



LDF

CELEBRATING
85
YEARS

IMPACT REPORT



LDF joins clients and partner organizations to rally in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., during the reargument of the voter redistricting case Louisiana v. Callais on Oct. 15, 2025.



Photo by Allison Shelley

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A racially equitable future is only possible when we work together. Join LDF in the fight today.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR-COUNSEL

Over 85 years ago, Thurgood Marshall and a team of lawyers founded the Legal Defense Fund to fight state-sponsored anti-Black racism using the power of law. LDF's founding was a radical experiment aimed at exposing and correcting the fundamental hypocrisy of a Constitution that purported to protect "all" while denying Black people basic rights under Jim Crow.

Led by visionary attorneys and sustained by loyal partners and supporters, LDF's work produced some of the most consequential civil rights victories of the 20th century, including the 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, which overturned "separate but equal" and expanded pathways to true equality for all.

In the decades since, LDF has remained at the forefront of nearly every multigenerational effort to secure the full rights and dignity of Black people — ensuring fairness in housing and employment, safeguarding voting rights, and advocating for a criminal legal system rooted in real justice. We've been on the front lines in courthouses, statehouses, Congress, and city halls, working alongside the communities we serve. Today, we continue to secure victories that thwart attacks on civil rights, including those waged by the second Trump administration. None of this work would be possible without you.

Devastating setbacks like the Supreme Court's decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*, which eviscerated the Voting Rights Act's prohibition against racial discrimination in redistricting, remind us that our battles are generational and demand persistence, courage, and resilience. We at LDF are driven by the belief that every action we take now, with your support, bends the long arc of history closer to justice for all.

As stewards of Justice Marshall's vision — and of the countless trailblazers who paved the way — we hold a responsibility that reaches beyond defending institutions or stopping



"We must also advance our own vision for the future: a truly multiracial democracy where dignity is honored, power is shared, and thriving is the standard."

efforts to roll back progress. We must also advance our own vision for the future: a truly multiracial democracy where dignity is honored, power is shared, and thriving is the standard. This is the dream we carry, and with the support of our community, it is the dream we are determined to realize for generations to come.

Janai S. Nelson

President & Director-Counsel
Legal Defense Fund

85 YEARS OF THE LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

WE WERE BUILT FOR THIS

Since 1940,
LDF has led
the fight for
civil rights
in America

LDF's Landmark Supreme Court Cases

1954



Thurgood Marshall

Briggs v. Elliott
Helped rule school
segregation
unconstitutional

1962

**Constance
Baker Motley**

Meredith v. Fair
Reinforced desegregation
in higher education

1969

Norman C. Amaker

*Allen v. State Board
of Elections (II)*
Challenged discriminatory
changes to voting practices

1971

Elizabeth DuBois

Groppi v. Wisconsin
Protects right to
unbiased jury trial

LDF staff members Aly Fosbury, Nia Warren, Larnee Satchell, and Dillon Jules II at the 2025 Selma Jubilee.
Photo by Roberto Hernandez



1982

James S. Liebman

Enmund v. Florida

Ruled the death penalty requires intent to take a life

1985

Charles Stephen Ralston

Webb v. Board of Education of Dyer County

Denied awarding of legal fees for pre-lawsuit school hearings

1986

Julius L. Chambers

Thornburg v. Gingles

Stopped discriminatory gerrymandering

1987

John Charles Boger

McCleskey v. Kemp

Allowed death penalty despite proof of racial disparities

Confronting a Racist Reality

LDF's story starts in an era when criminal justice systems in the United States were thoroughly entangled with state-sanctioned racism, particularly targeting descendants of enslaved African people who had built the nation's economy. Thurgood Marshall, who would become the first Black U.S. Supreme Court Justice, founded LDF on March 20, 1940, establishing the nation's first civil and human rights law firm.

Black people confronted entrenched segregation, suppressed voting rights, unequal education access, and limited economic opportunity. LDF emerged specifically to change that reality. During our early decades, we mounted a coordinated legal strategy against state-sponsored segregation. Years of strategic litigation and moral urgency poured into public school segregation cases, culminating in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 landmark victory that declared state-sponsored school segregation unconstitutional. When the Supreme Court unanimously rejected the unconstitutional lie of "separate but equal" in *Brown*, it demolished Jim Crow's legal foundations in education. The ruling remains one of the most consequential in American history.

Schooling was never the limit of LDF's ambition, though. We pursued racial justice and equality by going after racist and discriminatory laws and practices directly, building legal precedents along the way. Voting rights protections. Challenges to discriminatory hiring. Fights against segregation in housing, hospitals, and public accommodations. LDF showed up at the front lines of the nation's hardest-won Supreme Court battles.



Having marked our 85th anniversary, LDF is summoning a **new generation of activists, lawyers, and everyday individuals** to rise and carry forward both our legacy and commitment.

1988

Penda D. Hair

Patterson v. McLean Credit Union
Restricted lawsuit damages for ongoing racial workplace abuse

1991

Pamela S. Karlan

Chisom v. Roemer
Applied voting protections to state judicial elections

1995

Theodore M. Shaw

Missouri v. Jenkins
Restricted federal oversight of local school districts

Landmark Victories

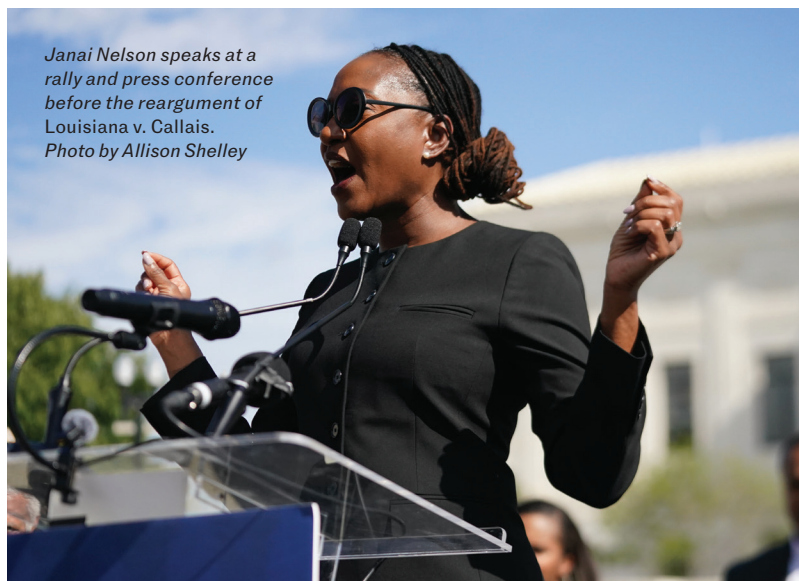
During the 1950s and '60s, the height of the Civil Rights Movement, LDF provided counsel and representation to civil rights figures and grassroots organizers facing high-stakes court battles that would reshape U.S. law and society. With our victory in *Brown v. Board of Education*, LDF gained the legal and moral momentum to pursue the next generation of civil rights battles and was well-positioned to press forward into a new era of legal advocacy for racial equality. Through litigation work in the 1960s, the Supreme Court struck down state-sanctioned segregation in public buildings, parks, hospitals, restaurants, and other public spaces.

LDF's founders dared to imagine a radically different America — one where Black people could thrive and experience the **fundamental civil rights** to which they are entitled.

In 1971, Jack Greenberg, LDF's second Director-Counsel, represented 13 Black employees at Duke Power's Dan River Steam Station in North Carolina. In *Griggs v. Duke Power*, the Court ruled Duke Power had violated the 1964 Civil Rights Act by disproportionately disqualifying Black employees using disparate impact practices. That ruling strengthened protections for equal employment opportunities regardless of race and prohibited artificial employment barriers regardless of intent.



Undated photo of Derrick Bell and Constance Baker Motley reviewing legal materials in LDF's library in New York City.



