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Federal Court Orders U.S. Department of Education to Reinstate Critical Federal Equity Assistance Center Funding

On Wednesday, July 30, 2025, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia granted a preliminary injunction to block the U.S. Department of Education's abrupt and unlawful termination of the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc.'s Equity Assistance Center grant. This decision [follows a lawsuit](#) filed by the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) on behalf of the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc. (MAEC) and the NAACP, which rely on this funding for critical resources and programming.

Since the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Congress has funded the federal Equity Assistance Center program to provide essential support to state education agencies, school districts, and students in preventing and remedying discrimination based on race, national origin, gender, and religion. By arbitrarily and abruptly terminating these grants, the Department deprived grantees, students, and educators of vital resources, jeopardizing grantees' ability to safeguard equal educational opportunity across the United States and depriving students of critical resources that protect their access to an equal education.

"We are grateful for the Court's recognition of the harm caused by the Department's actions and for the opportunity to continue our critical work," said **Dr. Karmen Rouland, President of MAEC**. "MAEC remains steadfast in our commitment to empowering educators and communities with the tools they need to build welcoming, affirming educational environments for every student."

"This ruling is not just a legal victory—it is a reaffirmation of the importance of an education free from discrimination," said **Susan Shaffer, Chair of the Board of Directors**. "We remain deeply committed to working with educators, families, and communities for the benefit of all students."

The Court questioned the NAACP's standing for a preliminary injunction, but granted relief to MAEC that will benefit the NAACP and its members. "This injunction is a crucial victory for educational equity across the country," said **Derrick Johnson, President and CEO of the NAACP**. "The EAC program plays a fundamental role in ensuring that Black students can access programs and support that dismantle systemic discrimination and promote inclusive learning environments. The fight is not over—and we will continue to stand on behalf of Black students to ensure that they receive the education they deserve."

"Today's ruling affirms that the Department of Education cannot disregard its legal obligations to protect students' civil rights and may not arbitrarily terminate decades-long federal programs upon which students and educators rely," said **Katrina Feldkamp, Assistant Counsel at**

LDF. The abrupt termination of the EAC program was not only unlawful, but also deeply harmful to the schools and communities that rely on these services to eradicate discrimination and create supportive environments for all students. The court’s decision sends a clear message that equity in education is not optional—it is a legal and moral imperative. We will continue fighting to ensure these critical resources are restored and protected.”

LDF continues to monitor and respond to efforts that undermine public education and civil rights enforcement across the country. In addition to this case, LDF has [filed several other successful or pending lawsuits](#) challenging the U.S. Department of Education’s recent actions that threaten educational equity and access for historically marginalized students. Through litigation, advocacy, and public engagement, LDF is committed to ensuring that the Department upholds its obligation to protect students’ civil rights and foster inclusive, high-quality public education.

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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.