

**Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on The Constitution
Written Questions for Harmeet Dhillon
Hearing on
“Ending Illegal DEI Discrimination & Preferences: Enforcing our Civil Rights Laws”
Wednesday, July 23, 2025**

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR COONS

1. On May 27, 2025, the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division filed a lawsuit against the State of North Carolina and the North Carolina State Board of Elections.

a. Did you personally speak with any North Carolina state official(s) about this lawsuit or its subject before it was filed? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

i. If so, who did you speak with?

Response: Please see my answer to Question 1.a.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my answer to Question 1.a.

iii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my answer to Question 1.a.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.a.

b. Did you personally speak with any North Carolina local official(s) about this lawsuit or its subject before it was filed? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

i. If so, who did you speak with?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.b.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.b.

iii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.b.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.b.

c. To your knowledge, did anyone from the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division personally speak with any North Carolina state official(s) about this lawsuit or its subject before it was filed? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

i. If so, who from the Civil Rights Division spoke to the North Carolina state official(s)?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.c.

ii. If so, who did the Civil Rights Division speak with?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.c.

iii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.c.

iv. If so, what was discussed?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.c.

v. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.c.

- d. **To your knowledge, did anyone from the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division personally speak with any North Carolina local official(s) about this lawsuit or its subject before it was filed? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.**

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

- i. **If so, who from the Civil Rights Division spoke to the North Carolina local official(s)?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.d.

- ii. **If so, who did the Civil Rights Division speak with?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.d.

- iii. **If so, when and where did these conversations occur?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.d.

- iv. **If so, what was discussed?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.d.

- v. **If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 1.d.

2. **On July 7, 2025, you sent a letter to Texas Governor Gregory Abbott and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton re “Unconstitutional Race-Based Congressional Districts TX-09, TX-18, TX-29 and TX-33.”**

- a. **Did you personally speak to Governor Abbott or his staff about the subject of this letter before you sent it? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.**

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

- i. **If so, when and where did these conversations occur?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.a.

ii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.a.

iii. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.a.

b. Did you personally speak to Attorney General Paxton or his staff about the subject of this letter before you sent it? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

i. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.b.

ii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.b.

iii. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.b.

c. To your knowledge, did anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division speak to Governor Abbott or his staff about the subject of this letter before you sent it? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

i. If so, who from the Civil Rights Division spoke to Governor Abbott or his staff?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.c.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.c.

iii. If so, what was discussed?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.c.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.c.

d. To your knowledge, did anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division speak to Attorney General Paxton or his staff about the subject of this letter before you sent it? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: To uphold the integrity of the legal process, it is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge conversations or discussions surrounding ongoing litigation.

i. If so, who from the Civil Rights Division spoke to Attorney General Paxton or his staff?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.d.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.d.

iii. If so, what was discussed?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.d.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 2.d.

3. The Department of Justice Civil Rights Division's website shows that the Disability Rights Section's Chief position is vacant.

a. Who is currently in charge of the Disability Rights Section?

Response: This position is currently vacant and its functions are managed by other career personnel. We do not typically provide confidential personnel information. The Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552a protects this type of confidential personnel information in the interest of ensuring individuals' right to privacy.

b. What is this individual's educational history?

Response: Please see my response to Question 3.a.

c. What is this individual's professional work history?

Response: Please see my response to Question 3.a.

d. What are this individual's goals and plans for the Disability Rights Section?

Response: This position is currently vacant. Also, this question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications. The Civil Rights Division conducts its enforcement efforts in a manner that upholds the civil and constitutional rights of all persons.

4. The Department of Justice Civil Rights Division's website shows that the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section's Chief position is vacant.

a. Who is currently in charge of the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section?

Response: This position is currently vacant and its functions are managed by other career attorneys. We do not typically provide confidential personnel information. The Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552a protects this type of confidential personnel information in the interest of ensuring individuals' right to privacy.

b. What is this individual's educational history?

Response: Please see my response to Question 4.a.

c. What is this individual's professional work history?

Response: Please see my response to Question 4.a.

d. What are this individual's goals and plans for the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section?