Janai Nelson speaks at a rally and press conference before the reargument of *Louisiana v. Callais*. Photo by Allison Shelley

2004

George H. Kendall

Banks v. Dretke

Enforced the state's duty to disclose evidence

2009

Debo P. Adegbile

Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District No. 1 v. Holder

Maintained voting protections while easing requirements

2017

Christina A. Swarns

Buck v. Davis

Condemned racist expert testimony in capital sentencing trials

2023

Deuel Ross

Allen v. Milligan

Upheld federal protections against racial vote dilution



Left: Elizabeth Eckford reflects on an iconic 1958 photograph in LDF's Washington, D.C., office in 2025. It shows her seated on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court with other members of the Little Rock Nine, along with Thurgood Marshall and civil rights activist Daisy Bates.



LDF staff and board members convene in Atlanta.



Janai Nelson, South Carolina NAACP President Brenda Murphy, plaintiff Taiwan Scott, and LDF Senior Counsel Leah Aden on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court after oral argument in *Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP* on Oct. 11, 2023. Photo by Allison Shelley

LDF's impact on criminal justice becomes even clearer when examining how its work reshaped rules surrounding extreme punishment. *Furman v. Georgia* in 1972, a case we brought forward, saw the Supreme Court strike down the death penalty as it was then being applied. Its arbitrary and discriminatory application violated the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments.

Our work protecting voting rights today finds its roots in Thurgood Marshall's 1944 victory in *Smith v. Allwright*, which he considered his most important case. The Supreme Court ruled 8-1 that the exclusion of Black Americans from voting in Texas's Democratic primary elections violated the Fifteenth Amendment. Black voter registration vastly improved following the ruling, causing Marshall to recognize the case as "a giant milestone in the progress of Negro Americans toward full citizenship."

Fighting for the Dream

LDF's founders dared to imagine a radically different America — one where Black people could thrive and experience the fundamental civil rights to which they are entitled. They dreamed of a nation where those civil rights, justice, and opportunities would not be reserved for a few but extended to all. Their victories laid the foundation for the continued fight in an ongoing struggle. Our 85-year milestone served as both a celebration and a warning that democracy in America remains unfinished.

By connecting past to present, LDF doesn't just remember what has been won. We compel all in America to imagine what can still be.

2024

Leah C. Aden

Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP
Made proving racial gerrymandering more difficult

2025

Stuart C. Naifeh

Louisiana v. Callais
Defended the constitutionality of majority-minority districts

2025



Janai Nelson

Louisiana v. Callais
Reargument of the constitutionality of majority-minority districts

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Fighting Project 2025

LDF OPPOSES THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORT TO DISMANTLE CIVIL RIGHTS

As the country moves through another Trump presidency, LDF is responding with clarity, preparation, and institutional memory. We have experience confronting an administration intent on rolling back civil rights protections, and that experience shapes how we meet this moment.

For over 85 years, LDF has defended the rights, dignity, and political power of Black communities, building the legal, policy, and research expertise required to respond when democratic norms are under threat. Many of the administration's actions over the last year have closely aligned with Project 2025, a sweeping and extremist blueprint designed to consolidate power within the executive branch, weaken democratic checks and balances, and dismantle longstanding civil rights protections.



Not Our First Trump Presidency

During President Trump's first term in office, LDF took steps to challenge policies that harmed Black communities. We sued to block bans on diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings; defended Temporary Protected Status for Haitian immigrants; secured court-ordered protections to ensure timely delivery of mail-in ballots during the 2020 election; and litigated against efforts to overturn election results by disenfranchising Black voters in Michigan.

Meeting Every Challenge

In October 2024, LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute published "Attack on Our Power and Dignity: What Project 2025 Means for Black Communities," a comprehensive, 96-page analysis detailing how Project 2025 would undermine Black political power, limit access to quality education, weaken worker and civil rights protections, promote punitive public safety policies, and threaten housing, reproductive rights, and environmental protections. The report also presents a vision for a multiracial democracy where Black communities can thrive.

Building on this analysis, LDF continues to fight back through litigation, policy advocacy, and public education. We are tracking how Project 2025 is being implemented and challenging actions that erode equal opportunity and democratic accountability. LDF's imperative is to remain a steady force that protects rights, demands accountability, and forges the path toward a free and equitable democracy. While Project 2025 puts forth its agenda to roll back our democracy, LDF is following through with our affirmative vision of creating a multiracial democracy where power is shared, dignity is sacred, and thriving is the standard.



MARKING A DECADE OF BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES

The last decade has been shaped by community demands to end racialized police violence and build sustainable safety for Black communities. LDF launched its Policing Reform Campaign in 2015 in the wake of the police killings and in-custody deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, and others. In 2020, the campaign became the Justice in Public Safety Project (JPP) and continues

to advance LDF's commitment to end racially discriminatory police practices and build community-centered safety.

The Justice in Public Safety Project

Through litigation, policy advocacy, community organizing, research, and strategic communications, the JPP works to deter and redress discriminatory policing, expand

public safety alternatives to law enforcement, and protect the foundations of multiracial democracy. From supporting local campaigns that challenge racially biased policing practices to advancing LDF's Framework for Public Safety, the project brings together interdisciplinary strategies to shift power and invest in solutions that allow communities to thrive without undue reliance on law enforcement.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

HONORING LEADERS IN THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

The National Equal Justice Awards Dinner (NEJAD), LDF's signature annual fundraising event, was held on May 15, 2025, in New York City to honor those who advance the fight for racial justice and equality for all. Hosted by actor Tony Goldwyn and featuring a performance by award-winning R&B and soul singer-songwriter Andra Day, the dinner assembled nearly 600 leaders in law, business, philanthropy, sports, and the arts, and highlighted the 85-year legacy that shapes LDF's mission and the urgency of the work ahead. Thanks to support from dozens of sponsors and in-room contributions, NEJAD generated funds for LDF's mission-critical work.

2025 Honorees Span Spectrum of Advocacy

Actor, author, and civil rights activist George Takei was recognized for his leadership and advocacy for marginalized groups. Takei has long been a voice for justice, drawing on his childhood experience of being illegally imprisoned at 5 years old with 120,000 other Japanese Americans during World War II. That injustice fueled his lifelong commitment to advancing the rights of Asian Americans, LGBTQ+ communities, immigrants, and Black Americans.

LDF proudly honored the Mellon Foundation, the nation's largest funder of arts, culture, and humanities, and a

vital supporter of LDF's work. The Foundation's commitment to building just communities through the arts and humanities propels us toward our shared vision of a fair and equitable society.

In a highlight of the evening, LDF paid tribute to the Spirit of Selma, marking the 60th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The tribute honored activists and civil rights leaders, including Rev. Jesse Jackson, SNCC Freedom Singer Charles Neblett, and Sheyann Webb Christburg — the youngest marcher on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday — whose collective courage in Selma, alongside hundreds of others, secured voting rights for generations.



Yusef DuBois Jackson, Janai Nelson, Rev. Jesse Jackson, George Takei, Brad Takei.
Photo by Margot Jordan



Reyna Roberts performs at NEJAD. Photo by Margot Jordan



Dennis D. Parker, Hon. Ronald L. Ellis, Former LDF PDG Elaine Jones, Hon. O. Peter Sherwood.
Photo by Margot Jordan

Alumni Reception Celebrates LDF's Legacy

LDF HONORS FIVE CHAMPIONS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS WITH THE PIONEER OF JUSTICE AWARD

On Oct. 9, 2025, we gathered generations of former staff — including all living Presidents and Directors-Counsel and LDF staff at LDF spanning the tenures of every President and Director-Counsel, including Thurgood Marshall — to celebrate trailblazing advocacy and those who shaped it. The event presented the Pioneer of Justice Award to Kristen Clarke, former Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice; Vanita Gupta, former Associate Attorney General of the United States; Dennis D. Parker, former Executive Director of the National Center for Law and Economic Justice; the Hon. O. Peter Sherwood, retired New York State Supreme Court Justice; and Bill Lann Lee, former Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice, for their leadership and commitment to advancing equality and protecting civil rights. The contributions of these leaders embody the enduring spirit that has fueled LDF's collective pursuit of justice for over eight decades.

