

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
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<https://oversight.house.gov>

April 17, 2025

Dr. Alan M. Garber  
President  
Harvard University  
Massachusetts Hall  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Dr. Garber:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is conducting oversight of Harvard University's (Harvard) lack of compliance with civil rights laws despite receiving more than half a billion dollars in federal funds annually. Harvard's potentially improper use of federal funds requires this oversight. The Committee requests documents and communications to inform its oversight of this matter, and to determine whether legislation is necessary to ensure that institutions of higher education receiving federal financial assistance are no longer able to violate the law while lucratively benefitting from the generosity of the American people.

On April 11, 2025, officials from the General Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Education wrote to you with a proposed settlement agreement seeking to return Harvard into compliance with civil rights laws.<sup>1</sup> Instead of working with the government, you wrote to the Harvard community claiming that efforts to comply with basic civil rights law obligations would "surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights."<sup>2</sup> Harvard is apparently so unable or unwilling to prevent unlawful discrimination that the institution, at your direction, is refusing to enter into a reasonable settlement agreement proposed by federal officials intended to put Harvard back in compliance with the law.<sup>3</sup> No matter how entitled your behavior, no institution is entitled to violate the law.

Longstanding civil rights law prohibits any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from discriminating "on the ground of race, color, or national origin."<sup>4</sup> Harvard receives many hundreds of millions of dollars annually in federal taxpayer dollars. For example, during Harvard's "fiscal year 2024, federal funding of \$686 million made up approximately 68% of total sponsored revenue..." and was "the University's largest source of support for

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Josh Gruenbaum, Sean R. Keveney, and Thomas E. Wheeler to Dr. Alan M. Garber, President, Harvard University (Apr. 11, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Alan M. Garber, *The Promise of American Higher Education* (Apr. 14, 2025), available at <https://www.harvard.edu/president/news/2025/the-promise-of-american-higher-education/>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. 88-352 (July 2, 1964), codified at 42 U.S.C. § 2000d ("No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.")

research...[.]”<sup>5</sup> Harvard received these funds, even though its massive \$53.2 billion endowment provided \$2.4 billion in total revenue for its 2024 fiscal year.<sup>6</sup> As an institution receiving more than half a billion in federal financial assistance annually, Harvard—just like all institutions of higher education that receive federal financial assistance—is required to comply with basic legal obligations attached to receipt of those funds.

One of the most basic requirements arises from civil rights laws passed more than 50 years ago that prohibit excluding participation in, denying the benefits of, or discriminating against any person in the United States on the basis of that person’s race, color, or national origin under those programs. You claim that complying with the law would violate Harvard’s “First Amendment rights” and “exceeds the statutory limits of the government’s authority under Title VI[.]”<sup>7</sup> Yet if Harvard, or any institution for that matter, does not wish to comply with this basic legal obligation, the proper avenue for achieving this is simple: do not take federal financial assistance.

The government’s April 11 proposed agreement in principle included requirements for governance and leadership reforms; merit-based hiring reforms; merit-based admissions reforms; international admissions reforms; reforms to achieve viewpoint diversity in admissions and hiring including the abolishment of criteria that function as ideological litmus tests; reforms to specific programs with egregious records of antisemitism and other bias; the actual discontinuation of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs; student discipline reforms; whistleblower protections; and reforms to provide transparency and monitoring for federal regulators.<sup>8</sup> Harvard rejected this settlement at your direction.<sup>9</sup> After Harvard rejected the settlement, the Joint Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism announced a freeze on “\$2.2 billion in multi-year grants and \$60M in multi-year contract value to Harvard University.”<sup>10</sup>

It should come as no surprise that Harvard would continue to advocate for illegal discrimination and violate its obligations under the law, as it has a long, consistent history of defending racial discrimination and antisemitic activities on campus. Harvard once placed quotas on the number of Jewish students it would admit.<sup>11</sup> And its predilection toward racial discrimination didn’t end with the civil rights era. Indeed, Harvard recently—merely two years ago—fought all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States to defend the institution’s desire to discriminate on the basis of race in admissions programs, which were found to have violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Harvard University Financial Report: Fiscal Year 2024*, (Oct. 2024) at 9, available at [https://finance.harvard.edu/sites/hwpi.harvard.edu/files/fad/files/fy24\\_harvard\\_financial\\_report.pdf?m=1729182806](https://finance.harvard.edu/sites/hwpi.harvard.edu/files/fad/files/fy24_harvard_financial_report.pdf?m=1729182806).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> *Supra*, n.2.

<sup>8</sup> *Supra*, n.1.

<sup>9</sup> *Supra*, n.2.

<sup>10</sup> See Press Release: *Joint Task Force to Combat Anti-Semitism Statement Regarding Harvard University* (Apr. 14, 2025), available at <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/joint-task-force-combat-anti-semitism-statement-regarding-harvard-university>.