Response: This position is currently vacant and its functions are managed by other career personnel. We do not typically provide confidential personnel information. The Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552a protects this type of

confidential personnel information in the interest of ensuring individuals' right to privacy.

5. The Department of Justice Civil Rights Division's website shows that the Policy and Strategy Section's Chief position is vacant.

a. Who is currently in charge of the Policy and Strategy Section?

Response: This position is currently vacant and its functions are managed by other career personnel. We do not typically provide confidential personnel information. The Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552a protects this type of confidential personnel information in the interest of ensuring individuals' right to privacy.

b. What is this individual's educational history?

Response: Please see my response to Question 5.a.

c. What is this individual's professional work history?

Response: Please see my response to Question 5.a.

d. What are this individual's goals and plans for the Policy and Strategy Section?

Response: This position is currently vacant. Also, this question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications. The Civil Rights Division conducts its enforcement efforts in a manner that upholds the civil and constitutional rights of all persons.

6. Have any Civil Rights Offices at any United States Attorney's Offices anywhere in the United States halted operations or been closed since you began your tenure as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights?

Response: The Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights does not direct the operations of United States Attorneys' offices.

a. If so, which offices and where?

Response: Please see my response to Question 6.

b. If so, why were these specific offices chosen?

Response: Please see my response to Question 6.

c. If so, who was involved in the decision-making process to choose to close specific offices?

Response: Please see my response to Question 6.

- d. If so, how will the Department of Justice fulfill its mandate without that capacity in the field?**

Response: Please see my response to question 6.

7. What are the Civil Rights Division's enforcement priorities?

Response: This question calls for confidential and executive privileged internal communications. Without waiving privilege, the Division has and will continue to enforce the statutes entrusted to its care to preserve the federal constitutional and statutory rights of all Americans.

8. Have you personally spoken to anyone in the White House about Civil Rights Division enforcement priorities? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege in the interest of protecting the confidentiality of White House deliberations, national security, and the effective performance of constitutional duties.

- a. If so, who did you speak with?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 8.

- b. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 8.

- c. If so, what did you discuss?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 8.

- d. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 8.

9. To your knowledge, has anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division spoken to anyone in the White House about Civil Rights Division enforcement priorities? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege.

a. If so, who from the Department of Justice spoke to the White House?

Response: Please see my response to Question 9.

b. If so, who did the Department of Justice speak to?

Response: Please see my response to Question 9.

c. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 9.

d. If so, what was discussed?

Response: Please see my response to Question 9.

e. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 9.

10. On June 30, 2025, you sent a letter to Dr. Alan Garber, President of Harvard University, re “Notice of Violation.”

a. Have you personally spoken to anyone from the White House about this letter or its contents, before or after it was sent? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege.

i. If so, who did you speak with?

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.a.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.a.

iii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.a.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.a.

- b. To your knowledge, has anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division spoken to anyone from the White House about this letter or its contents, before or after it was sent? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.**

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege.

- i. If so, who from the Department of Justice spoke to the White House?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.b.

- ii. If so, who did the Department of Justice speak to?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.b.

- iii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.b.

- iv. If so, what was discussed?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.b.

- v. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 10.b.

- 11. Has the Civil Rights Division been involved with any litigation or investigations regarding any law firm named in an executive order by President Trump? If so, please explain your Division's involvement fully.**

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege.

- a. Have you personally spoken to anyone from the White House about executive orders about law firms? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.**

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

- i. If so, who did you speak with?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

iii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

b. To your knowledge, has anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division spoken to anyone from the White House about executive orders about law firms? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

i. If so, who from the Department of Justice spoke to the White House?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

ii. If so, who did the Department of Justice speak to?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

iii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

iv. If so, what was discussed?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

v. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 11.

12. Has the Civil Rights Division been involved with any litigation or investigations regarding Columbia University since you became Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights? If so, please explain your Division's involvement fully.

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege. A public-facing description of the Settlement Agreement between the Columbia University and United States is available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/07/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-secures-major-settlement-with-columbia-university/>.

