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#### **DOJ SIDES WITH APPLICANTS IN HARVARD SUIT**

The U.S. Department of Justice on Thursday sided with applicants who are suing Harvard University over affirmative action policies, saying that there is compelling evidence that the university discriminates against Asian-American applicants in its admissions process.

The Justice Department filed a statement of interest on the side of the plaintiffs in *Students For Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President And Fellows Of Harvard College* in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. The plaintiffs, a group of Asian-Americans rejected by Harvard, contend that the university has systematically discriminated against them by artificially capping the number of qualified Asian-Americans from attending the school in order to advance less qualified students of other races.

"Harvard has failed to show that it does not unlawfully discriminate against Asian Americans," the DOJ statement said. "Substantial evidence also demonstrates that Harvard admissions officers and committees consistently monitor and manipulate the racial makeup of incoming classes, which has resulted in stable racial demographics in Harvard's admitted classes from year to year. The Supreme Court has called such attempts to 'racially balance' the makeup of a student body 'patently unconstitutional.'"

The Harvard case, spearheaded by the anti-affirmative-action group Students for Fair Admissions, is viewed by some conservative politicians and advocates as a test of whether a decades-long effort to eliminate affirmative action policies will ultimately succeed. The group was founded by conservative activist Edward Blum, who has fought affirmative action laws in the past.

Harvard, which admitted fewer than 5 percent of its applicants this year, said its own analysis did not find discrimination. The university has also noted that Blum has lost previous challenges to affirmative action policies.

The Department of Education and Justice Department said in July that the administration was abandoning Obama-era policies that asked universities to consider race as a factor in diversifying their campuses and would instead favor race-blind admissions. Advocates of affirmative action argue that this stance is harmful and will put decades of equal opportunity policy into jeopardy.

A trial in the Harvard case has been scheduled for October. - Chris Triunfo/SHNS

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