



For Immediate Release

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Federal Court Upholds Harvard's Race-Conscious Admissions Policies

Today, a Massachusetts Federal Court [affirmed](#) that Harvard's consideration of race as one of many factors in undergraduate admissions decisions is consistent with – and supported by – longstanding United States Supreme Court law.

The lawsuit against Harvard is one of multiple efforts by conservative, anti-civil rights activist Edward Blum to end admissions practices that foster diversity, including *Fisher v. University of Texas*, in which the United States Supreme Court rejected Blum's attempt to outlaw race-conscious admissions.

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. ([LDF](#)) and local counsel [Sugarman Rogers](#) represent 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations comprised of thousands of Asian American, Black, Latinx, Native American, and white students and alumni as amici curiae, or friends of the court, in this lawsuit.

A coalition of Harvard student groups issued the following statement:

“Today, the court stopped a blatant attack on diversity at Harvard and at colleges across the country. The court's decision recognizes that students are more than mere statistics and credentials: they are real people with experiences often inextricably linked to their race. As the court affirmed today, race-conscious admissions is a vital mechanism for creating classrooms that reflect the rich diversity of our country. Students of all races benefit from exposure to people from different backgrounds and a broader understanding of the world we all inhabit. This decision ensures that Harvard students will continue to receive the highest quality education that exposes them to different perspectives and prepares them to be our nation's future leaders.”

For more than 40 years, the Supreme Court has repeatedly reaffirmed that colleges and universities have the right to consider race, as one of many factors, in admissions. Today's decision affirms this principle.

“This ruling is an important victory in the ongoing struggle for equal opportunity in higher education and reaffirms what the United States Supreme Court has held unequivocally for 40 years: that racial diversity can be vitally important to a student's education. Due to pervasive racial inequality in primary and secondary education, as well as racial bias in standardized testing, colleges and universities



cannot provide their students with the known benefits of diversity without considering race, as one of many factors, in admissions,” said [Jin Hee Lee](#), Senior Deputy Director of Litigation at LDF. “We stand proudly with our clients – a multi-racial coalition of 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations – in their successful fight for admissions policies that foster diversity and equal opportunity for all.”

LDF President and Director-Counsel, [Sherrilyn Ifill](#) stated, “Today’s decision by the United States District Court of Massachusetts meticulously adheres to what the United States Supreme Court has long said: that race can be used as a factor in college admissions when it is narrowly tailored and used as a part of a holistic review of an applicant. Over the course of her 130-page opinion Judge Allison Burroughs demonstrates that Harvard’s admissions process operated consistent with the law. More importantly, this decision affirms the ongoing and critical importance of efforts to promote diversity in education. As Judge Burroughs powerfully explains, race conscious admissions practices, “help ensure that colleges and university can offer a diverse atmosphere that foster learning, improves scholarship, and encourages mutual respect and understanding.” An even greater victory in this case was won by our clients, a multi-racial coalition that included Asian American, Black, Native American, Latinx, and white student and alumni groups, who decided that they would not allow race to divide them. In intervening in this case, they advanced the shared goals of equal access and opportunity that undergirds the very concept of race-conscious admissions. Today we salute our clients, whose powerful voices have been so important to a full understanding of this issue and this case.”

LDF is a leading voice in the decades-long struggle for equitable college admissions policies, from its early efforts to desegregate colleges and universities throughout the Jim Crow South to its ongoing advocacy for the continued use of race-conscious admissions policies in higher education, including its representation of 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations in *SFFA v. Harvard*.

Read the declarations, arguments, and briefs submitted by LDF on behalf of the 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations serving as amici curiae [here](#).

The Harvard student and alumni organizations serving as amici curiae are listed below:

21 Colorful Crimson (“21CC”)
Association of Black Harvard Women (“ABHW”)



Coalition for a Diverse Harvard (“Diverse Harvard”)
First Generation Harvard Alumni (“FGHA”)
Fuerza Latina of Harvard (“Fuerza Latina”)
Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance (“H4A”)
Harvard Asian American Brotherhood (“AAB”)
Harvard Black Alumni Society (“HBAS”)
Harvard Islamic Society (“HIS”)

Harvard Japan Society (“HJS”)
Harvard Korean Association (“HKA”)
Harvard Latino Alumni Alliance (“HLAA”)
Harvard Minority Association of Pre-medical Students (“MAPS”)
Harvard Phillips Brooks House Association (“PBHA”)
Harvard South Asian Association (“SAA”)
Harvard University Muslim Alumni (“HUMA”)
Harvard Vietnamese Association (“HVA”)
Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Association (“AAA”)
Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Women’s Association (“AAWA”)
Harvard-Radcliffe Black Students Association (“BSA”)
Harvard-Radcliffe Chinese Students Association (“CSA”)
Kuumba Singers of Harvard College (“Kuumba”)
Native American Alumni of Harvard University (“NAAHU”)
Native Americans at Harvard College (“NAHC”)
Task Force on Asian and Pacific American Studies at Harvard College (“TAPAS”)

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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 and 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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