



For Immediate Release  
Wednesday, May 08, 2024

LDF Media  
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(New York, NY) – Today, the Legal Defense Fund sent a [letter](#) to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) asking for a formal investigation into the hiring practices of two major U.S. companies, AutoNation and Genuine Parts. The call for the EEOC to exercise its authority comes after evidence of potential racial discrimination in the hiring practices of the two companies was uncovered by a [national experiment on employment discrimination](#).

“The EEOC has a responsibility to enforce our civil rights laws by investigating employers who may be engaged in discriminatory employment practices,” said **Amalea Smirniotopoulos, Senior Policy Counsel and Co-Manager of LDF’s Equal Protection Initiative**. “The foundation of economic and racial justice is the ability of all people to access opportunity, work with dignity, support themselves and their families, and fully participate in the economy. Yet deeply ingrained, unfair barriers to equal opportunity continue to reinforce occupational segregation by race and leave talent on the table. Vigorous enforcement of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is even more vital now, as employers roll back policies that helped overcome racial discrimination, foster diverse and inclusive workplaces, and ensure equal employment opportunities.”

As reported by the [New York Times](#), a team of economists conducted an audit study to measure employment discrimination based on race in the United States within the various sectors of the labor market. From 2019 to 2021, researchers sent 83,000 resumes to more than 10,000 entry level jobs at 108 of the country’s largest companies. The study found, of those companies, AutoNation, a used car retailer, contacted presumed white applicants 43 percent more often than Black applicants with similar qualifications, and Genuine Parts Company, which sells auto parts, called presumed white candidates 33 percent more often.

“Black people have fought to access higher, more rigorous levels of education yet they are stubbornly relegated to lower wage jobs and less lucrative industries compared to white people with similar levels of education due to ongoing and systemic discrimination. Companies need to have policies in place to ensure that they do not discriminate based on race and help foster diverse workforces,” said **David Wheaton, Equal Justice Police Fellow at LDF**.

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*Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. [LDF's Equal Protection Initiative](#) seeks to defend and advance the proper interpretation of the Equal Protection Clause and anti-discrimination law so that we can all continue to advance equal opportunity for all. 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 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.*