LDF Launches New Substack

SUBSCRIBERS RECEIVE NEWS, STORIES, AND UPDATES FROM LDF

In January 2025, LDF debuted its Substack website and newsletter, which are dedicated to shaping narratives and

uplifting stories at this pivotal moment in our democracy. Subscribers receive a weekly newsletter containing all articles published by LDF staff throughout the week, including original opinions, insights, justice wins, and reporting that amplify racial justice news, inform audiences, and

counter misinformation. All supporters are invited to subscribe to LDF's Substack to receive content illuminating injustices, celebrating progress, and advocating for the communities we serve. Visit legaldefensefund.substack.com to subscribe.

SCAN QR CODE
TO SUBSCRIBE



MEET THE FULL COHORT OF MARSHALL-MOTLEY SCHOLARS

The Marshall-Motley Scholars Program (MMSP) was created in 2021 to produce a pipeline of civil rights lawyers trained to protect the rights, freedoms, and political power

of Black communities across the South. Now in its fifth year, the program remains the only one of its kind, offering full law school scholarships, professional development, summer internship

placements, and a postgraduate commitment to civil rights lawyering in the region. These investments ensure that Southern communities have dedicated advocates equipped to confront modern threats to democracy, equity, and justice.

LDF's seventh Director-Counsel, Sherrilyn Ifill, and then Associate Director-Counsel Janai Nelson, brought the MMSP to life, naming it in honor of Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley. The program is modeled after LDF's fellowship program, The Earl Warren Legal Training Program, which launched in the 1960s to support young lawyers in the South with the resources and infrastructure to build a civil rights practice. Julius Chambers, LDF's third Director-Counsel, was one of the first two fellows in the Warren program and served as the inspiration to grow the cooperating attorney network, a collection of Southern civil rights lawyers who work with LDF to represent Black communities.

The program has met its goal of supporting 50 Marshall-Motley Scholars, who represent a powerful cross section of the South's future legal leadership. Each cohort brings a diversity of talent and commitment to issues ranging from voting rights and community safety, to the expansion of high-quality educational opportunities for Black students and tax policy to preserve Black home ownership.

The scholars are organizers, researchers, policy advocates, youth leaders, and community builders. They each share a commitment to using the law as a tool to confront discrimination, expand access to the ballot, protect civil liberties, and advance equal justice across the South.

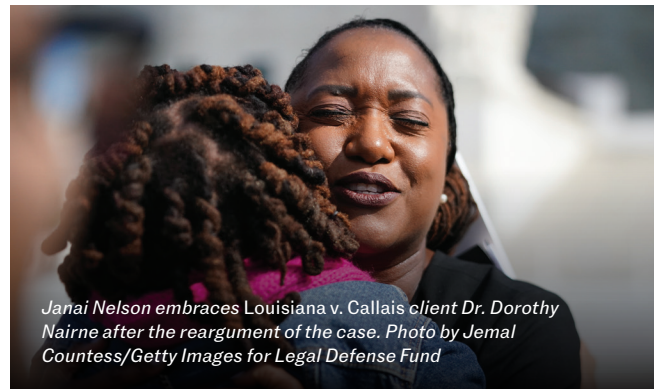


THE BATTLE FOR FAIR CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

LDF argues for fair district maps across Louisiana and beyond



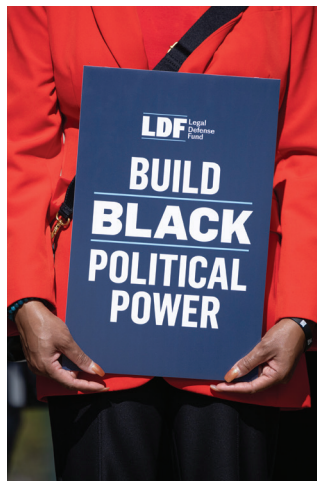
LDF joins partner organizations to rally during the reargument of Louisiana v. Callais. Photo by Allison Shelley



Janai Nelson embraces Louisiana v. Callais client Dr. Dorothy Nairne after the reargument of the case. Photo by Jemal Countess/Getty Images for Legal Defense Fund



Stuart C. Naifeh speaks as Black Louisiana voters and civil rights advocates call on the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold a fair and representative congressional map in Louisiana v. Callais on March 24, 2025, in Washington, D.C. Photo by Jemal Countess/Getty Images for Legal Defense Fund





“Our long-contested political process is a means to access life’s opportunities. Extraordinary ordinary people have long fought for their inclusion in this process. I proudly serve a small role in supporting that valiant struggle.”

— LEAH C. ADEN, LDF SENIOR COUNSEL

On April 29, 2026, the Supreme Court issued a 6-3 ruling in *Louisiana v. Callais* that upended Black Louisiana voters’ opportunity to elect their candidates of choice and gutted one of the last remaining safeguards against discrimination in the Voting Rights Act (VRA). However, because of the Court’s disastrous ruling, what’s at stake now is every voter’s opportunity to choose leaders who will represent their best interests.

Fair representation is foundational to democracy. Without the protections of the VRA, voters may have fewer chances to elect leaders who reflect their lived realities, lessening their power over decisions that shape their schools, health care, infrastructure, environment, and economic future.

CHALLENGING THE PRIOR DISCRIMINATORY MAP

In 2022, the Louisiana legislature passed a congressional map that included only one majority-Black district, despite the fact that Black voters make up one-third of the state’s population. Civil rights groups, including LDF, challenged this discriminatory map under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits voting practices that discriminate based on race. At the time, the courts agreed the map violated federal law and ordered the creation of a second majority-Black district. The legislature complied, and in 2024, Louisiana enacted Senate Bill (SB) 8, a new map with two majority-Black districts.

However, opponents of fair representation were not done. A group of self-titled “non-African American voters” filed a lawsuit claiming the legislature’s map was an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. LDF and co-counsel stepped in to defend SB 8. Despite these efforts, a federal three-judge panel struck down the map in May 2024, saying it overly prioritized race when drawing the second opportunity district for Black voters. LDF appealed this decision, arguing that the ruling misinterpreted the VRA and the Constitution and could jeopardize other states’ ability to rectify discriminatory maps.

LDF’s appeal brought the case before the U.S. Supreme Court for oral argument in March 2025 and for reargument in October 2025. LDF argued that SB 8’s map complied with the VRA because the state’s demographics, geography, and political landscape support the conclusion that Black voters

must have two districts in order to have a fair chance to elect candidates of their choice. Before arguments, the Supreme Court froze the lower court’s ruling, allowing the fair map of SB 8 to remain in place for the 2025 elections. However, because of this disastrous ruling, the Louisiana legislature was given the green light to use partisan purposes as a smokescreen for racial disenfranchisement.

THE IMPACT ACROSS AMERICA

Louisiana v. Callais wasn’t solely about legal doctrine — it’s a case that shows us what representation looks like in real life. When districts reflect the communities they serve, it allows voters the opportunity to elect leaders who understand the realities of their constituents. When maps dilute Black voting power, Black voters’ voices are silenced. The Voting Rights Act, one of the most important civil rights laws in the country’s history, is now a “dead letter,” offering no reprieve to those most at risk of discrimination in voting.

While redistricting normally happens at the start of every decade to reflect updated U.S. census data, the consequences of dramatic mid-decade redistricting, like we’re seeing now, can last for generations. After the ruling, multiple states across the country, including many areas where communities of color have been historically underrepresented, moved to introduce maps that could severely impede fair representation.

WE’VE BEEN HERE BEFORE

Achieving fair representation in Louisiana is part of our broader mission. Since 2020, LDF has argued multiple redistricting cases before the Supreme Court, including in Alabama and South Carolina. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, as well as our “Redistricting Watch” series on Substack, we continue to monitor and fight against practices that seek to silence Black voters and weaken their influence.

