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LDF Releases Statement on U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development's Hearing Regarding DEI on College Campuses

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held a hearing entitled: "Divisive, Excessive, Ineffective: The Real Impact of DEI on College Campuses." The hearing is the latest in a series of attacks by extremists seeking to dismantle programs that improve campus climate and remove unfair barriers to opportunities for people of color, LGBTQ+ people, differently-abled people, and other underrepresented students. LDF has been monitoring this issue nationally and leading campaigns to defend against attacks on DEIA at the state level, including in South Carolina, Georgia, and Texas.

In response, LDF Director of Strategic Initiatives Jin Hee Lee released the following statement:

"Today's hearing comes at a time when our nation is experiencing backlash against generations of hard-fought progress to advance racial equality and afford equal educational opportunities to all. On college campuses, where DEIA programs are central to the lives of students of color in supporting diverse and inclusive environments, the repercussions of these attacks are dire. In fiscal year 2022, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights received a record number of discrimination complaints based on race, sex, or disability. Further, according to FBI data, K-12 schools, colleges, and universities were the third most common location for a hate crime to be committed in the United States between 2018 to 2022.

"As a nation, we cannot afford to forgo the benefits and contributions of talented Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other underrepresented students. Moreover, our national security, our ability to compete in a global economy and in scientific and technological innovation, and the health of our multi-racial democracy depend on producing informed leaders and a well-trained workforce who are capable of navigating and thriving in a racially diverse society. DEIA programs in higher education can help ensure that opportunities to access educational resources and achieve professional success are equally open to all.

"There is no evidence that DEIA programs foster antisemitism or other forms of unacceptable bias. Indeed, DEIA programs can help address harassing conduct, remedy prior discrimination, and foster a more positive and inclusive school climate, improving the campus community for all students.

“We know that we are stronger together and we have more in common than not. The majority of this country's people will work together towards equal opportunity for all and must reject efforts to turn communities who face discrimination and hate against one another.

“Amidst persistent inequalities in American society, which were widely condemned worldwide only four years ago in our nation's largest social justice movement, it is imperative for all of us to remain committed to programs that create a more racially-just world.”

Diverse and inclusive environments yield improved [critical thinking skills](#), enhanced problem-solving ability, higher graduation rates, more ambitious educational and career goals, higher earnings in the workforce, better health outcomes, [increased](#) student satisfaction and motivation, improved knowledge, and increased self-confidence. Racially-diverse educational settings also reduce prejudice by promoting more cross-racial contact in and outside the classroom and encouraging friendships and relationships across racial lines. Finally, increased diversity in student interactions help students to become more familiar with social difference, develop intergroup skills, and be prepared for diverse working environments.

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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. LDF's [Equal Protection Initiative](#) seeks to defend and advance the proper interpretation of the Equal Protection Clause and anti-discrimination law so that it remains clear that it is legal to advance equal opportunity for all. 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.