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## LDF Delivers Oral Argument in first day of *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* Appeal

Today, the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit heard oral arguments in the *Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. Harvard*. Jin Hee Lee, Senior Deputy Director of Litigation at the [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.](http://naacpldf.org) (LDF) delivered the oral argument on behalf of the 26 Harvard student and alumni organizations serving as amici. She issued the following statement after the hearing:

"Today's argument before the First Circuit Court of Appeals revealed the deep flaws in SFFA's case and the tremendous harm to all Harvard students if race conscious admissions were eliminated. In his argument, SFFA's counsel asserted that no harm would come of their preferred alternative to race conscious admissions despite the dramatic one-third reduction of qualified Black students that would occur.

"All Harvard students, as well as Harvard faculty, would suffer from this loss of the educational benefits of diversity, as demonstrated by the powerful stories of Harvard students and alumni at trial. We are hopeful that the First Circuit will rule correctly and affirm the vital importance of racial diversity for the entire Harvard community."

In May 2020, 26 Harvard student and alumni organizations, represented by LDF, filed an [amicus brief](#) in the First Circuit Court of Appeals condemning this divisive lawsuit that seeks to eliminate the consideration of race in admissions, thereby threatening diversity at the college.

The brief, filed on behalf of organizations representing diverse backgrounds and racial and ethnic heritages, argues that the SFFA improperly equates a lawful, race conscious admissions program with intentional discrimination despite the Supreme Court's recognition of the compelling interests in the educational benefits of diversity. The brief further details the need for race conscious admissions due to the lack of educational opportunities for all qualified students of color, as well as the critical role that students of color have played in pushing Harvard to become a more diverse and inclusive institution.

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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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