

Harvard Expands Lawsuit Against Trump Administration to Include Additional \$450 Million in Terminated Grants

The Ivy League institution challenged the freezing of funds as a violation of First Amendment Rights.

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The Veritas shield with wreath and banner on Stone House at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., on March 17, 2025. Scott Eisen/Getty Images



By T.J. Muscaro

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Harvard University expanded its lawsuit against the Trump Administration's federal funding cuts on May 13 to include the additional \$450 million in grants that administration officials announced were being terminated earlier that same day.

That grant money, which was to come from eight different federal agencies, added to the already \$2.2 billion in terminated federal grants. It was announced by the Joint Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism, which includes representatives from the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services, and was designed to "root out anti-Semitic harassment in schools and on college campuses," according to one of President Donald Trump's executive orders.

"Harvard University has repeatedly failed to confront the pervasive race discrimination and anti-Semitic harassment plaguing its campus," the task force said in a statement.

"Jewish students were subjected to pervasive insults, physical assault, and intimidation, with no meaningful response from Harvard's leadership."

The federally-funded Ivy League institution challenged the freezing of funds as a violation of the First Amendment. It asked U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs to block the grant terminations. Burroughs scheduled the arguments for the case to be heard on July 21.

"The Government has not identified—and cannot identify—any rational connection between antisemitism concerns and the medical, scientific, technological, and other research it has frozen or terminated," the lawsuit said.

Education Secretary Linda E. McMahon has accused Harvard of "engaging in a systemic pattern of violating federal law," and alleged other issues such as political bias on campus and upholding an admissions process not based on merit.

"The Administration's priorities have not changed and today's letter marks the end of new grants for the University," McMahon said in a May 5 letter.

"Harvard should no longer seek GRANTS from the federal government, since none will be provided."

In one instance, Harvard was criticized when a pro-Hamas protester, who faced criminal charges for allegedly assaulting a Jewish student on campus, was awarded a \$65,000 fellowship grant by the Harvard Law Review.

Harvard argued in its complaint that it was committed to combating anti-Semitism and ensuring its campus is safe for Israeli and Jewish students, and called the administration's actions a threat to academic freedom at the institution.

In a letter issued on May 12, Harvard President Alan M. Garber reaffirmed the school's stance and further accused the Trump administration of "overreach into the constitutional freedoms of private universities" and "continuing disregard of Harvard's compliance with the law."

"Harvard will not surrender its core, legally-protected principles out of fear of unfounded retaliation by the federal government," he said.

Reuters and Naveen Athrappully contributed to this report.

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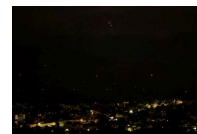
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