Despite the Supreme Court’s ruling, our belief is clear: Representation is power. The fight for fair maps is a fight for a democracy where all communities are seen, heard, and valued. And our democracy is worth defending. LDF believes progress is possible, but only through a sustained commitment to keep fighting forward.

PRESERVING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

LDF opposes illegal directive that would prevent millions of Americans from voting

In March 2025, President Trump signed an executive order to force the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to amend the federal voter registration form to require a specific list of documents to prove American citizenship. Additionally, the executive order directed the EAC to withhold funding from states that don't require proof of citizenship documents. These changes conflict with federal law and the Constitution, and therefore are unlawful.

AN UNLAWFUL ORDER

Rather than continuing to provide Americans with accessible opportunities to register to vote, the executive order demanded compliance with new regulations that would disproportionately impact voters of color. The order flies in the face of one of the foundational principles of our democracy — a president is not a king; they cannot violate the separation of powers to change elections and

disenfranchise millions of voters. This executive order was coordinated with attempts to impose these barriers through legislation. In January, the SAVE America Act was introduced in Congress, aiming to require every American to provide documentary proof of citizenship (such as a passport, birth certificate, or citizenship certificate) to register or re-register to vote. This legislation would functionally eliminate online and mail-in voter registration and create a new poll tax for voters who need to purchase additional citizenship documentation. These changes would also overwhelmingly affect people who have legally changed their name, citizens in rural communities, as well as Black people, people of color, and low-income voters who may struggle to obtain these documents.

SUCCESS IN FEDERAL COURT

LDF and a coalition of leading civil rights and advocacy organizations filed a federal lawsuit, *League of Women*

Voters v. Trump, challenging the executive order and naming it as an overreach of presidential power as the president cannot solely set election laws; only Congress and states can.

The lawsuit led to a temporary order that prohibited the EAC from enacting the president's executive order requirements. The coalition continued to fight to make this protection permanent, and in October, the court ruled in the coalition's favor by permanently barring the EAC from enforcing parts of the executive order that would force voters to provide documentation proving citizenship.

LDF continues to vehemently oppose any action that disproportionately harms voters' access to the ballot. While the executive order was halted in court, the SAVE America Act could still explicitly affect the country's most marginalized communities. Despite its name, the SAVE America Act saves no one, but rather seeks to limit access to the ballot box by weakening the political power of the country's growing, diverse electorate.

THE SAVE ACT IS A POLL TAX
THE SAVE ACT IS A POLL TAX
THE SAVE ACT IS A POLL TAX
THE SAVE ACT IS A POLL TAX

Making people buy new IDs?
That's just a poll tax with new packaging.

THE VRA IN ACTION: REDISTRICTING WINS



Black Louisiana voters and civil rights advocates call on the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold a fair and representative congressional map in *Louisiana v. Callais* on March 24, 2025, in Washington, D.C. Photo by Jemal Countess/Getty Images for Legal Defense Fund

Before *Callais*, the VRA, which turned 60 in 2025, was the strongest tool LDF had to confront efforts to weaken Black political power in court. In Alabama, Louisiana, and Tennessee, LDF supported three redistricting cases where legislatures tried to push the limits of the VRA and the Constitution to dilute the strength of Black voters. Many of our challenges were successful, which compounds the devastating impact of the Supreme Court's decision.

Louisiana

In *Nairne v. Landry*, LDF represented Black Louisianans who challenged state legislative maps that ignored patterns of racially polarized voting and failed to create the required additional majority-Black districts. In August 2025, the court affirmed LDF's argument that Louisiana's maps violated Section 2 of the VRA by unfairly dividing communities into state districts that diluted their voting power.

Alabama

LDF went to trial in *McClure v. Jefferson County Commission* to expose the county's attempt to ensure Black voters would remain underrepresented and prevent fairly drawn districts from going into effect. In September 2025, a federal court permanently blocked the map, ruling that the current districts violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

Tennessee

In Fayette County, Tennessee, LDF challenged a 2021 county commission map that left Black voters with no opportunities to elect a preferred candidate to any of the 19 commissioner positions. Lawmakers unanimously adopted a fairer map in June 2025, which created three new majority-Black districts ahead of 2026 elections.

Committed to the Dream

Fair maps are imperative to civil rights, enabling Black communities to meaningfully influence decisions that shape their lives today and in the future. This is the dream for a multiracial democracy, and LDF is committed to using all the tools we have — in courthouses, statehouses, and communities — to secure it.

State Voting Rights Acts for the Future

As Black voters and other voters of color face the greatest assault on their voting rights since the Jim Crow era, a growing number of states are acting to protect the right to vote and safeguard our democracy. By passing State Voting Rights Acts (State VRAs), states can

safeguard their constituents from discriminatory voting practices and policies. State VRAs have been gaining traction. Eleven states have enacted State VRAs, and at least eight others have introduced a State VRA in their legislatures. Seventy-eight percent of

voters support passing a State VRA where they live, and LDF is working tirelessly to ensure legislators heed this clear directive from their constituents, including by crafting model legislation and organizing legislative and community support in key states.

FIGHTING TO PROTECT PUBLIC EDUCATION

Through three federal lawsuits, LDF is taking action against the Department of Education's attacks on equal educational opportunities for all



Sydney Satchell, 2024 Paralympic gold medalist, speaks at the LDF Selma Teach-In. Photo by Roberto Hernandez

In the United States, students' right to access equal education — regardless of who they are, where they live, or what language they speak — is under attack. But LDF is on the front lines, defending every student's right to educational opportunity. When the U.S. Department of Education under the Trump administration began dismantling decades of progress, we responded with three federal lawsuits aimed at pushing back against these illegal efforts and protecting students' ability to learn.

PROTECTING STUDENTS' CIVIL RIGHTS

In early 2025, the Department of Education sent out communications targeting civil rights protections in schools. The department spread inaccurate information and misinterpretations of civil rights laws, attempting to prohibit and chill lawful efforts to ensure equal educational opportunity access for Black students and to terminate critical public education funds.

The Promise of *Brown v. Board*

LDF's landmark victory in *Brown v. Board of Education* struck down the "separate but equal" doctrine and catalyzed a national movement to end state-sanctioned segregation. More than 70 years later, the organization continues to fight to ensure that the promise of *Brown* is realized. LDF continues to litigate dozens of school

desegregation cases nationwide, enforce court orders, and challenge discriminatory policies to ensure that Black children receive equal, high-quality educational opportunities. LDF also advocates for policies that promote inclusive, well-resourced schools and dismantle systemic barriers to education.

Through this work, LDF serves as a critical force against efforts by the Trump administration's Justice Department to abandon enforcement of existing desegregation orders and terminate federal supervision without holding school systems to the well-established standards for ensuring elimination of unlawful race discrimination.

On April 15, 2025, LDF filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the NAACP, arguing that the Department of Education's communications are legally flawed and that the department is intentionally discriminating against Black students.

PRESERVING ACCESS TO CRITICAL DATA

The Department of Education made a series of decisions in 2025 that included ceasing collecting, maintaining, analyzing, and disseminating federal education data. This information is critical to ensuring that researchers can study educational outcomes for Black, Native, Indigenous, and Latino students, as well as students with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

On April 24, 2025, LDF filed a federal lawsuit representing the National Academy of Education and National Council on Measurement in Education, alleging that the department is illegally undermining efforts to track and advance equal access to education nationwide.

SAFEGUARDING EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTERS

Equity assistance centers have helped students gain equal access to educational resources in the United States since 1964. But on Feb. 13, 2025, the Department of Education abruptly and arbitrarily terminated the federal equity assistance center program, which funded the centers across the nation.

