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## **Civil Rights Groups Send Post-Affirmative Action Report to Harvard, UNC, and over 100 Additional Colleges and Universities Detailing Options for Equitable and Diverse Higher Education After the Supreme Court Decision**

*Accompanying Letter Urges Educational Opportunities Attainable for All*

**Washington, DC** – Today six leading civil rights groups released [a comprehensive report](#) that offers recommendations for advancing educational equity in light of the Supreme Court’s affirmative action decisions, providing key recommendations that can increase access to equitable and diverse education. The executives of the six organizations delivered the report with a personal letter to Harvard, UNC, and over 100 additional colleges and universities.

The extensive report, co-sponsored by the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL), Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC (Advancing Justice – AAJC), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), LatinoJustice PRLDEF, and the Asian American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, includes approaches that institutions can implement to increase diversity in higher education. The report offers concrete solutions to college students, education professionals, individuals, and institutions looking to further their commitment to pursuing racial equity. And it suggests ways to bring fair and robust educational opportunities to all students, paving the way for institutions to admit individuals from varied backgrounds to create a diverse campus that reflects the extensive resources and potential of our multiracial democracy.

“Regardless of the Supreme Court’s affirmative action decision, colleges and universities must do all they can to ensure equitable educational opportunities,” **said Jin Hee Lee, LDF’s Director of Strategic Initiatives**. “This report provides a blueprint for

those in higher education to advance racial equity and foster a diverse learning environment.” “The success of our multiracial democracy hinges upon the ability to tap the talent, innovation, and potential of all Americans. It is therefore imperative to open the pipelines to educational resources and professional opportunities so that we can all benefit from the rich diversity America has to offer,” Lee added.

“The Supreme Court’s decision was a setback in the efforts to widen educational opportunities for students, especially from communities of color. But we will remain dedicated and vigilant in pushing colleges and universities to provide access to resources and opportunities for those who cannot pay their way into highly regarded schools at all levels within our educational system,” **said Advancing Justice - AAJC President and Executive Director John C. Yang.** “The majority of Asian Americans support affirmative action, and we will continue to fight for equitable admissions policies on their behalf as well as Black and Latino Americans.”

“In the aftermath of the Supreme Court’s ruling we need to encourage students from communities of color to continue to apply to the schools of their choice and this report advocates for policies in higher education that encourage students who have been uneasy since the Court’s decision. Our hope is that leaders take a serious look at new options to keep equity at the forefront of admission policies in our colleges and universities,” **said David Hinojosa, Director of the Educational Opportunities Project at the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.**

The Supreme Court decision restricting the freedom of colleges and universities to use affirmative action does not mean schools should waver in their commitment to diversity and opportunity or retreat from their obligation to address persistent racial inequalities. Colleges can still consider race in alternative ways and students can continue to discuss race and how it has shaped their character or unique abilities in the college admissions process,” **said ReNika Moore, Director of the Racial Justice Program, ACLU.** “With this new resource, we aim to clarify any misinterpretation of the decision and provide much needed guidance on how to advance equal opportunity and diversity in higher ed.”

"Racial disparities in education begin long before students are ready to fill out college applications. Now that they've dismantled race-conscious admissions, the radical right is going after race-neutral efforts to achieve equal access to education, and it's no surprise that they've made K-12 education the next frontier in the campaign to roll back progress on civil rights," **said Fran Fajana, Director of Racial Justice for LatinoJustice PRLDEF.** "Several cases have already been brought against K-12 schools, but all have failed so far. We will continue to defend school districts working to make their schools more fair and equitable, and we will continue to call out the hypocrisy of those fighting to block every path to educational opportunity for talented and under-identified students. This report highlighting measures, including race neutral ones, that colleges can take to keep the doors of opportunity open to all students could not be more timely."

“In the Supreme Court’s decision on affirmative action, the Court distorted the history of the Equal Protection Clause and the legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education* to propagate a false myth of “color blindness.” Colleges and universities now confront the challenge of addressing racial disparities in the blind. This report illuminates critical guidance to leaders in higher education committed to not simply maintaining but growing a multi-racial campus, which benefits all students and our society at large,” **said Bethany Li, Legal Director of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF).**

After centuries of exclusion, no single program will ever adequately address systemic racial inequality. The Supreme Court’s decision highlights the urgent need for swift and critical action in higher education to reduce discrimination and open more doors to marginalized communities.

The report includes these recommendations:

1) **Diligently Comply with Anti-Discrimination Laws:** Schools should take proactive measures to ensure that their policies and practices comply with federal and state antidiscrimination laws, which prohibit funding recipients from intentionally or unintentionally limiting opportunities for people based on race or ethnicity.

2) **Reimagine and Retool Admissions Policies in Higher Education:** Schools should engage in holistic admissions processes that evaluate applicants’ demonstrated capacity and strength, considering resources and opportunities available to them in their K-12 community. Schools should also critically examine admissions requirements, policies, and procedures to ensure that they do not create inequitable and unnecessary barriers to access.

3) **Expand Recruitment Efforts and Build Robust Pipelines:** Schools should develop innovative strategies to target recruitment efforts to underserved communities. This includes tailored programming for students who cannot visit campus, development of robust pipelines for students of all ages, and investment in and compensation for historically underrepresented students and alumni who serve as ambassadors for the institution in their communities.

4) **Support Historically Marginalized and Underrepresented Students on Campus:** A healthy, vibrant campus climate for all students is critical for ensuring equity in higher education.

Lastly, all schools have different access to resources that will inevitably drive their options for crafting a diverse class, but this report notes they also have the responsibility to do everything in their power to commit to diversity and equity in and beyond their admissions process.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

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### **About the Legal Defense Fund**

Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF 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.

### **About Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to mobilize the nation's leading lawyers as agents for change in the Civil Rights Movement. Today, the Lawyers' Committee uses legal advocacy to achieve racial justice, fighting inside and outside the courts to ensure that Black people and other people of color have the voice, opportunity, and power to make the promises of our democracy real. For more information, please visit <https://lawyerscommittee.org>.

### **About Advancing Justice – AAJC**

[Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC](#) has a mission to advance the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and to build and promote a fair and equitable society for all. Visit [www.advancingjustice-aaajc.org](http://www.advancingjustice-aaajc.org).

### **About American Civil Liberties Union**

For more than 100 years, the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU) has worked in courts, legislatures, and communities to protect the constitutional rights of all people. With a nationwide network of offices and millions of members and supporters, the ACLU takes on the toughest civil liberties fights in pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

### **About LatinoJustice PRLDEF**

LatinoJustice PRLDEF works to create a more just society by using and challenging the rule of law to secure transformative, equitable and accessible justice, by empowering our community and by fostering leadership through advocacy and education. For 50 years, LatinoJustice PRLDEF has acted as an advocate against injustices throughout the country. To learn more about LatinoJustice, visit [www.LatinoJustice.org](http://www.LatinoJustice.org).

### **About Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund**

The [Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund \(AALDEF\)](#), a national organization founded in 1974, protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans. By combining litigation, advocacy, education, and organizing, AALDEF works with Asian American communities across the country to secure human rights for all. AALDEF focuses on critical issues affecting Asian Americans, including immigrant rights, voting rights and democracy, economic justice for workers, educational equity, housing and environmental justice, and the elimination of anti-Asian violence.

