



For Immediate Release
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**LDF Statement on FOIA Request Lawsuit Settlement
with the U.S. Department of Education**

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) reached a settlement agreement in a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request lawsuit filed against the United States Department of Education (ED) in May 2018. LDF sued ED after the department failed to respond to a July 2017 request for records regarding policy changes made by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to how civil rights complaints are handled by the department. The settlement stipulation requires the federal government to cover a portion of LDF's litigation costs and fees stemming from this lawsuit.

Ajmel Quereshi, Senior Counsel at LDF, issued the following statement regarding this settlement:

“Today’s settlement marks the end of a nearly three-year quest to obtain more information from the U.S. Department of Education regarding its enforcement of civil rights protections. LDF’s lawsuit, which was filed after the federal government illegally refused to respond to our FOIA request for over nine months, ultimately revealed that ED had created concerning new processes for the handling of civil rights complaints, exerted more control over complaints related to LGBT discrimination, and created presentations that criticized the detailed manner in which the Obama administration investigated allegations that students’ civil rights had been violated.

“The critical information obtained from this FOIA request confirmed what we had suspected all along – that the Trump administration’s Department of Education has drastically scaled back its enforcement of civil rights protections, including those that addressed racial discrimination and disparities.

“While having access to these materials has been crucial for holding ED accountable, LDF should not have been compelled to take legal action to acquire them. We are grateful that the settlement agreement brings a resolution to this matter, but LDF should not have had to dedicate years of time to ascertain information that ED should have readily provided, as required by law.”

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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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