



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **LDF Sues U.S. Department of Education on Behalf of NAACP and Equity Assistance Center Challenging Grant Termination**

Last night, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) filed a [federal lawsuit](#) on behalf of the NAACP and the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc. (“MAEC”) challenging the U.S. Department of Education’s unlawful elimination of the federal equity assistance center program (“EAC program”) and related grants. Since 1964, Congress has appropriated critical funding to equity assistance centers, like MAEC, to support state education agencies, school districts, and students with their efforts to promote equal educational opportunity across the United States. The lawsuit references the Department of Education’s action on February 13, 2025 to abruptly and arbitrarily terminate the equity assistance program and funding to MAEC and other grantees, robbing them of the resources needed for it to continue working with schools to prevent and remedy ongoing problems of discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, and religion.

The lawsuit asserts that the Department of Education’s move to terminate the equity assistance centers is a part of President Trump’s unlawful and discriminatory attack on so-called “diversity, equity, and inclusion” initiatives. The Department’s actions ignore the federal government’s obligations under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Education Amendments of 1972, and other anti-discrimination laws to provide schools with critical technical assistance to prevent discrimination.

"For so many Black students across our nation, EAC programs serve as a vital pathway to ensuring they can access the critical resources they need to thrive in classrooms and beyond," said **Derrick Johnson, President and CEO of the NAACP**. "In addition to providing technical assistance to students and teachers, these programs support school communities to abide by desegregation orders and to foster equitable, inclusive learning environments. We stand here today with unwavering support for our students, teachers, and school communities—knowing that the innumerable barriers they’ve already faced as a result of these grant terminations are an affront to their right to access equal opportunity in education."

"The Department of Education’s termination of the EAC program is a dangerous and misguided attempt to roll back decades of progress towards civil rights and equal opportunity in public education," said **Katrina Feldkamp, LDF Assistant Counsel**. "The EAC program is critical to ensure that Black students, low-income students, and other students of color can access the resources they need to thrive. Ending our client’s grant under the guise of opposing programs that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion is a betrayal of the law’s intent and the communities it was designed to protect."

"The dismantling of the Equity Assistance Centers—the nation’s oldest education technical assistance program—marks a profound retreat from our civil rights commitments. For decades,

these centers have served as a cornerstone in the fight for equal educational opportunity, supporting states, districts, and schools in confronting racial, gender, religion, and national origin discrimination," said **Susan Shaffer, President of MAEC.**"

"The Department's decision to terminate these centers abandons the very promise of equity and justice for all in our public education system," said **Karmen Rouland, MAEC's Vice President.**

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium has provided integral assistance for schools for over 25 years. The plaintiffs are asking the court to vacate and permanently enjoin the termination of the grant.

Read the [full lawsuit](#).

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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. 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.*