

CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS SUE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OVER ANTI-EQUITY EXECUTIVE ORDERS

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NNPA NEWSWIRE — The organizations involved, including the National Urban League (NUL), National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), and AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC), argue that the orders “severely limit organizations’ ability to provide critical services” such as HIV treatment, fair housing support, and employment assistance.

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Civil Rights Groups Sue Trump Administration Over Anti-Equity Executive Orders

By Stacy M. Brown

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The Legal Defense Fund (LDF) and Lambda Legal filed a [federal lawsuit](#) today challenging three executive orders issued by President Donald Trump. According to the groups, the orders threaten civil rights and the ability of organizations to provide vital social and health services. The lawsuit—National Urban League v. Trump—was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. It claims that the orders violate the First and Fifth Amendments by targeting diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility (DEIA) programs, and transgender rights.

The organizations involved, including the National Urban League (NUL), National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), and AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC), argue that the orders “severely limit organizations’ ability to provide critical services” such as HIV treatment, fair housing support, and employment assistance. These restrictions, they say, disproportionately harm people of color, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and those living with HIV.

Orders in Question

The lawsuit targets three executive orders signed by President Trump on January 20 and 21:

1. **Executive Order No. 14151** – Ending Radical and Wasteful DEI Programs and Preferencing
2. **Executive Order No. 14168** – Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government
3. **Executive Order No. 14173** – Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity

Together, these orders terminate equity-related grants and ban federally funded entities from engaging in DEIA efforts or acknowledging transgender identities. Janai Nelson, President and Director-Counsel of LDF described the orders as “unconstitutional attacks on historically

marginalized communities," adding that they "perpetuate false stereotypes and undermine multiracial democracy." Lambda Legal's HIV Project Director, Jose Abrigo, called the policies "dangerous and dehumanizing," emphasizing their potential to "put lives at risk" by defunding health services vital to marginalized groups.

Impact on Communities

Marc H. Morial, President & CEO of the National Urban League, noted that NUL programs have placed over a quarter-million people in jobs over the past decade, often with federal support. "This assault on diversity, equity, and inclusion is discriminatory at best and institutionalized economic oppression at its worst," Morial stated. John Peller, President & CEO of AFC, warned that the orders could impede efforts to combat the HIV epidemic. "We must be able to prioritize Black, Latine, LGBTQ+ people, and transgender women in our work. These executive orders would prohibit us from doing that critical and lifesaving work," he said. Lisa Rice, President and CEO of the NFHA, described the orders as "chaotic and illegal," arguing that they dismantle longstanding fair housing protections. "The President cannot undo the Constitution or take away our rights with a signature," Rice asserted.

Legal Claims and Relief Sought

The plaintiffs contend that the executive orders infringe on their free speech by censoring DEIA-related communications, violating due process through vague prohibitions, and discriminating against marginalized groups. They seek declaratory and injunctive relief to halt enforcement of the orders. "These orders drip with contempt for transgender people," Abrigo said. "Defunding organizations that support marginalized communities punishes them for striving to improve lives." The lawsuit also argued that there are broader consequences of the administration's actions. "Beyond spreading inaccurate, divisive rhetoric, these orders tie the hands of organizations providing critical services," Nelson stated. "We stand with our clients to ensure these unconstitutional orders are struck down."

A Call to Protect Civil Rights

Executive orders and lawsuits have come as concerns soar about the rollback of civil rights protections. "Fair housing and equal opportunity are national policies of the United States," Rice said. "Any effort to divide and treat people unfairly contradicts our founding principles." The organizations are urging swift judicial intervention to prevent further harm to vulnerable communities. "We cannot allow decades of civil rights progress to be erased," Nelson declared. For many, the stakes are personal. Will, an AFC program participant living with HIV, shared, "As someone who has relied on these services, I am deeply concerned about what's at risk if we can't name the issues our people face."

Excerpt:

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