- a. Have you personally spoken to anyone from the White House about Columbia University? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- i. If so, who did you speak with?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- iii. If so, what did you discuss?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- b. To your knowledge, has anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division spoken to anyone from the White House about Columbia University? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- i. If so, who from the Department of Justice spoke to the White House?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- ii. If so, who did the Department of Justice speak to?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

- iii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

iv. If so, what was discussed?

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

v. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 12.

13. Has the Civil Rights Division been involved with any litigation or investigations regarding CBS since you became Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights? If so, please explain your Division's involvement fully.

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege.

a. Have you personally spoken to anyone from the White House about CBS? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

i. If so, who did you speak with?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

iii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

b. To your knowledge, has anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division spoken to anyone from the White House about CBS? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

i. If so, who from the Department of Justice spoke to the White House?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

ii. If so, who did the Department of Justice speak to?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

iii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

iv. If so, what was discussed?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

v. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 13.

14. Has the Civil Rights Division been involved with any litigation or investigations regarding NPR since you became Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights? If so, please explain your Division's involvement fully.

Response: It is a longstanding Department policy not to divulge communications that are protected by executive privilege.

a. Have you personally spoken to anyone from the White House about NPR? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

i. If so, who did you speak with?

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

ii. If so, when and where did these conversations occur?

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

iii. If so, what did you discuss?

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

iv. If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

- b. **To your knowledge, has anyone from the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division spoken to anyone from the White House about NPR? Please include both written and spoken communications, in-person or not.**

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

- i. **If so, who from the Department of Justice spoke to the White House?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

- ii. **If so, who did the Department of Justice speak to?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

- iii. **If so, when and where did these conversations occur?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

- iv. **If so, what was discussed?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

- v. **If so, did anyone else attend these discussions? Who?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 14.

15. **The Civil Rights Division has closed or dismissed their claims in a number of cases related to voting rights. Please explain fully why the Division chose not to continue with each of the following cases:**

- a. ***United States v. Houston County*, which alleged that the current method of electing the Houston County Board of Commissioners dilutes the voting strength of Black citizens, in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- b. ***United States v. Georgia*, which alleged that Georgia's SB 202 violated the Voting Rights Act.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- c. ***Sixth District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church v. Kemp*, which alleged that Georgia's SB 202 violated the Voting Rights Act.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- d. ***United States v. Alabama*, which challenged Alabama’s voter roll removal program under the National Voter Registration Act.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- e. ***League of United Latin American Citizens v. Abbott*, which alleged that Texas lawmakers adopted electoral maps with the intent and effect of discriminating against Latino and Black voters.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- f. ***United States v. Virginia*, which challenged Virginia’s voter roll removal program.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

16. The Civil Rights Division has closed or dismissed their claims in cases related to unconstitutional police department conduct. Please explain fully why the Division chose not to continue with each of the following cases:

- a. ***United States of America v. Louisville Metro/Jefferson County Government*, which alleged that the defendants used excessive force, conducted unreasonable searches and seizures, and discriminated against Black people and those with behavioral health disabilities.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- b. ***United States v. City of Minneapolis*, which alleged that defendants used excessive force and discriminatory police practices.**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

17. The Civil Rights Division has closed investigations into, and retracted findings of constitutional violations on the part of, several local police departments. Please explain fully why the Division chose not to continue with each of the following investigations:

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

a. Phoenix, Arizona

Response: Please see my response to Question 17.

b. Trenton, New Jersey

Response: Please see my response to Question 17.

c. Memphis, Tennessee

Response: Please see my response to Question 17.

d. Mount Vernon, New York

Response: Please see my response to Question 17.

e. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Response: Please see my response to Question 17.

f. Louisiana State Police

Response: Please see my response to Question 17.

18. Please explain fully why the Civil Rights Division terminated a settlement agreement following an investigation regarding Lowndes County, Alabama's sanitation.

