

## **National Urban League v. Trump: Defending Against Intolerance and Erasure**

On February 19, 2025, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) and Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit on behalf of the National Urban League, the National Fair Housing Alliance, and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, challenging three executive orders that target diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives and seek to erase the existence of transgender people from public life.

In *National Urban League v. Trump*, LDF and Lambda Legal claim that these organizations are being forced to adopt the Trump Administration's discriminatory viewpoints or risk losing federal funds. In either situation, they would be unable to fulfill their missions, leaving many vulnerable populations, including people of color, women, LGBTQ individuals, and people with disabilities, without critical—and often life-sustaining—services. The lawsuit also highlights how the executive orders exhibit a particular prejudice against Black and transgender people.

### **The Trump Administration is Attempting to Tie Our Country's Helping Hands**

As nonprofit organizations, the National Urban League, the National Fair Housing Alliance, and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago serve as lifelines for communities whose basic needs are not being met. These nonpartisan organizations have spent decades providing vital services to underserved communities across the country who are too often denied access to the resources necessary to live safe and healthy lives.

- **The AIDS Foundation of Chicago** supports almost 7,000 people living with or vulnerable to HIV, many of whom are Black, Latino, and/or transgender.
- **The National Fair Housing Alliance** combats housing and lending discrimination, and in 2023, the organization helped hundreds of renters avoid homelessness.
- **The National Urban League** serves 3.8 million people annually, across dozens of states, promoting economic empowerment and increasing the overall quality of life for communities in need.

Through their dedication and work, these organizations show how a commitment to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility can make America a better place for everyone. Yet despite these organizations' significant contributions to helping communities in need, the Trump Administration's executive orders seek to tie their hands and prevent them from continuing their important and critical work.

## **Fighting Back Against Unlawful Orders**

In January 2025, President Trump issued a series of executive orders targeting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs in the public and private sectors:

- “Ending Radical and Wasteful DEI Programs and Preferencing,” which requires, among other things, federal agencies to terminate “equity-related” grants and contracts;
- “Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government,” which denies the existence of transgender people, orders their erasure from government recognition and protection, and demands that others do the same; and
- “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity,” which prohibits many diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility programs and initiatives, and falsely asserts that they are inconsistent with hard work and meritocracy.

Collectively, these orders attempt to impose the Trump Administration’s false and discriminatory views about diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility on private entities; invite arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement through potentially far-reaching prohibitions that are vague and indiscernible; potentially prevent federal grantees and contractors from prioritizing their services for people of color, women, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities who are the most vulnerable and underserved; and violate rights under the United States Constitutional and federal statutes.

## **A Request for Relief**

The National Urban League, the National Fair Housing Alliance, and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago are asking the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to declare the executive orders unlawful and unconstitutional and to prohibit the Trump Administration from implementing the orders. The organizations are also asking the court to stop the Trump Administration from implementing and enforcing the executive orders until their legal claims are resolved—what is known as a preliminary injunction. If the court takes swift action, the organizations can safely continue serving the communities most in need of their services without fear of losing federal funds or abandoning their organizational missions.

## **Safeguarding the Future of America’s Multiracial Democracy**

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts help organizations break down barriers to equal opportunity and comply with civil rights laws. The executive orders that are being challenged in court stretch the bounds of presidential power by forcing any public or private entity that receives federal grants and contracts—from state governments and local school districts to corporations, nonprofits, and colleges and universities—to choose between remaining true to the principles of fairness, justice, and equality or continuing to receive the federal funding they depend on. In doing so, these executive orders make America less fair, less prosperous, and less safe—to the detriment of all Americans.

LDF and Lambda Legal are proud to fight alongside the National Urban League, the National Fair Housing Alliance, and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago—and every organization that takes

care of our friends, family members, neighbors, and fellow Americans who have been unfairly left behind.