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## Why is the Trump administration going after the Harvard Law Review?

**The Trump administration's scrutiny of Harvard Law Review's diversity efforts isn't about fairness but a calculated attempt to undermine an institution that has produced influential legal minds from across the political spectrum.**

By Peter Stris

**T**he Trump administration has launched an investigation into the Harvard Law Review, a student-run journal at Harvard Law School. It claims the journal discriminates based on race when selecting student editors and deciding what articles to publish.

As a former editor of the Law Review, this hits close to home. I've seen firsthand how careful and deliberate the selection process is. Harvard Law accepts only about 10% of applicants, and from that highly competitive pool, just another 10% are chosen for the Law Review. The selection process looks beyond grades—it considers legal analysis, writing skill, and the applicant's potential to contribute to a dynamic, intellectually rigorous, and diverse editorial team.

That last item is where the Trump administration takes issue. It views the Law Review's commitment to diversity as discriminatory. But from my experience, it's exactly the opposite. In a legal world still shaped by inequality, diversity isn't an add-on—it's essential. Legal scholarship affects real people, and without a range of perspectives, it risks becoming narrow or blind to injustice.

Editors of the Law Review have come from across the ideological spectrum. President Barack Obama, its first Black president, launched his career there. So did progressive legal titans like Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elena Kagan, Stephen Breyer, and Ketanji Brown Jackson—the first Black woman on the Supreme Court. But the journal is



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not a liberal enclave. Alumni include conservative stalwarts like Justice Antonin Scalia, Chief Justice John Roberts, Senator Ted Cruz, and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Their politics diverge sharply, but they share a foundation of excellence shaped in part by the Law Review.

This bipartisan legacy underscores a central truth: inclusion hasn't diluted merit—it has advanced our understanding of it. The editorial board's commitment to a wide range of voices has not compromised quality; it has elevated it.

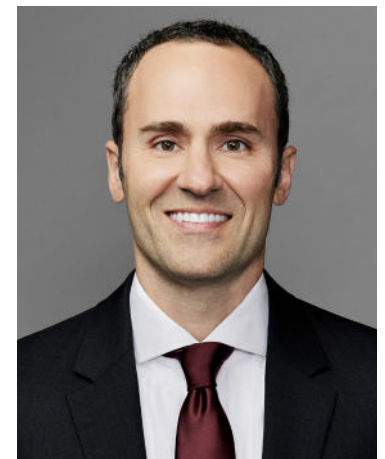
The real question, then, is why the Trump administration cares. Why is it using federal investigative power to scrutinize the membership poli-

cies of a student-run journal? The answer lies not in concern for fairness or merit but in a broader campaign to undermine independent institutions—especially those that promote intellectual autonomy or social inclusion.

This effort has taken many forms: threats to withhold federal funds from universities, lawsuits against media outlets, pressure on law firms perceived as politically unfriendly. The goal is consistent—to erode the credibility and independence of institutions that might resist political control or challenge the narrative.

Harvard has long been a crucible for American leadership. Its graduates sit on the Supreme Court, run

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Fortune 500 companies, craft national policy, and teach the next generation of legal minds. The Harvard Law Review, in particular, has served as a proving ground for many of the country's most influential legal thinkers, offering them a platform to sharpen their arguments and shape the national discourse. People read the Law Review because it helps

define the contours of legal debate—not just within academia, but in courtrooms and legislative chambers across the country.

In this context, the focus on the Harvard Law Review is symbolic. This isn't about a student journal—it's about undermining an institution that shapes legal thought and stands for intellectual independence.

The Law Review is part of an academic and cultural establishment that Trump has long portrayed as out-of-touch and hostile to "real" Americans. Going after it helps stoke grievance, rally supporters, and assert dominance over institutions that have historically stood apart from partisan politics.

The irony, of course, is that this fixation on prominent institutions

comes not from strength, but from insecurity. The move to investigate a student journal is not an act of principled oversight—it's a political gesture, designed to send a message: deference is expected, dissent will be punished, and no space is too small to escape scrutiny. That's not governance. It's intimidation masquerading as accountability.