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LDF Issues Statement in Response to President Trump’s Executive Order

Today, President Trump issued an “Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping” that takes aim at federal agencies, grant programs, and contractors – forbidding them from engaging in programs and trainings that promote diversity and inclusion and conditioning federal funding on adherence to a prescribed belief system. The executive order also threatens penalties against a supervisor or employee who authorizes or approves such trainings. In addition, the order purports to define and prohibit the teaching of, or belief in, “divisive concepts.”

Janai Nelson, the Associate Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) released the following statement in response to the executive order:

“Today, President Trump issued an executive order on the purported combatting of ‘race and gender stereotyping.’ Both the form and substance of the executive order are a dangerous missive aimed at constraining freedom of expression, fomenting racial enmity, and undermining gender equality.

“It is an insult to the intellect of the American people and an assault on our constitutional sensibilities to suggest that this legally suspect directive is anything other than a thinly-veiled attempt to punish recipients of federal funds for espousing viewpoints with which the president disagrees. LDF is examining all possible legal challenges to this ill-advised and inflammatory act.”

Today’s executive order is another in the long line of attacks by the president on issues ranging from immigration and climate change to the Affordable Care Act and border security. Federal courts have ruled against the Trump Administration repeatedly, including on its attempts to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; impose a citizenship requirement for the Census; and eliminate federal funding to “sanctuary cities.”

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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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