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LDF Responds to DOJ Lawsuit Against Yale Regarding Race-Conscious Admissions Process

Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a lawsuit against Yale University after the school refused to refrain from considering race in its 2020-21 admissions cycle and to seek prior approval from DOJ before considering race in any future admissions cycle, as demanded by DOJ in a letter, dated August 13, 2020. On August 27, 2020, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the DOJ to obtain information about its investigation of Yale University for alleged racial discrimination in its admissions program.

In response to the lawsuit, LDF Assistant Counsel Monique Lin-Luse released the following statement:

“This lawsuit is another effort by the Trump Administration to quash important efforts to expand educational opportunities to all qualified students. Instead of using federal resources to advance racial equity in our educational systems amid persistent and longstanding discrimination against students of color, the DOJ is challenging the legality of race-conscious admissions in opposition to 42 years of Supreme Court precedent.

“This Administration has a long track record of actively opposing, rather than furthering, racial justice. This lawsuit is the latest example of this deeply troubling trend, as the DOJ disparages the qualifications of talented Black, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong students, and shockingly redefines ‘Asian American’ to exclude students of Southeast Asian descent.

“The presence of systemic inequities in education is overwhelming and well-documented. Holistic admissions, which flexibly considers race as one of many factors, is necessary to ensure proper consideration of all qualified students despite these inequities. Instead of supporting universities’ efforts to increase educational access, DOJ is using its authority to exacerbate racial isolation and exclusion by erroneously relying on standardized tests, which are hardly objective but instead steeped with inherent racial biases.”

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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. 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. 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.

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