



Asian American Groups Applaud Decision to Uphold Race-Conscious Admissions at Harvard

Judge finds no proof of intentional discrimination against Asian American applicants

Boston, MA, October 1, 2019 — A federal court today ruled to uphold Harvard University’s race-conscious admissions policy in *Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. Harvard*. Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice) applauds the ruling, which reassures public and private universities across the country that the measured consideration of race in the application process is a valid means of evaluating a student’s qualities and achievements, providing equal opportunity, and ensuring diversity on campus.

“Today’s decision is a critical victory for Asian American students, who benefit from affirmative action and support race-conscious admissions policies,” said Aarti Kohli, executive director of Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus. “While we must do more to ensure that Asian American students do not face unequal opportunities through harassment, stereotyping and language barriers, the use of race-conscious admissions policies — which safeguard against discrimination — is an important step.”

Last year, Advancing Justice, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Lawyers For Civil Rights and pro bono counsel Arnold & Porter filed an amicus brief on behalf of Asian Americans and other students of color at Harvard who support race-conscious admissions. During the three-week trial last October, four of the students testified regarding how they benefited directly from Harvard’s race-conscious admissions process and why the consideration of race in college admissions is a safeguard against racial discrimination.

“As an Asian American, affirmative action helped give me a fair shot in Harvard’s application process,” said Sally Chen, who testified in support of Harvard in the trial last fall. “The court made the right decision for Asian Americans, for diversity in education, and for all of the students like me who believe race is an important part of our identity and something we deserve to be able to share. The fight for racial equity is far from over. I will continue to fight for race-conscious policies on behalf of other Asian American students at Harvard and across other college campuses.”

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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, DC), Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus (San Francisco), Advancing Justice – Atlanta, Advancing Justice – Chicago, and Advancing Justice – Los Angeles.

The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, was formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. Now in its 56th year, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is continuing its quest to “Move America Toward Justice.” The principal mission of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is to secure, through the rule of law, equal justice for all, particularly in the areas of criminal justice, fair housing and community development, economic justice, educational opportunities, and voting rights.

About Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the first non-profit law center dedicated to Asian immigrants and refugees ("Asian Americans") in the Southeast.

Our goal is to engage, educate and empower under-represented Asian Americans to greater civic participation.

We are one of five independent organizations that make up the national Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Together with our affiliates in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, we bring more than 100 years of collective experience in addressing the civil rights issues faced by Asian Americans and other vulnerable and underserved communities. Visit www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org.