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

19. Describe the steps that you and the Civil Rights Division have taken regarding the following executive orders.

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications. Without waiving privilege, the Division has produced public-facing press releases on much of its work. Those press releases are available here:
https://www.justice.gov/news?f%5B0%5D=facet_components%3A436.

a. Restoring Equality of Opportunity and Meritocracy, dated April 23, 2025

Response: Please see my response to Question 19.

b. Reinstating Common Sense School Discipline Policies, dated April 23, 2025

Response: Please see my response to Question 19.

c. Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism, dated January 29, 2025

Response: Please see my response to Question 19.

d. Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity, dated January 21, 2025

Response: Please see my response to Question 19.

e. Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing, dated January 20, 2025

Response: Please see my response to Question 19.

Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, dated January 20, 2025

Response: Please see my response to Question 19.

**Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on The Constitution
Written Questions for Harmeet Dhillon
Hearing on
“Ending Illegal DEI Discrimination & Preferences: Enforcing our Civil Rights Laws”
Wednesday, July 23, 2025**

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR WELCH

1. What is the legal definition of “illegal DEI?”

Response: On July 29, 2025, the Attorney General released guidance for federal government agencies clarifying the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) programs. *See* “Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination,” Memo from Attorney General Pamela Bondi, July 29, 2025.¹

- a. Has the Civil Rights Division submitted this definition in any court of law? If so, please provide the case citation.**

Response: Please see the answer to Question 1.

- b. Has any court of law defined “illegal DEI?”**

Response: The courts have long held that any policy that fails to comply with federal law and that discriminates on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or other protected characteristics is illegal, regardless of the label the court has given the term.

2. Are there efforts that private entities can undertake to promote diversity and equal opportunity that do not violate civil rights laws?

Response: Antidiscrimination laws demand equal opportunity. For example, in the employment context, because of the protections afforded under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, employers cannot consider a person’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin when making employment decisions. An employer that otherwise attempts to promote diversity by considering a person’s protected class violates Title VII. Ending the use of any protected class as a factor in a person’s life is important because, as Chief Justice John Roberts noted in the education context, “[t]he way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race.” *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School Dist. No. 1*, 551 U.S. 701, 748 (2007).

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1409486/dl?inline>.

3. **Do you agree that federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment still exist and it is the duty of the Civil Rights Division to enforce them?**

Response: Yes.

4. **Do you believe that it is illegal for institutions to make voluntary efforts to remove obstacles to equal opportunity for students of all backgrounds?**

Response: As a general matter, the Department cannot speculate on hypotheticals.

5. **Do you believe that students on college campuses have the right to peaceful protest under the First Amendment?**

Response: Yes, subject to reasonable time, manner, and place restrictions. It is important to note that while peaceful protest is a constitutionally protected right, trespass and other forms of disruption are not, and those who choose to violate the law will be prosecuted to the fullest extent the law allows.

DOJ has confirmed that 368 employees have left the Civil Rights Division since the start of the Trump Administration.

6. **Who is overseeing the hiring of career attorneys at the Civil Rights Division?**

Response: The Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division oversees all of the functions within the Civil Rights Division.

7. **Are political appointees involved in the hiring process?**

Response: It is longstanding Department policy not to comment on personnel matters.

8. **Have you personally solicited applications for vacant Civil Rights Division attorney positions?**

Response: Yes.

- a. **If so, when and where did you do so?**

Response: On X, on several occasions:

<https://x.com/harmeetkdhillon/status/1935052014943113689?s=46>

- b. **Did you solicit any applications for vacant Civil Rights Division attorney positions prior to the vacancies being posted on USA Jobs?**

Response: Not to my recollection.

9. **As of July 30, 2025, how many attorneys remain at the Civil Rights Division?**

Response: As of November 28, 2025, the Division employed 167 attorneys.

- a. **Please provide the breakdown of attorneys for each of the eleven Sections in the Division.**

Response: The Division does not report on the number of attorneys or staff by Section.

10. **Have any Sections of the Civil Rights Division been disbanded or otherwise terminated since January 20, 2025?**

Response: This question's use of "disbanded or otherwise terminated" is vague and ambiguous. Without any admission that any office was disbanded or terminated, subject to and without waiving these objections, to the best of my understanding of the meaning of the question, the Federal Compliance and Coordination Section still exists. However, due to attrition of staff, its functions have been combined with the Housing and Civil Enforcement Section for the time being. Further, the Policy and Strategy Section's reorganization is part of a broader Department of Justice reorganization.