On May 8, 2025, LDF filed a lawsuit on behalf of the NAACP and the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium arguing that the department's elimination of these programs is part of the Trump administration's unlawful and discriminatory attack on so-called "diversity, equity, and inclusion" initiatives. They are ignoring anti-discrimination laws and stripping away vital resources that schools rely on to prevent and remedy discrimination based on race, national origin, gender, and religion.

Every student in America deserves equal access to education, regardless of who they are. LDF has met this challenge before and will continue to fight for students' right to learn.

LDF BRINGS THE FIGHT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION TO CONGRESS

As the organization that litigated and won *Brown v. Board of Education*, LDF issued a call for lawmakers to support equitable, high-quality academic instruction

On Feb. 5, 2025, LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson testified before the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, urging lawmakers to defend equal educational opportunity and fulfill the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

ENCOURAGING FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY

In her testimony, Nelson argued that public education is fundamental to the nation's future. "Public education is not only critical to creating pathways for all to meaningfully participate in our economy, but is essential to defending our multiracial democracy," she said. But "the current administration has prioritized legislation and executive action that may further deny access to a quality education for all students."

Calling on Congress to reject efforts to shirk federal responsibility in public education, Nelson called out efforts to

dismantle the Department of Education and upend the critical civil rights oversight it provides. She laid out a clear vision for equal opportunity: "Public schools in America must deliver quality education for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, disability, religion, or any other identifying characteristic."

'A PUBLIC GOOD FOR ALL'

Yet that vision is still a dream, not a reality. Poor education policy and decades of resistance to *Brown's* mandate of desegregation have resulted in underfunded school systems and underachieving schools. Nelson called on Congress to act, urging lawmakers to support a public education system that "welcomes, includes, and is safe for all."

The stakes could not be higher: "Education is a civil right and a public good for all," she said. From arguing and winning *Brown v. Board of Education* to confronting the challenges of today, LDF remains committed to advancing educational equity in America.

PROVIDING RESOURCES TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS

LDF believes that the right of every student to access education fairly and fully is crucial for a well-functioning, multiracial democracy. For generations, the role of the U.S. Department of Education was to fulfill that right by enforcing civil rights laws, safeguarding protections, and providing critical resources to ensure that all students can learn.

But recent proposals from the Trump administration have attacked the department, aiming to dismantle and weaken its authority. Effective challenges to these actions come from both LDF and its partners, as well as local advocacy groups, community members, students, and parents who are equipped with the knowledge and information to hold school boards accountable; fight for passage of policies that protect equal access to resources, funding, and accountability; and make their voices heard.

To empower students and their families in their fight for educational equity, LDF created a policy advocacy resource, available on our website, that explains the Trump administration's proposals and provides information in three key areas: students' rights to a discrimination-free education; funding for elementary and secondary education; and funding and accountability in higher education.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS TO A DISCRIMINATION-FREE EDUCATION

In equipping students and parents to address their rights to an education free of discrimination, LDF provides guidelines for advocating for themselves; filing complaints with the department's Office of Civil Rights;

championing the continued collection of data; fighting for passage of policies; and electing pro-civil rights school board members.

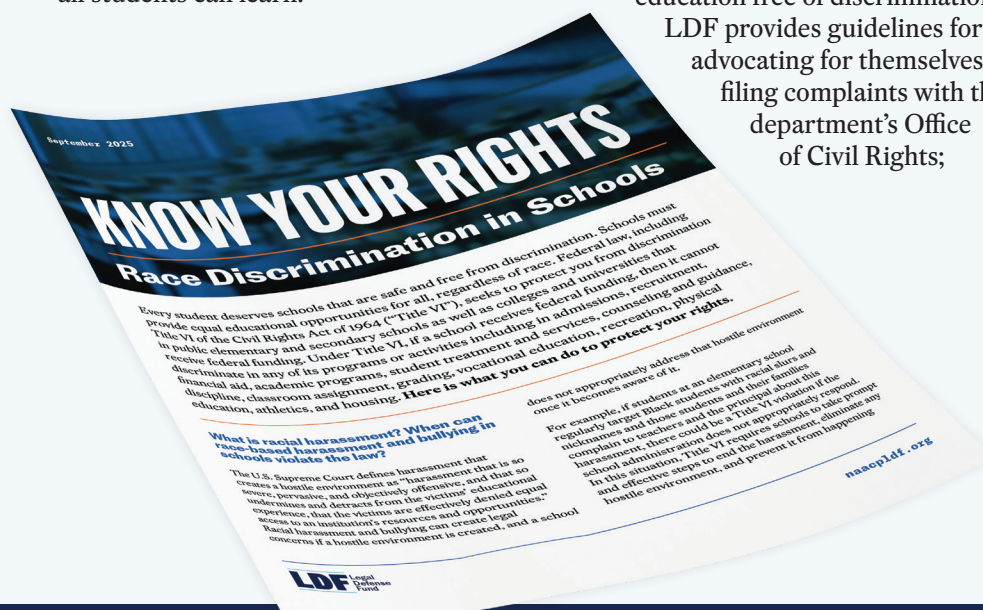
The resource includes guides on developing racially inclusive school programming; addressing harassment based on race, color, or national origin; and confronting racial discrimination in school discipline. It also includes a special section on the rights of students who are English learners, who are guaranteed the right to participate equally and meaningfully in school under federal law.

FUNDING FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Funding cuts would be detrimental to all schools, but they have a disproportionate impact on schools that serve disadvantaged and low-income students and students with disabilities. LDF directs students and parents to work with their local school district to understand which programs are supported by federal dollars and to share personal stories on how this funding has affected their lives, encouraging elected officials to maintain funding.

FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This resource gives students and parents information on how to submit formal comments on changes to higher education rules and regulations that would affect their ability to access vital funds that can pay for school. It takes a whole community to challenge these actions — and LDF will continue to provide resources to empower all to take part.



THE FUTURE BELONGS TO US

How four Black students are standing up for their dreams

In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* was a catalyst for a vision of public education that serves the needs of all children and supports democracy. Yet that fight continues today, and LDF is at work to inspire the next generation to join in. Recently, lawmakers have waged a war against public education, taking steps to gut the U.S. Department of Education, threaten public school funding, and censor the teaching of America's history in classrooms.

But Black students involved with LDF's initiatives are fighting for their futures and the nation — for a vision of equality, justice, and unconfined dreams.

Ja'Kobe Bibbs, president of the NAACP chapter at the University of Alabama, where he's a junior, and a recent intern with the Southern Poverty Law Center, is working to change the narrative through events on voting rights and legislative advocacy. He's a plaintiff in LDF's lawsuit *Simon v. Ivey*, challenging Alabama's law censoring inclusive curriculum and programs in public colleges and universities. "Our voices carry the power to shape narratives, challenge systems and demand accountability," he says.

Aaliyah Pichon, a second-year law student at George Washington University and aspiring civil rights attorney in LDF's Marshall-Motley Scholars Program (MMSP), finds empowerment in staying informed and engaged. As community service chair of her school's Black Law Student Association, she believes speaking up isn't optional. "Laying claim to the future means taking responsibility for shaping what's to come," she says.

Dijon Stokes, a second-year law student at Howard University and aspiring civil rights attorney in MMSP, is passionate about criminal justice reform. He draws strength from past movements. "The Civil Rights Movement didn't happen in a day," he says. "I can say, like those before us did, that I'm locked into this for life and I'm not going anywhere."

Sydney Testman, a senior at the University of Alabama–Birmingham and plaintiff in *Simon v. Ivey*, believes in the power of building community. She recognizes that Black students must advocate for themselves. "No one else is going to be the advocates for us," she says. "We have to be the ones to put our names and voices in those rooms — or it just won't happen."



