



**For Immediate Release**  
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**LDF Issues Statement on Anniversary of the *Brown v. Board Decision***

Today is the 68th anniversary of the Supreme Court's historic decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. In commemoration, [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson released the following statement:

“On this date 68 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court released its unanimous opinion in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case and declared that the time had come to end the pernicious and unconstitutional doctrine of ‘separate but equal.’ Even more importantly, by agreeing with the arguments made against segregated schools by leading attorney Thurgood Marshall (the first LDF President and Director-Counsel who would eventually become the first Black Supreme Court Justice) and his team of extraordinary LDF litigators, the Court shifted the trajectory of this country toward its founding ideals of equality, liberty, and justice. The country — the world — was inalterably changed by this seminal decision.

“We at LDF are profoundly proud of the import and power of the *Brown* case as an iconic and inspirational victory for human rights. Decided in 1954, *Brown* ended segregation in public schools and set in motion the end of legal apartheid in the United States. The ruling redefined equality in the eyes of the law, setting the stage for racial integration in all facets of American life. *Brown* gave America its identity as an aspiring multi-racial, multi-ethnic democracy. As guardians of *Brown*'s legacy, and as an organization that continues the hard work to align America's professed values with its practices, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that many of the promises of equality and justice implicit in *Brown* remain unmet. And while these unmet promises are most obvious in the realm of public education, the gap between the future envisioned by the authors of *Brown* and the present experienced by millions of people in America is considerable. And it is growing.

“The argument inherent in *Brown*, and endorsed by the Court as well as subsequent generations, always understood the right to education as an essential and irreplaceable component of the right to full and equal citizenship. As then-Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote on behalf of the unanimous Court, an equal education was ‘the very foundation of good citizenship.’ Ending a political and social system premised on the white supremacist assumption that some people are superior to, more deserving, or more American than others was the beating heart of the *Brown* case and the social movement that supported it — and that was galvanized by it in turn.

“*Brown* matters to us today not only because of the policy changes it mandated but, perhaps more importantly, because of the dream of an inclusive, pluralist, and egalitarian America that it represents. To truly honor *Brown*, then, it is our obligation to continue the work, not only by confronting the many ways our schools have once again become separate by race and class, but

also by addressing the many ways our country today is renegeing on its foundational promise of granting every individual's right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

“*Brown* is a testament that even the most marginalized and oppressed can join together in the righteous cause to make real a more perfect union for us all. However, so long as Black communities and other communities of color in the U.S. struggle to provide their children with an equal education — or to access the ballot, or to secure financial stability, or to protect themselves against lawless and violent policing and hate crimes — *Brown's* work will remain unfinished.”

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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.*