#) case was filed on behalf of Elizabeth Horton Sheff, her son Milo, and other families in 1989 by LDF, the ACLU, and Mr. Horton. The lawsuit alleged that the State of Connecticut had failed to provide Hartford students with a racially integrated education as required by the State Constitution. In 1996, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and ordered the state to integrate the Hartford area schools.

A new agreement was reached in [June 2016](#) to continue the current desegregation efforts at schools in Hartford and the surrounding suburbs.

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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.*