"LDF has been part of my family's story for generations — first as clients in *Briggs v. Elliott*, which helped shape the landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and later when my wife and I relied on LDF to represent us in a fair housing case. We have long admired LDF's unwavering pursuit of justice and proudly support their work. It is truly an organization for all seasons." — LUTHER RAGIN

FIGHTING INTOLERANCE AND ECONOMIC ERASURE IN THE COURTS

LDF challenges three executive orders that seek to block equal access to essential services

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are among our country's greatest strengths. They are also essential for advancing our multiracial democracy. But in 2025, President Trump signed two anti-equity executive orders and one anti-gender executive order undermining these principles and posing a direct threat to organizations that support diverse communities. LDF quickly stepped in to challenge those harmful orders on behalf of two organizations.

The National Urban League (NUL) and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago provide critical and often life-sustaining services and support to people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities. Trump's executive orders related to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and transgender people pose an existential threat to these organizations. Together, these orders reverse decades of civil rights progress. Countering this agenda, LDF and Lambda Legal filed *National Urban League v. Trump* on behalf of these two organizations on Feb. 19, 2025.

In the lawsuit, NUL and AIDS Foundation of Chicago argue that the executive orders would prevent them from fulfilling their missions, leaving their communities without critical services. The lawsuit also makes clear that these executive orders make America less fair, less prosperous, and less safe — to the detriment of all Americans. LDF will continue to uphold diversity and support organizations that care for diverse communities.

Ensuring Access to Clean, Affordable Water

Due to rising water bills, shutoffs, and property liens from water bills, millions of people have trouble accessing clean, affordable water. Black households are more likely to experience water shutoffs, with nearly one in three Black families facing unaffordable bills compared to one in 10 white families. For years, LDF has partnered with local advocates to address water affordability and access issues for Black communities, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Wins for Clean Water

In DeKalb County, Georgia, through a strategic combination of community organizing and advocacy, LDF worked with our partners at DeKalb Water Watch to score a victory for low-income communities in their fight for water access. In February 2025, county commissioners passed new legislation, leading to income-based water debt forgiveness for low-income residents with past water and sewer billing debt. This first-of-its-kind policy in the Deep South is an important initial step in addressing longstanding issues of inequity in water utility costs.

In Cleveland, Ohio, LDF challenged several of the city's water policies and practices, including its policy of placing liens on residents' homes for unpaid water bills through a federal class action lawsuit filed in December 2019. Plaintiffs alleged the water lien policy constituted racial discrimination under the Fair Housing Act because it disproportionately impacts Black residents and places them at an increased risk of losing their home. In June 2025, Black homeowners and residents won a major victory when a federal appellate court allowed them to continue a class action lawsuit that claimed discrimination under the Fair Housing Act, despite repeated attempts by the City of Cleveland to end the lawsuit.

Progress is being made — but there is still work to do. Residents in DeKalb County remain plagued with unaffordable water bills as high as \$40,000 amid uncertainty about implementation of a water affordability program. LDF will stay in the fight, advocating for clean water for all.

RESTORING WEALTH AND OPPORTUNITY TO BLACK COMMUNITIES

LDF seeks justice for descendant of Black family who was forced to leave their city

LDF is fighting to ensure the dream of economic security and advancement for Black communities becomes a reality. We are working to address past harms, break the concentration of race and poverty, and dismantle segregation. That is why, on Feb. 2, 2026, LDF joined Seyfarth Shaw LLP in filing a state lawsuit in Alameda County, California, on behalf of a descendant of Sidney and Irène Dearing, the first Black homeowners in the city of Piedmont in Alameda in 1924. The Dearings were dispossessed of their home when the city fraudulently claimed it needed to seize the family's property to construct a road for public use. The city never built the road, and the lawsuit alleges that the city never intended to do so.

The city's actions followed a relentless campaign of racial terror against the Dearings and their children to oust them from the city, including a 500-person mob at their home, threatening letters from the KKK, bricks thrown through their windows, gunshots fired at the property, and attempted bombings — all while the Piedmont police refused to provide the Dearings protection.

This case is part of a long record in California and elsewhere of governmental action to forcibly compel Black people from their property, denying Black families of the wealth and other benefits of homeownership, including access to well-resourced public schools and other community resources.



“American business leaders play a vital role in safeguarding democracy, the rule of law, and civil rights. A fair and accessible

legal system is the foundation of a stable economy and thriving markets where innovation, opportunity, and justice go hand in hand. LDF’s work to ensure equal representation and protect fundamental rights is indispensable to creating a society where businesses and communities can prosper together.” — KENNETH FRAZIER

We envision a future where Black people across the United States have access to housing in well-resourced neighborhoods where they feel safe from racial attacks, and where thriving is the standard. Seeking redress for Piedmont’s actions depriving the Dearings of their home and generational wealth is a step toward that future.

AN ALARMING ABUSE OF POWER

LDF responds to the Trump administration's attempt to intimidate residents of Washington, D.C.

Across the country, federal and state overreach in the name of public safety hits Black communities the hardest, causing real harm while claiming to protect them. From militarized deployments to aggressive policing in Black neighborhoods, Black people bear the brunt of policies justified by fear, not facts.

Under the pretense of a fabricated crime emergency, President Trump deployed the National Guard to occupy Washington, D.C., in August 2025, turning the nation's capital into a militarized zone. This misuse of military resources is an attempt to silence and instill fear in residents, and directly exposes Black communities to intimidation, danger, and unlawful surveillance. It is an alarming abuse of power that underscores the urgent need to challenge federal overreach and protect communities at risk of law enforcement abuse.

OPPOSING HARMFUL STEREOTYPES

In September 2025, LDF filed an amicus brief in *District of Columbia v. Trump* to support the District's request to halt the deployment of the National Guard.

In the brief, LDF challenged the Trump administration's purported public safety rationale, emphasizing that there was minimal credible evidence that militarized forces reduce crime. In fact, the presence of the National Guard invokes harmful and tired stereotypes about Black criminality and creates the unsafe atmosphere that comes with military occupation of Black communities.

LDF defends the constitutional rights of D.C. residents, urging the courts to uphold the preliminary injunction and deny the administration's request for a stay.



“When Thurgood Marshall hired me as the first assistant counsel at LDF, I learned not only my

profession but also how to fight for justice. Working on cases that **integrated Southern hospitals** and helped halt capital punishment shaped my life. That experience is why I have supported LDF since 1980. Their mission is as **vital today** as it was in the 1960s.”

— MICHAEL MELTSNER

NYPD Gang Database Promotes Racial Profiling

According to stop-and-frisk statistics from the New York City Police Department (NYPD), in 2023, Black New Yorkers were subjected to 59% of stop and frisks — known as Terry stops — and Latino New Yorkers to 30%. This staggering level of policing far exceeds their share of the city's population. The NYPD mirrors this disproportionate targeting in its Criminal Group Database, commonly called the Gang Database.

Drawing the Line

In April 2025, LDF, The Legal Aid Society, The Bronx Defenders, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, and Ballard Spahr filed a class-action complaint against the City of New York challenging the Gang Database. In the lawsuit, LDF argues that the database systematically targets and criminalizes Black and Latino New Yorkers, who make up about 99% of the names listed in the database, resulting in their increased detention, surveillance, and arrest.

The complaint highlights the NYPD's use of arbitrary criteria, such as where a person lives or what color clothing they wear, to racially profile and label Black and Latino New Yorkers as gang members. With no credible evidence that it improves public safety or reduces crime, the NYPD uses the Gang Database to carry out racialized policing without accountability.

LDF opposes the discriminatory and harmful Gang Database. Standing firmly against this injustice, we are drawing a clear line between public safety and racialized surveillance to end a practice that perpetuates racist harm under the guise of law enforcement.

BUILDING SAFE COMMUNITIES

LDF's Framework for Public Safety is based on empowering, not policing

Armed policing is not the answer to ensuring safe communities. LDF's Framework for Public Safety rejects the notion that criminalization, punitive approaches, and policing fueled by racial bias bring about public safety. Instead, we propose a framework rooted in law and community partnership.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT WORKS

Contrary to popular belief, a large proportion of 911 calls do not involve violence and do not require armed police presence. With the Framework for Public Safety, LDF suggests routing applicable callers to community-based responders who can connect them with social services such as housing and healthcare.

