



**For Immediate Release**  
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**LDF Issues Statement on Supreme Court's Decision to Grant Cert in *SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC***

Today, the United States Supreme Court granted writs of certiorari in *Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC*. From its inception, SFFA, led by Ed Blum, has sought to end the limited consideration of race within a holistic admissions process that fosters the educational benefits of diversity, which the Supreme Court has approved multiple times over four decades.

In response to the Court's decision, [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. \(LDF\)](#) President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill issued the following statement:

“Given the lower courts’ meticulous and exhaustive opinions in *SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC* that closely followed over 40 years of well-settled law, the Supreme Court’s decision to grant writs of certiorari seriously threatens the nation’s ideals of equality. A holistic, race-conscious college admissions program ensures that students’ experiences, shaped and influenced by race, are fully considered and appreciated for their potential contributions to a vibrant, dynamic, and diverse educational setting.

“Holistic, race-conscious admissions programs enable Harvard University, the University of North Carolina, and other colleges and universities to bring together people of different backgrounds to learn from one another. Holistic admissions also help mitigate systemic barriers to educational opportunities faced by many Black students and other students of color, ensuring that all hard-working and qualified applicants receive due consideration.

“Further, the Court’s decision today comes amidst the backdrop of widespread efforts to erase and deny the experiences of people of color. As our country experiences a resurgence of white supremacy, it is as important now as ever before that our future leaders be educated in a learning environment that exposes them to the rich diversity that our country has to offer, so they may be fully prepared for the many challenges ahead.”

In November 2020, the First Circuit Court of Appeals [affirmed](#) a lower court’s judgment that Harvard’s holistic, race-conscious admissions program is legal and permissible. Similarly, in October 2021, the United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina upheld UNC’s holistic, race-conscious admissions policy.

## Client quotes:

**Farah Afify ('22), Phillips Brooks House Association:** “The importance of race-conscious admissions cannot be understated for its impact on me as a student of color, on my friends at Harvard and other colleges, and on the youth we serve and empower in the Boston and Cambridge communities. Because of affirmative action, my history as an Arab and Muslim immigrant contextualized the rest of my achievements, allowing my life and experiences to be considered more fully during the admissions process. I hope that the Supreme Court will agree that race is critical for contextualizing students' experiences. If SFFA wins, it will be a major setback not just for individual students of color, but for generations of students attending institutions of higher education.”

**Nayleth Lopez-Lopez ('23), President, and Santy Mendoza ('23), Vice President, Fuerza Latina:** “As representatives of Harvard Fuerza Latina, we are hurt and disappointed by the Supreme Court’s decision to hear this case and review previous court decisions to rightfully uphold Harvard’s race-conscious admissions practices. It will be painful to have to go through the stress of another legal battle wherein students’ right to celebrate all aspects of our identities and contribute to a more diverse school community would be put into question. Should the Court side with SFFA, it would be an incredible blow to holistic admissions practices across the country that are crucial in supporting underrepresented students in gaining admission into schools that have historically denied us opportunities and increasingly need our voices and perspectives. We hope that the Supreme Court ultimately makes the right decision to uphold the decisions of two lower courts that have affirmed Harvard’s commitment to holistic, race-conscious admissions.”

**From the Board of the Coalition for a Diverse Harvard:** “Those of us who were lucky enough to have gone to Harvard know that what is at stake here is the very core of a Harvard education—the chance to build bonds with diverse classmates whom we might never encounter otherwise, to practice solving thorny problems across difference, to grasp the complexity of creating equitable pathways for all our families and communities to thrive. A ruling against race-conscious admissions would set the goal of equity in education back decades. It would say that students can't discuss their backgrounds when sharing who they are, which would be an erasure of their selves, as the student witnesses recounted. It would further limit the opportunities of marginalized students and communities, including Asian Americans. It would say that race doesn't matter in American life, which is simply untrue, and would cement the highly inequitable status quo.”

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. Visit [www.defenddiversity.org](http://www.defenddiversity.org) to learn more about LDF’s efforts in this case.

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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. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).*