11. **In 2007, the DOJ Inspector General and DOJ Office of Professional Responsibility conducted an investigation into allegations that political and ideological affiliations were considered in hiring, transferring, and assigning cases to career attorneys in the Civil Rights Division. Subsequent recommendations were made to the Civil Rights Division regarding prohibited personnel practices and compliance with the Civil Service Reform Act.**

Are you familiar with the 2007 prohibited personnel recommendations made by the DOJ Inspector General and DOJ Office of Professional Responsibility?

Response: I am aware the Office of Professional Responsibility issued a report in 2007.

12. **Are you following those guidelines?**

Response: The Division follows all applicable law.

13. **It has been widely reported Sections within the Civil Rights Division received new policy statements directing the work of each section. My office released those policy statements prior to our hearing on July 23, 2025.**

Who participated in the drafting of these new policy statements?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

14. **Were any career staff consulted in the drafting of these policy statements?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

15. Did you send these policy statements via email to each Section?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

16. According to public reporting, following the issuance of the new policy statement for the Voting Rights Section, political appointees directed the few remaining attorneys in the Voting Section to dismiss all active voting rights cases.

Please explain the rationale for dismissing all active voting rights cases.

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

17. Please explain the rationale for removal and reassignment of the Voting Rights Section leadership.

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

18. In the policy statement you distributed to the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division, you direct the Section, alongside the Department of Homeland Security, “to assist States to share database information upon request for accurate voter registration list maintenance.”

What assistance has the Voting Section provided related to this effort?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

19. Which states have agreed to run their voter rolls through the database?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

20. In the policy statement, you refer to the “illegal dilution” of U.S. citizen votes by noncitizens. What does “illegal dilution mean?”

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications. This also calls for a legal conclusion. Without waiving privilege, I refer you to the phrase “illegal dilution” used in Section 1 of Exec. Order No. 14248, 90 Fed. Reg. 14005 (Mar. 25, 2025). The Order later uses the term “dilution” to refer generally to the negative effect on voting rights caused “by illegal voting, discrimination, fraud, and other forms of malfeasance and error” and being “diluted by fraudulent votes.” *Id.*

21. Has or does the Division intend to request access to the voter data of all 50 states?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

On July 7, 2025, you notified Texas that four majority-minority congressional districts in the state are unconstitutionally gerrymandered.

22. Was your decision to send the letter to the Texas legislature influenced *in any way* by President Trump's interest in the state's redistricting?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications. Longstanding Department policies prohibit me from discussing conversations that may have occurred with other Executive Branch officials.

23. Please explain when and why your office began investigating the Texas congressional districts.

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

24. How many letters have been sent to other state and local government entities or commissions alleging their districts are unconstitutionally gerrymandered? Please detail each notice sent.

Response: As I stated during the hearing, the Department has only sent a letter to Texas at this time. However, we will continue to investigate potential violations of the VRA. Other investigations are ongoing and as such implicate confidential and privileged information.

25. In May 2025, the DOJ Federal Coordination and Compliance Section terminated a significant settlement agreement with county and state health departments regarding wastewater treatment in Lowndes County, Alabama.

Who made the decision to terminate the agreement regarding conditions in Lowndes County?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

26. Please describe the basis for the termination of the Lowndes County settlement agreement.

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

27. Were career attorneys consulted before the termination of this agreement?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

28. Do you believe that providing basic sewer services to Americans is illegal DEI?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

29. A 2017 independent study found widespread hookworm infections in Lowndes County. These conditions were later highlighted in a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and discussed during a 2019 hearing of the House Ways and Means Committee. A Civil Rights Division investigation further revealed that residents face serious public health risks from raw sewage exposure rarely seen in the United States, including tropical parasites like hookworm that can cause developmental delays in children.

