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21 Harvard Student and Alumni Organizations Reject Attempt to Censor Their Voices

Harvard student and alumni organizations, represented by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. ([LDF](#)), are fighting back against an attempt to exclude their voices from being heard by the court considering a lawsuit that seeks to eliminate the consideration of race in Harvard's admissions and threatens diversity at the college. LDF [filed a response](#) on their behalf today in a Massachusetts federal court to an application seeking to strike their stories from the record.

Students for Fair Admissions, an organization purporting to represent Asian American college applicants and headed by Edward Blum, [filed an opposition](#) earlier this week to a motion filed by twenty-one ethnically and racially diverse Harvard student and alumni organizations who support inclusive admissions to have their stories be part of the case. Blum's opposition requests that the court exclude the declarations submitted by these Harvard groups—organizations that have advocated for racial inclusion on campus for decades and have vast institutional knowledge about issues affecting Harvard students of color.

“Ed Blum is attempting to silence the voices of actual students and alumni from diverse backgrounds who can speak to the lived experience at Harvard, said [Rachel Kleinman](#), LDF's Senior Counsel. “This latest move further exposes SFFA's hidden agenda. Rather than looking out for students, Ed Blum is simply focused on blocking programs that promote diversity, no matter the consequences.

“These organizations have eloquently expressed their belief that race must continue to be considered in Harvard's admissions process and have bravely shared their members' personal stories. It is crucial that we listen to these students—not shut them out simply because they pose a threat to Ed Blum's case.”

In support of their brief, representatives from 21 Harvard student and alumni organizations submitted declarations describing their experiences, and those of their members, with racial isolation—and, at times, racial hostility—on campus, the benefits of diversity to all students, and their commitment to inclusive admissions policies.

Catherine Ho and Stephanie Tang of **Harvard Asian American Women's Association**, Rewan Abdelwahab of **Harvard Islamic Society** and **Minority Association of Premedical Students**, Abraham Lee and Nicole Kim of **Harvard Korean Association**, Simileoluwa Falako and Madison Trice of **Harvard-Radcliffe Black Student Association**, Sonya Kalara and Fatima Shahbaz of **Harvard South Asian Association**, Rashid Yasin of **Harvard University Muslim Alumni**, Melissa Tran of **Harvard Vietnamese Association**, and Alice Cheng of **Task Force on Asian and Pacific American Studies at Harvard College** issued the following statement:

“We are at the heart of this case. Our lived experiences speak loudly and authentically about why diversity on our campus matters and why the removal of race from Harvard’s admissions policies is not an option. Our voices must be heard.”

Read the LDF brief and declarations from the 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.