



ADVANCING JUSTICE CONDEMNS ADMINISTRATION'S USE OF DOJ'S CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION TO FURTHER ITS ANTI-CIVIL RIGHTS GOALS

Washington, D.C. — The White House is preparing to commit resources of the U.S. Department of Justice's civil rights division to investigate and sue universities over their affirmative action policies. The Trump administration's new project will threaten decades of progress in civil rights, which have provided tremendous benefits to Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other minority groups.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice), an affiliation of five civil rights organizations, issues the following statement:

"Asian Americans Advancing Justice condemns the White House's targeting of affirmative action in American universities, and its blatantly political use of the U.S. Department of Justice, a federal agency whose mandate includes protecting and defending civil rights laws, to accomplish its anti-civil rights goals. We reject the administration's latest explanation that this attempt to further attack affirmative action policies is for the benefit of Asian Americans.

Under Supreme Court rulings, most recently in June 2016, affirmative action is a specific and established concept that allows universities to consider race as just one of many factors to build diverse campus communities that benefit all students, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Advancing Justice opposes quotas for and discrimination against Asian Americans, and we support affirmative action programs, which allow admissions officers to evaluate applicants holistically. These two concepts are separate and distinct. Affirmative action expands educational opportunities for all applicants in a society where cultural and racial biases in testing and access to quality education deny many students equal opportunity. Low-income and working class Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders significantly benefit from affirmative action policies. Advancing Justice-LA is currently representing diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander students and applicants who support and benefit from affirmative action policies in an existing case against Harvard University.

In the broader context of escalating costs and shrinking access to higher education overall, we believe that if this administration were truly interested in increasing access to higher education, it would focus on the real issues in education access and not systematically erode access for the most vulnerable students. In California, for example, Advancing Justice affiliates are fighting for increased access to higher education for all students, leading a multiracial coalition that will ensure greater resources for college preparation for all underprivileged children, increased seats in public colleges for in-state students, and more resources to help with succeeding in college.

Since the new administration has been in office, it has been moving very deliberately to operationalize its nativist agenda with policies like this one. Instead of attacking affirmative action programs, the Trump administration should use its platform to increase opportunities for all students while continuing to address the persistent equity gaps for low-income students and students of color. We support



affirmative action and refuse to allow Asian Americans to be used as a wedge between communities of color.”

CONTACT:

Jessica Jinn, (213) 241-8817, jjinn@advancingjustice-la.org

Christina So, (415) 848-7728, christinaso@advancingjustice-alc.org

Michelle Boykins, (202) 296-2300 x144, mboykins@advancingjustice-aajc.org

Brandon Lee, (773) 271-0899 x200, blee@advancingjustice-chicago.org

James Woo, (404) 585-8446, jwoo@advancingjustice-atlanta.org

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Asian Americans Advancing Justice is a national affiliation of five leading organizations advocating for the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and other underserved communities to promote a fair and equitable society for all. The affiliation's members are: Advancing Justice | AAJC (Washington, D.C.), Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (San Francisco), Advancing Justice - Los Angeles, Advancing Justice - Atlanta, and Advancing Justice - Chicago.