<sup>11</sup> Brief *Amicus Curiae* of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights under Law and the Silicon Valley Chinese Association Foundation in Support of Petitioner on Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, No. 20-1199 (Mar 31, 2021); see also Ian Shapira, *Before Asian Americans sued Harvard, the school once tried restricting the number of Jews*, WASH. POST (Oct. 15, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023).

Even as Harvard is apparently preparing to reject all federal financial assistance so it can avoid complying with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Harvard has received enormous sums from foreign sources, including from authoritarian governments. According to reports derived from data collected from the Department of Education, Harvard University received over \$894 million from foreign government sources during the time period of 2014 to 2019.<sup>13</sup> Harvard received over \$151 million from foreign governments—including the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bangladesh—from January 2020 to October 2024.<sup>14</sup> One analysis found that as foreign funding increased at institutions like Harvard, so did antisemitism.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to Harvard's disregard for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Harvard also thumbs its nose at Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its protections from sex based discrimination for institutions of higher education receiving federal financial assistance.<sup>16</sup> Harvard permits men to compete in women's athletic events, and use women's bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing areas.<sup>17</sup>

To assist the Committee's investigation of this matter, the Committee requests the following documents and information, covering the time period January 1, 2023, to the present, as soon as possible but no later than May 1, 2025:

1. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to governance and leadership reforms, including but not limited to:
  - a. clear lines of authority and accountability;
  - b. empowering tenured professors; and
  - c. limiting the influence of affiliated individuals more committed to activism than academics.
2. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to merit-based hiring reform, including but not limited to:

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Asher Small, et al., *The Corruption of the American Mind: How Foreign Funding in U.S. Higher Education by Authoritarian Regimes, Widely Undisclosed, Predicts Erosion of Democratic Norms and Antisemitic Incidents on Campus*, NETWORK CONTAGION RESEARCH INSTITUTE & INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM AND POLICY (Nov. 6, 2023).

<sup>14</sup> Avi Burstein & Abigail Gerstein, *Harvard Received \$151 Million from Foreign Governments Since January 2020*, THE HARVARD CRIMSON (Feb. 28, 2025).

<sup>15</sup> *Supra*, n.13.

<sup>16</sup> Education Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-318 (June 23, 1972), *as amended*, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1681 (No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...”).

<sup>17</sup> Elyse Goncalves & Akshaya Ravi, *Former Penn Swimmers Sue Harvard For Allowing Trans Athletes to Compete*, THE HARVARD CRIMSON (Feb. 5, 2025).

- a. policies regarding hiring preferences based on race, color, sex, religion, or natural origin.
3. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to merit-based admission reform, including but not limited to:
  - a. policies regarding hiring preferences based on race, color, sex, religion, or natural origin.
4. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to international admissions reform, including but not limited to:
  - a. policies regarding the admittance of any student that may have views contrary to that of the United States (e.g. support for terrorism or antisemitism).
5. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to viewpoint diversity in admissions and hiring, including but not limited to:
  - a. ideological litmus tests.
6. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to reforming programs with egregious records of antisemitism or other bias, including but not limited to:
  - a. the October 7, 2023 terrorist attacks perpetrated against Israel; and
  - b. the subsequent campus protests, whether at Harvard or otherwise.
7. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to discontinuing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices, including but not limited to:
  - a. Harvard's DEI offices or other programs;
  - b. DEI policies; and
  - c. DEI related restrictions on speech.
8. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to student discipline reform and accountability, including but not limited to:
  - a. consistently and impartially applying current disciplinary policies and procedures; and

- b. disallowing organizations that advocate for or tacitly support violence, anti-American views, terrorism, antisemitism, or other illegal activities.
9. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to whistleblower reporting and protections, including but not limited to:
  - a. whistleblower and reporting procedures and protections; and
  - b. adverse actions taken against whistleblowers.
10. All documents and communications between or among Harvard University administrators, faculty, staff, or any other affiliated individuals referring or relating to transparency and monitoring, including but not limited to:
  - a. Foreign gifts pursuant to Sec. 117 of the Higher Education Act;
  - b. Cooperation with state and federal immigration officials; and
  - c. The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS).

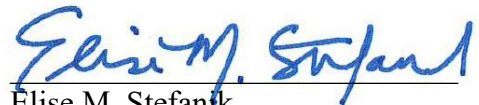
In addition to the requested documents and communications, the Committee reserves its right to request any Harvard employee, yourself included, sit for an in-person transcribed interview in Washington, D.C.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. To arrange for the delivery of documents and confirm your testimony, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



James Comer  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and  
Government Reform



Elise M. Stefanik  
Chairwoman  
House Republican Leadership

cc: The Honorable Gerald Connolly, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform