



For Immediate Release
Friday, June 15, 2018

LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Statement on Lawsuit Involving Harvard's Admissions Process

Reflecting the reality that race still matters and racial discrimination persists, Harvard considers race as one factor in its holistic admissions process as it seeks to achieve a diverse class. A lawsuit alleging that this consideration of race unlawfully discriminates against Asian-American applicants could soon be resolved, as the parties filed motions to end the case without going to trial.

The plaintiff in the case, Students for Fair Admissions, is a nonprofit that purportedly represents Asian-American college applicants but is, in fact, headed by Edward Blum, a longtime foe of civil rights, who spearheaded the litigation that resulted in the Supreme Court's recent invalidation of a key provision of the Voting Rights Act. Mr. Blum has also been involved [in several other lawsuits challenging the consideration of race in university admissions](#).

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 as amicus curiae in [Fisher v. University of Texas](#). In *Fisher*, 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.

Jin Hee Lee, LDF's Deputy Director of Litigation issued the following statement on today's filings:

"The college admissions process must be equitable and inclusive in order to ensure a comprehensive assessment of prospective students' talents and potential.

"This lawsuit filed by Edward Blum in the name of Asian-American students is a dangerous ploy to distort the benefits of diversity for college students of all races, despite settled law on this issue.

"Studies have proven that the quality of education improves for all students when people of diverse backgrounds learn from one another. And there is real harm to students of color who feel isolated in their educational environment. Thus, the Supreme Court has repeatedly held, most recently in [Fisher v. University of Texas](#),

that colleges and universities can pursue racial diversity as part of their educational mission. In fact, the plaintiffs have acknowledged in their brief filed today that the Supreme Court is clear on its position on this important issue.

“Ensuring equal access to higher education is an American value that is supported by decades of legal precedent. LDF will not stand idly by as opponents of racial justice seek to reverse the significant progress made toward true equality by trying to systematically dismantle programs that ensure inclusive college admissions.”

###

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.