



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **LDF Commends DOJ's New Title VI Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures**

Today, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) announced a new set of policies and procedures strengthening the enforcement apparatus of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits the granting of federal funds to state and local programs that engage in racial, color, or national origin discrimination. The protocols also strengthen the enforcement of nondiscrimination provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, which are modeled on Title VI and prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, and sex in connection with any program or activity funded with specific law enforcement assistance funds. To date, these provisions have never been vigorously enforced against law enforcement agencies.

In April 2021, in the wake of ongoing violence against Black and Brown Americans at the hands of law enforcement, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) [sent a letter](#) to Attorney General Merrick Garland calling on the DOJ to suspend the distribution of federal funds to law enforcement agencies until the DOJ can confirm that the agencies receiving grants and funds from it are not in violation of Title VI's anti-discrimination provisions. LDF first raised these concerns with the DOJ and White House officials in 2015.

In response, LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement:

“Title VI is an essential civil rights enforcement tool that for too long has been underutilized as a method for holding law enforcement agencies accountable for discriminatory policing practices and disproportionate violence against Black and Brown communities. For nearly a decade, LDF has been urging the DOJ to take much-needed steps to enforce the anti-discrimination provisions of Title VI and we are pleased that the agency, under the leadership of Attorney General Garland and his team, undertook this important assessment and produced the new policies and procedures it announced today, which create a much more muscular enforcement apparatus at a critical time in our nation’s history.

“Initially included in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to address resistance to the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education*, a landmark LDF case, Title VI reflects the recognition that federal funds should never be used by state and local programs engaged in racial discrimination – including law enforcement agencies. Today’s announcement is a step in the right direction towards fulfilling the spirit and letter of the statute, not only in the area of law enforcement, but throughout the range of programs administered by the Department.

“The relentless and disproportionate police intimidation, harassment, and violence against Black and Brown people throughout the United States has continued unabated for far too long. This reality, combined with the Supreme Court’s 2001 decision in *Alexander v. Sandoval*, which weakened the ability of private parties to successfully pursue legal action for certain discriminatory practices, underscores the critical need for the DOJ to aggressively enforce its new policies and procedures moving forward.

“We are optimistic that, with today’s news, the DOJ will do just that and use this tool to address discriminatory and unconstitutional law enforcement and other racially discriminatory conduct against people of color in cities and towns across the country. LDF looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Department as it begins implementation of these new efforts, and we implore every federal agency to utilize Title VI to the fullest extent possible within their own purviews to further protect communities against discrimination.”

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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.*