We also propose a renewed focus on investing in community resources to address the societal factors and root causes of violence. Research shows that federal, state, and local investments in employment support, public health infrastructure, affordable housing, and food security improve safety outcomes in communities.

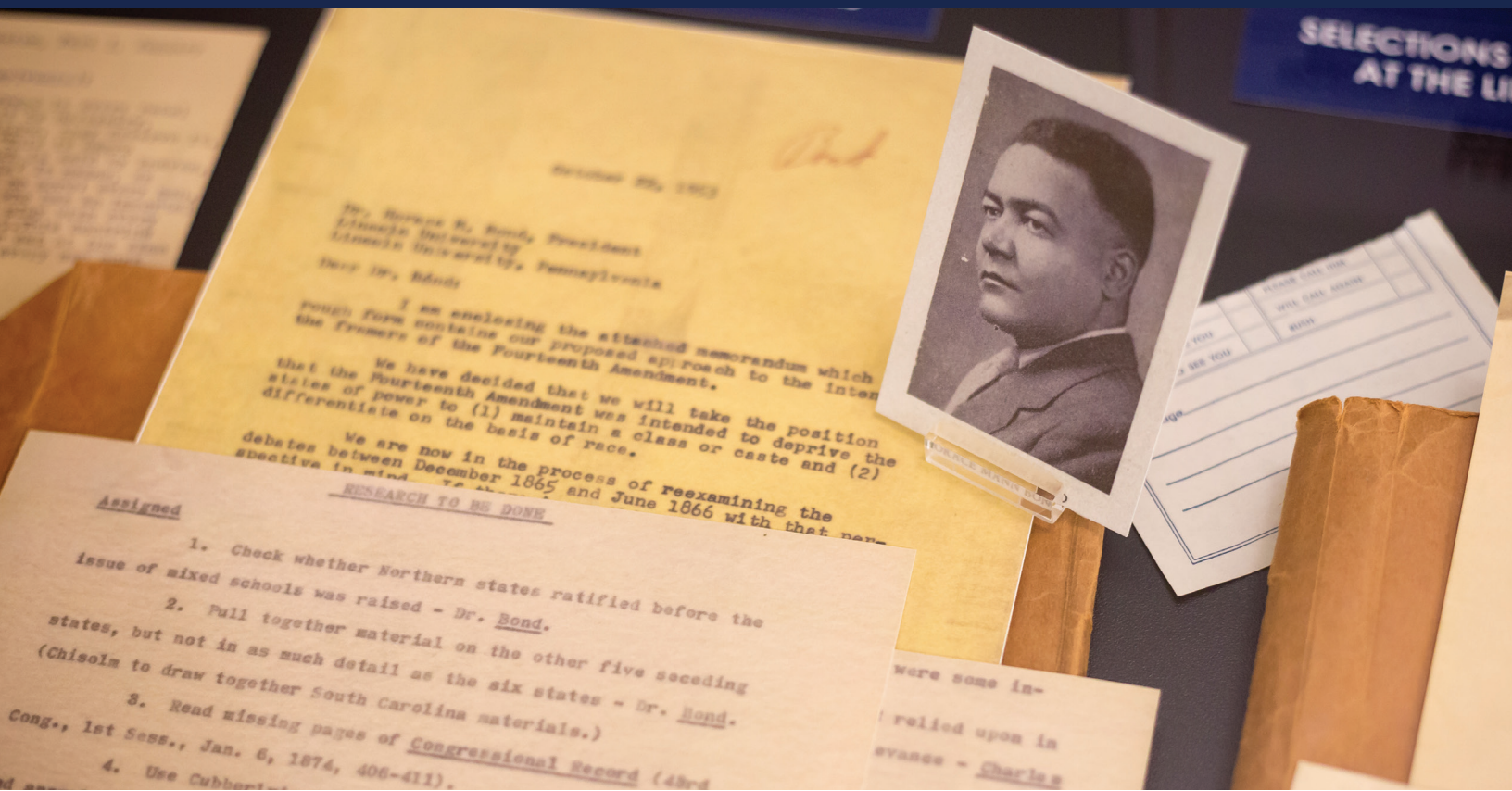
It's time to end unjust policing and criminalization. With the Framework for Public Safety, communities can build a system that repairs harm, strengthens economic security, and promotes the long-term well-being of their residents.

A Victory Against Police Violence

The 2020 killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor sparked demonstrations advocating for the elimination of racist and violent policing across all 50 states. In response to primarily peaceful demonstrations, the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) fired tear gas, flash bangs, pepper balls, and other military-grade weapons indiscriminately into large crowds. In October 2025, the ACLU of Kentucky, LDF, and law firm Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward &

Maazel LLP reached a settlement in *Attica Scott, et al. v. Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Government, et al.* on behalf of plaintiffs who were subjected to excessive force by the LMPD in violation of their First and Fourth Amendment rights.

Louisville has now made changes to its policies on protest response, including prohibiting the use of chemical and direct impact weapons to move or manage crowds at peaceful protests and creating a Civilian Review and Accountability Board.



MEETING THE MOMENT

Through exhaustive research, razor-sharp analysis, and detailed archiving, the Thurgood Marshall Institute is defending democracy

For over 85 years, LDF has paired groundbreaking litigation with rigorous research to advance racial justice. For 10 years, an expert team of social scientists and archivists at the Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI), LDF's think tank and archival repository, have used research to protect truth amid recent attacks and preserved history.

Research findings are shared widely through TMI Briefs and Reports and "Justice Above All," a podcast that explores historical and modern-day civil rights issues. TMI also manages the National Police Funding Database and holds TMI Labs, which are closed-door and off-the-record convenings of advocates to strategize around emerging racial justice issues.

Anti-Blackness in Policing and Public Safety

Research throughout 2025 exposed how longstanding practices continue to reinforce racial inequality. TMI's analysis of Project 2025 revealed plans to expand executive power, weaken civil rights enforcement, and end federal oversight of police departments. Some of these changes have already disproportionately harmed Black communities.

A deeper look at the policing of protests further illustrates these inequities. In the brief "Police and Protests," TMI documents how police were more likely to appear, escalate, and use force during the 2020 racial justice demonstrations, despite the majority of the protests being peaceful. The use

of excessive force endangered public safety and undermined protesters' First Amendment rights.

TMI also illuminated how gang databases operate as tools of racial profiling, targeting, and criminalizing Black boys and young men based on vague criteria. Notably, TMI's study of crime data in Portland and Chicago found that these cities experienced no significant increase in crime after eliminating their gang databases. These findings run counter to claims that gang databases are necessary for crime prevention and public safety.

Defending Public Education

TMI's education research highlighted how ahistorical interpretations of the law threaten educational equity for all. The podcast episode "*Brown II* at 70: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Myth of Neutrality" shows how modern courts have distorted the intent of the Reconstruction Amendments to restrict race-conscious remedies and undermine equal protection.



People view an archival display on *Brown v. Board of Education* in LDF's Washington, D.C., office.

6K+

Built by a dedicated team within TMI, "Recollection" brings together thousands of digitized documents from the 6,000+ cases LDF has litigated since the 1940s.

A deeper look at college admissions revealed how standardized testing and institutional priorities reinforce barriers for Black and low-income students, highlighting the need for equity-centered admissions processes. Additional reporting on Project 2025's education agenda warns that privatization, curriculum censorship, and cuts to early childhood programs could intensify segregation and weaken public education.

Democracy, Citizenship, and Belonging

The Institute's democracy research highlighted persistent barriers to voting and the growing strength of Black political participation. In the podcast episode "Democracy at a Crossroads," guests discussed communities that are organizing for Black political power amid historical and current voter intimidation and voter suppression tactics.

