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**Lawsuit Threatening *Sheff* Progress is Dismissed;
Promise of Integrated Hartford School System Strengthens**

Today, *Robinson v. Wentzell*, a misguided federal lawsuit which challenged the racial integration goals for magnet schools in the Hartford region, was voluntarily withdrawn and dismissed by the court. This dismissal comes following the [recent settlement](#) in the related state court case [Sheff v. O'Neill](#) and strengthens the advancements made in that historic case. *Sheff* is a school desegregation case filed by Elizabeth Horton Sheff and other Black, Latinx, and white families in 1989 to remedy the extreme racial segregation between schools in the city of Hartford and its surrounding suburbs. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) represented the plaintiffs in *Sheff*, where the Connecticut Supreme Court recognized that the racial segregation in schools in the Hartford-region violated the state constitution.

“The *Sheff* plaintiffs’ recent success in convincing the State to expand opportunities for all Hartford students to attend integrated magnet schools makes clear how misguided the *Robinson* case was. The goal of *Sheff* has always been—and continues to be—helping students access a quality and integrated education regardless of their race or zip code,” said [Cara McClellan](#), Assistant Counsel at LDF.

The *Robinson* lawsuit was filed in February 2018 by the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF), a conservative California legal organization, on behalf of several Hartford parents. The lawsuit sought to reverse decades of progress in expanding educational opportunities in Hartford by challenging certain aspects of the court-ordered reforms in *Sheff*. LDF, alongside the Center for Children’s Advocacy and the American Civil Liberties Union, intervened in the *Robinson* case on behalf of the *Sheff* Plaintiffs.

“I am pleased to hear that this threat against the progress we fought so hard for over the last thirty years has been withdrawn,” said Elizabeth Horton Sheff, an intervenor-defendant in *Robinson* and the lead plaintiff in *Sheff*. “Now Connecticut can continue moving forward with efforts to live up to its duty in providing every Hartford student with what the State Constitution says they deserve: equal access to integrated, quality schools.”

The settlement in *Sheff* and dismissal of *Robinson* are both substantial victories in the fight to end racial and economic segregation in the Hartford education system. You can read the full dismissal [here](#).

Visit our [Sheff v. O’Neill case page](#) for more background on the ongoing fight for educational opportunity in Hartford.

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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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