Have you reviewed any of these reports or studies?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

30. Before terminating this agreement, did you or the Civil Rights Division identify any evidence contradicting these findings?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

31. Did you or anyone else at the Civil Rights Division conduct any follow-up investigation before ending the agreement?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

32. Have you or anyone from the Civil Rights Division met with the residents of Lowndes County—either before the decision to terminate the agreement, or since then?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

33. In May 2025, the Civil Rights Division dismissed a number of investigations and proposed consent decrees against police departments for allegations they had, or may have, a pattern and practice of violating residents' constitutional rights.

Do you agree that it is important to hold law enforcement officers and agencies accountable when they violate people's constitutional and civil rights, such as through the use of excessive force and racial discrimination?

Response: Law Enforcement Officers and the agencies they are employed by must always follow the U.S. Constitution and all federal and state laws. When bad actors in uniform fail to do so, the Department stands ready to take all necessary action to address any resulting constitutional or civil rights violations, including via criminal prosecution.

34. Approximately two weeks ago, the Civil Rights Division requested a one-day sentence for Brett Hankison. Mr. Hankison was convicted of violating Breonna Taylor's civil rights during a police raid that resulted in her death.

Who made the decision to recommend this sentence?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

35. Were career attorneys consulted prior to this recommendation?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

36. In March 2025, the Civil Rights Division dismissed the lawsuit against Southwest Keys Programs, which had brought forth allegations of sexual abuse and harassment against the largest provider of housing for migrant children.

Who made the decision to dismiss the case against Southwest Keys Programs?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

37. Please describe the basis of the dismissal.

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

38. Were career attorneys consulted prior to the dismissal?

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

39. In May 2022, the Civil Rights Division filed a complaint against SpaceX, which is owned by Elon Musk.

Have any employees of the Civil Rights Division faced any negative employment actions due to their involvement in the SpaceX complaint?

Response: The Civil Rights Division does not publicly disclose details of individual personnel matters.

**Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on The Constitution
Written Questions for Harmeet Dhillon
Hearing on
“Ending Illegal DEI Discrimination & Preferences: Enforcing our Civil Rights Laws”
Wednesday, July 23, 2025**

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PADILLA

Questions for The Honorable Harmeet K. Dhillon

1. The Civil Rights Division has abandoned or frozen several pattern-or-practice investigations into police departments across the country. And in cases where charges were filed, your Division has taken positions—including requesting minimal jail time for civil rights violations—that prioritize political messaging over enforcement.

- a. In the Breonna Taylor case, you personally signed a sentencing memo recommending a one-day sentence for a former officer convicted of violating civil rights. Why did you override the recommendation of your own Criminal Section to request such a lenient sentence?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- b. You have dropped civil rights lawsuits against police departments in Minneapolis, Louisville, and Oakland. Can you point to any pattern-or-practice police investigations you’ve initiated since taking office?**

Response: This question wrongly assumes that the Civil Rights Division dropped a lawsuit in Oakland. The Civil Rights Division has not had a lawsuit involving the Oakland Police Department; there has been long-term litigation against that agency brought by private parties.

- c. California has a history of local law enforcement agencies under DOJ oversight, including the Antioch and Vallejo Police Departments. Have you taken any steps to continue or expand investigations into these departments, or have they been deprioritized under your leadership?**

Response: The Division has not had an open investigation of the Vallejo, California Police Department. The Senator may be confusing the U.S. Department of Justice with the State of California’s Department of Justice. California’s Attorney General entered into an agreement to “reform” the Vallejo Police Department in 2021, and that agreement expired in June of 2023.²

² See <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6938344-Agreement-between-the-City-of-Vallejo-and#document/p4/a2191425>.

- d. How does the abrupt termination of consent decrees advance public safety or protect Americans from unlawful use of force by law enforcement?**

Response: This question wrongly assumes that there has been abrupt termination of consent decrees. There has not. Any court-approved consent decree could only be terminated pursuant to a court order following approval of a judge.