The report "Democracy Defended 2024" documents LDF's work to achieve historic gains for Black voters — from new protections under State Voting Rights Acts to landmark electoral victories — in the face of attempts to criminalize voting assistance, intimidate election workers, and spread misinformation.

What has emerged from this research is clear: Protecting democracy requires confronting suppression efforts and advancing policies that ensure full and fair access to the ballot for all eligible voters.

LDFRecollection.org: A Living Archive of Civil Rights History

"LDF Recollection: A Civil Rights Archive" is LDF's investment in preserving and expanding access to more than 80 years of civil rights legal history. Developed by TMI's Archives department, it brings together thousands of digitized documents from over 6,000 cases, along with oral histories, correspondence, advocacy materials, photographs, and press releases. The platform also features narrative content, biographies, an interactive timeline, and a *Brown v.*

Board of Education curriculum that helps to contextualize the archive and make it accessible to a broad audience.

Designed for litigators, researchers, students, and the public, "Recollection" includes the LDF Oral History Project — capturing firsthand accounts from former clients, attorneys, and community members whose experiences shaped landmark cases. Together, these materials illuminate both the legal record and the lived experience behind it.

Perhaps the most exciting thing is that we're just getting started. TMI's Archives team continues to digitize, organize, and publish additional materials, steadily expanding the depth and reach of the collection. The team also leads an internship program aimed at building pathways for Black archivists and archivists of color.

Since its launch in October 2024, "Recollection" has been recognized with the Society of American Archivists' 2025 Archival Innovator Award.

LDF IN ACTION: A YEAR OF IMPACT

In 2025, LDF celebrated 85 years of advancing civil rights.

Litigation

LDF filed more lawsuits against the Trump administration in 2025 than during the entire first Trump administration — **challenging nearly every anti-DEIA and voter suppression executive order issued** — and has successfully obtained court orders blocking these actions.

LDF JOINS STATE OF THE PEOPLE ONLINE AND ON TOUR

In spring 2025, LDF joined the State of the People POWER tour, a nationwide rapid-response campaign to stop the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” which proposed the largest-ever cuts to social safety net programs in U.S. history to fund tax cuts for the ultrawealthy and corporations.

In addition to planning and participating in multiple tour stops, a highlight was a historic 24-hour livestream held opposite President Trump’s State of the Union address, where LDF leaders hosted an hourlong conversation in civil rights history that grounded the conversation about current-day threats on Black communities.



LDF AT THE SUPREME COURT

In 2025, LDF continued its legacy of Supreme Court litigation, including two of the most consequential civil rights cases of the term: *Louisiana v. Callais* and *Trump v. Barbara*,

the latter of which advanced to the Court in 2026. In *Callais*, LDF defended Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act; the Court’s April 2026 decision weakened these protections, threatening equitable representation nationwide. LDF continues to challenge the decision’s impact and defend Black political power.

At the same time, LDF successfully led the challenge to efforts to dismantle birthright citizenship — the legal principle guaranteed by the Constitution that babies born in the U.S. are citizens. *Trump v. Barbara* advanced through the federal courts in 2025 to the Supreme Court in April 2026.

Policy

25+

Helped shape 25+ advocacy sign-on letters

15

Submitted 15 public comments on regulations that the Trump administration or states sought to adopt to roll back civil rights

14

Organized 14 briefings to educate congressional offices and the public about urgent policy matters

Strategic Communications

13M+

Reached 13,000,000+ people on our journey to the Supreme Court for *Louisiana v. Callais*

630+

Secured 630+ media features in news outlets across the country

140+

Launched Substack and published 140+ original stories

We welcomed more than **9,000 new donors** and **50 staff** to join the fight for racial equality. We worked with **300+ coalition partners** to organize Black communities around voting rights, public safety, educational equity, water rights, affordable housing, and more.

Community Organizing

1k

Reached 1,000+ racial justice advocates

40+

Responded to 40+ rapid response requests from local and national partners

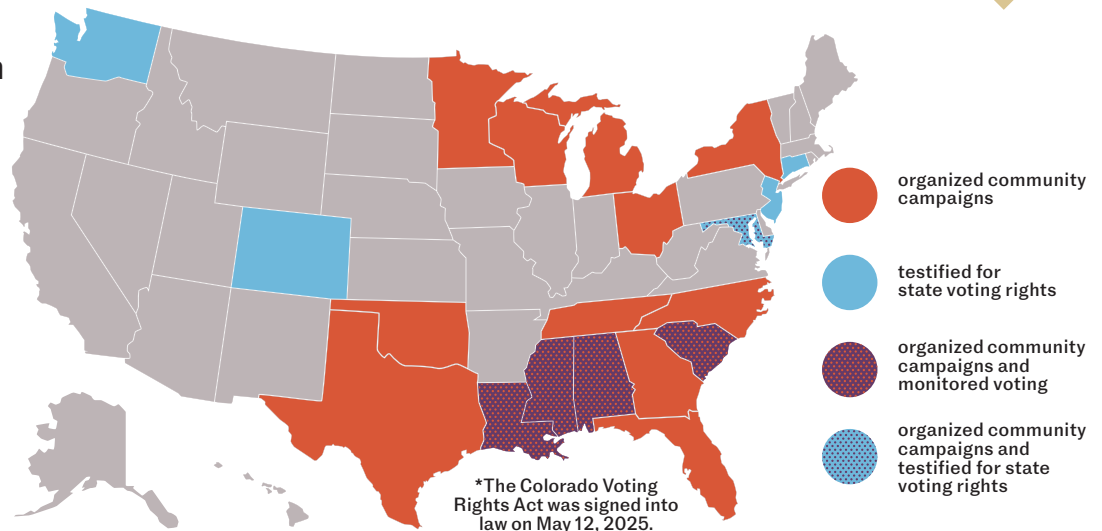
31

Through community organizing, led, or supported more than 31 local campaigns across 17 states

Political Participation

330+

Visited and monitored voting at 330+ polling sites across the South to help ensure voting rights were protected



LDF Recollection: A Civil Rights Archive

54k

54,000 worldwide users viewed "Recollection"

13k+

13,000+ archival documents on "Recollection"

41

41 oral history interviews completed

142

scholarship recipients and fellows supported in 2025

LDF joins partner organizations to rally during the reargument of *Louisiana v. Callais*. Photos by Allison Shelley



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Help shape the next 85 years. Get involved with LDF and rise with us.





VOLUNTEER

Volunteer with LDF's Black Voters on the Rise (BVOTR) and join the fight to protect voting rights. BVOTR volunteers help monitor elections, inform the public of attempts to suppress the vote, and flag critical issues for legal action — before, during, and after Election Day.

Become a poll worker in your community. Poll workers help ensure safe, fair, and efficient elections for all.

FOLLOW

Follow LDF on social media to stay up to date on our work, amplify urgent calls to action, and take part in the moments that move justice forward. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, Threads, LinkedIn, TikTok, X, YouTube, and Bluesky.

Subscribe to LDF's Substack for reliable, timely, and accurate civil rights and racial justice information, reflecting our deepened commitment to shaping narrative and uplifting stories and voices at this critical moment in our democracy.

DONATE

Fuel the future of civil rights. Your generosity powers LDF's mission to deliver on the dream of justice for all. From workplace giving to estate planning, LDF offers innovative ways to support our work. For more information, please visit naacpldf.org/support/ways-to-give or use the QR code below.

LDF's Legacy Society recognizes those who have named LDF in their long-term financial and estate plans — making a deeply meaningful impact in the fight for racial justice now and in the future.

If you are interested in learning more about the Legacy Society or other ways to support LDF, please contact development@naacpldf.org.



"My father gave his first gift to LDF in 1968, and my parents **devoted their lives** to helping others. Continuing their legacy through my own philanthropy is a privilege. LDF's abiding **commitment to justice**

inspires hope and reminds us that progress is possible."

— DIANE MOROFF



naacpldf.org