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25 Harvard Student and Alumni Organizations File Amicus Brief in Support of College Admissions Policies That Foster Diversity

Twenty-five Harvard student and alumni organizations, represented by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. ([LDF](#)), filed [an amicus brief](#) today in a Massachusetts federal court condemning a divisive lawsuit that seeks to eliminate the consideration of race in admissions, thereby threatening diversity at the college.

The brief, filed on behalf of 25 organizations representing diverse backgrounds and racial and ethnic heritages, argues that the elimination of race in Harvard's college application process will lead to further discrimination towards applicants of color. The brief also describes how erasing race from the admissions process means students will be forced to hide a key part of their identity and notes how racial and cultural heritage cannot be ignored when considering any college applicant.

“Edward Blum and Abigail Fisher are once again on a mission to prevent colleges from fostering racial diversity in their student bodies,” said [Jennifer A. Holmes](#), **LDF's Eric H. Holder, Jr. Fellow**. “While the students Edward Blum is allegedly representing have changed, his quest to reduce diversity on college campuses remains the same. If he were truly invested in the interests of Asian American applicants, his lawsuit would call on Harvard to ensure that its admissions policies allow each candidate, of every race, to be fairly assessed in a holistic manner.”

The brief, the second filed on behalf of Harvard student and alumni groups by LDF in this case, asserts that removing race as one of many considerations in Harvard's admissions process would not rectify the alleged discrimination against Asian American applicants — instead, it would deepen racial disparities in admission rates and result in an advantage for white applicants. The brief also notes how eliminating race in college applications is discriminatory and will disproportionately impact Black, Latinx, Native American, Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, and other applicants of color. College applicants' experiences and opportunities in life are often irrevocably intertwined with their racial and cultural heritage, and erasing race will ban applicants of color from sharing personal stories that shape who they are and reveal their identity.

LDF's brief also argues that colleges cannot assemble a diverse student body without considering how race affects each applicant's opportunity to build a strong college application. The brief includes case studies and statistics to demonstrate how applicants of color face racial bias in standardized testing and extreme inequities in primary and secondary education due to, among other things, implicit racial bias and structural racism. These students are more likely to have less-experienced teachers; go to schools that lack a college counselor, art instruction, or extracurricular activities; and be subjected to discipline that removes them from their classroom and deprives them of valuable instructional time.

The 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations represented in the LDF amicus brief include four new additions since the [first amicus brief](#) LDF filed in this case: the Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance, the Harvard Black Alumni Society, the Association of Black Harvard Women, and a music group expressly dedicated to diversity, 21 Colorful Crimson, each of whom submitted a declaration in support of the brief. (full list of amici below).

"[We] seek to break down racial, ethnic, and social divisions at Harvard through art," **wrote 21 Colorful Crimson**. "21 Colorful Crimson realizes that the educational experience at Harvard is not merely limited to course curriculum [and we] recognize . . . that all students benefit from a diverse campus. We see this benefit in [our work] each day."

"[We] support the consideration of race in admissions because we understand [that] diversity, including racial, is an important ideal and necessary to provide a complete educational experience and environment," **wrote Harvard Black Alumni Society**.

"Our academic experiences at Harvard have been enriched by the opportunity to learn from our classmates who come from a variety of racial, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds," **wrote Association of Black Harvard Women**. "Their contributions during class and lectures provide us with a more robust understanding of our world."

"Harvard has long played a role in America's history of convening a student body that brings diverse and wide-ranging paradigms into a common community," **wrote Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance**. "Taking away the ability to consider race as just one element of a holistic admissions process would be detrimental to the educational mission of Harvard and other such institutions of higher learning. The ramifications would be felt beyond universities."

"Diversity in the classroom improves students' critical thinking, communication and problem-solving skills—better preparing graduates for the multicultural workforce and society we live in," said [Michaele N. Turnage Young](#), **LDF Senior Counsel**. "Erasing race from the admissions process at Harvard would harm all students by depriving them of these benefits."

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 ruled against Edward Blum and Abigail Fisher, reaffirming the Court’s longstanding position that universities may consider race, as one of many factors, in admissions given the critical importance of diversity in higher education.

The Harvard organizations that joined the amicus brief are listed below:

1. 21 Colorful Crimson (“21CC”)
2. Association of Black Harvard Women (“ABHW”)
3. Coalition for a Diverse Harvard (“Diverse Harvard”)
4. First Generation Harvard Alumni (“FGHA”)
5. Fuerza Latina of Harvard (“Fuerza Latina”)
6. Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance (“H4A”)
7. Harvard Asian American Brotherhood (“AAB”)
8. Harvard Black Alumni Society (“HBAS”)
9. Harvard Islamic Society (“HIS”)
10. Harvard Japan Society (“HJS”)
11. Harvard Korean Association (“HKA”)
12. Harvard Latino Alumni Alliance (“HLAA”)
13. Harvard Minority Association of Pre-medical Students (“MAPS”)
14. Harvard Phillips Brooks House Association (“PBHA”)
15. Harvard South Asian Association (“SAA”)
16. Harvard University Muslim Alumni (“HUMA”)
17. Harvard Vietnamese Association (“HVA”)
18. Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Association (“AAA”)
19. Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Women’s Association (“AAWA”)
20. Harvard-Radcliffe Black Student Association (“BSA”)
21. Harvard-Radcliffe Chinese Students Association (“CSA”)
22. Kuumba Singers of Harvard College (“Kuumba”)
23. Native American Alumni of Harvard University (“NAAHU”)
24. Native Americans at Harvard College (“NAHC”)
25. Task Force on Asian and Pacific American Studies at Harvard College (“TAPAS”)

Read the [new brief](#), as well as 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.**