- 2. Your Division has dismissed landmark Voting Rights Act cases, issued enforcement memos repeating debunked claims about non-citizen voting, and reportedly threatened criminal charges against election officials who fail to meet vague security standards.**

- a. You have issued directives prioritizing investigations into election fraud, despite repeated findings—including by Republican-led states—that fraud is exceedingly rare. What specific data are you relying on to justify this shift?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- b. Is it your position that redistricting maps found to dilute minority voting power should be redrawn to benefit the Republican Party, as President Trump has suggested?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- c. You voluntarily dismissed the Section 2 case against Georgia’s SB 202 law despite documented evidence that the law would disproportionately burden Black voters. What changed in the factual record to justify that decision?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- 3. The Civil Rights Division has framed a broad range of civil rights enforcement efforts—including consent decrees, diversity initiatives, and environmental justice programs—as “illegal DEI.” But that phrase has no clear legal meaning, and applying it indiscriminately risks undermining the very statutes the Division is charged with enforcing.**

- a. The Environmental Justice settlement in Lowndes County, Alabama, was ended on the basis that providing sewer services to rural Black communities was “illegal DEI.” How do you justify that rationale, particularly in light of Title VI’s clear prohibition against disparate access to federally funded services?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- b. **Are there other communities currently facing environmental health risks, like those in the Central Valley or Imperial County in California, where your Division has declined to take action, despite the fact that the burden falls overwhelmingly on communities of color?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications. Furthermore, this question is also misapplied to the Civil Rights Division. Questions regarding potential environmental health risks, if any, are more properly addressed to the federal and state agencies charged with enforcing statutes and regulations that may be applicable to such allegations.

- c. **Has the Civil Rights Division issued any formal guidance explaining what it considers “illegal DEI”?**

Response: Yes. On July 29, 2025, the Attorney General released guidance for federal government agencies clarifying the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) programs. *See* “Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination,” Memo from Attorney General Pamela Bondi, July 29, 2025.³

- d. **If not, how are institutions expected to comply with your enforcement expectations?**

Response: Institutions that receive federal funding should refer to the July 29, 2025, memorandum released by Attorney General Bondi.

4. **Public reports—and your own public remarks—indicate that your leadership of the Civil Rights Division has been plagued by a mass exodus of career staff, including long-serving attorneys with decades of civil rights enforcement experience. Multiple sources report that these departures were encouraged or even orchestrated through targeted buyouts, political pressure, and reassignment threats.**

- a. **You reposted a tweet describing departed attorneys as having “persecuted” Christians and parents, and said on the Glenn Beck show that you didn’t want people “who feel like it’s their pet project to go persecute police departments.” Do you believe investigating police misconduct or enforcing anti-discrimination statutes are a form of “persecution”?**

Response: The Civil Rights Division enforces the civil rights of all citizens without preference or bias.

³ <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1409486/dl?inline>.

- b. Did you or anyone under your direction offer financial incentives or reassignment threats to induce career staff to resign or retire?**

Response: To my knowledge, no one has been threatened with reassignment as an inducement to resign or retire. With certain exceptions, such as Criminal Section prosecutors, Civil Rights Division employees have been offered the option of Voluntary Early Retirement and Deferred Resignation. These programs were completely voluntary, and no one was forced to take part in either. We deny the characterization of the question.

- c. If so, how do you justify that conduct under the Civil Service Reform Act?**

Response: Not applicable.

- 5. Under your leadership, the Civil Rights Division has aggressively pursued investigations and actions targeting universities and corporations under the banner of “illegal DEI.” You’ve repeatedly cited the case *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* to justify broad investigations into race-conscious policies at universities, federal contractors, and even private employers. But neither that case nor Title VI authorizes a categorical ban on diversity-related programs. Instead, your public statements suggest the Division is being used to carry out a political agenda, not enforce settled law.**

- a. A DOJ memo you’re enforcing claims that the *Students for Fair Admissions* case prohibits “illegal DEI preferences,” but that term appears nowhere in the decision. Can you point to a specific statute or court holding that bans voluntary DEI programs in employment or contracting?**

Response: On July 29, 2025, the Attorney General released guidance for federal government agencies clarifying the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) programs. *See* “Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination,” Memo from Attorney General Pamela Bondi, July 29, 2025.⁴

- b. You’ve stated that “just about every one of the 6,000 institutions of higher education that receives federal funds is probably out of compliance.” This includes the University of California system. Are you currently investigating UC’s faculty recruitment programs under the UC 2030 Plan?**

Response: It is longstanding Department policy not to discuss ongoing investigations.

- c. If so, what specific practices do you believe violate federal law?**

⁴ <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1409486/dl?inline>.

Response: It is longstanding Department policy not to discuss ongoing investigations.

- d. Do you believe diversity statements, affinity groups, or voluntary trainings on systemic inequality are unlawful under Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act?**

Response: On July 29, 2025, the Attorney General released guidance for federal government agencies clarifying the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) programs. *See* “Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination,” Memo from Attorney General Pamela Bondi, July 29, 2025.⁵

- 6. Since your confirmation, the Division has dismissed cases involving housing discrimination, employment discrimination, and even sexual abuse of migrant children—sometimes without explanation. Meanwhile, policy directives instruct staff to prioritize culture war executive orders rather than core statutory mandates.**

- a. DOJ withdrew from the settlement agreement in *United States v. Southwest Key Programs*, which concerned sexual abuse of immigrant minors in custody. What new facts or legal analysis justified that decision?**

Response: This question calls for confidential and privileged internal communications.

- b. Why has the Disability Rights Section filed only one case since January of this year, despite a documented backlog and ongoing systemic violations in access to care and services?**

Response: Longstanding Department policy prohibits me from discussing pending litigation as well as possible future litigation.

- c. California has the largest population of individuals with disabilities in the country. Can you point to any recent action by your Division to protect their rights in employment, housing, education, or healthcare?**

Response: Longstanding Department policy prohibits me from discussing pending litigation as well as possible future litigation.

- 7. You’ve said that you have more applicants than you can hire, and your team is playing “whack-a-mole” to go after institutions “all over the country.” Public reports suggest the Division has pressured universities to force out leaders or face investigations and funding cuts.**

⁵ <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1409486/dl?inline>.

- a. What role did your Division play in the resignation of the University of Virginia president?**

Response: Longstanding Department policy prohibits me from discussing pending litigation as well as possible future litigation.

- b. Were there communications between your office and external political organizations targeting him?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 7.a.

- c. Are you using threats of funding revocation as a tool to coerce institutions into abandoning diversity or inclusion efforts, even absent findings of statutory violations?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 7.a.

- d. Should the American people trust that your enforcement actions are grounded in law and evidence—not ideology—when you’ve publicly celebrated being “on offense” and pledged to go after “woke law schools” and “woke policies?”**

Response: Political ideology does not play a role in enforcement decisions. The Department remains steadfast in enforcing only the letter of the law and all constitutional guarantees granted to Americans.

- 8. The Civil Rights Division has adopted rhetoric and policies that target LGBTQ+ individuals—particularly transgender youth. Internal directives reportedly refer to “protecting children from transgender indoctrination and mutilation,” language that echoes harmful political narratives rather than neutral enforcement of civil rights law. Meanwhile, the DOJ is actively litigating against the California Department of Education and California Interscholastic Federation for their decision to comply with state laws permitting transgender students to participate in school athletics.**

- a. Is it your position that the acceptance of transgender and non-binary identities constitutes “indoctrination?”**

Response: Longstanding Department policy prohibits me from discussing pending litigation as well as possible future litigation.

- b. What qualifies as “indoctrination,” and what enforcement authority does your division rely on to oppose it?**

Response: Longstanding Department policy prohibits me from discussing pending litigation as well as possible future litigation.

- c. In the DOJ’s litigation against California’s education authorities, what legal theory are you advancing to argue that compliance with state non-discrimination laws is itself unlawful?**

Response: Longstanding Department policy prohibits me from discussing pending litigation as well as possible future litigation.

- d. What civil rights protections, if any, is the Civil Rights Division currently enforcing on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community?**

Response: The Division is charged with enforcing the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which criminalizes willfully inflicting bodily injury because of a victim’s “actual or perceived . . . gender identity.”⁶ As one example, on July 25, 2025, the Division filed a brief in *United States v. Ritter* (4th Cir.), defending a conviction under that act.

⁶ 18 U.S.C. § 249(a)(2).