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July 27, 2023

Dear Colleague:

I'm writing on behalf of the California Association of Black Lawyers ("CABL") to ask for your help in countering the recent attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") in the admissions process. Rolling back decades of DEI progress will not "course correct" over time.

There's no doubt that the national affirmative action ban will compound the devastating effects of Proposition 209. According to a [study](#) conducted by the American Bar Association ("ABA"), "the total percentage of Black, Hispanic and Native American first-year students at Berkeley Law fell from 19% in 1996 to less than 6% in 1997—the year after the state banned affirmative action."

On a national level, [data](#) from 2019 shows that while Blacks are 13.4% of the United States population, only 7.9% Black law students are enrolled in ABA accredited law schools. Hispanics represent 18.3% of the population, while Hispanic/Latino law students make up 12.7% of the ABA law school population. The data reveals the largest disparity between the general population and the rate of law students by race and ethnicity is law students identifying as Black, followed by law students who identify as Hispanic/Latino.

I'm sure you have heard about Arkansas Senator Tom Cotton warning law firms about possible federal civil rights violations if those firms have DEI programs. Diversity continues to be attacked at all levels. Ensuring diverse applicants have the opportunity to enroll, and excel, in law schools is critical if we want our profession and courts to reflect the demographics of our cities, our state, and our country.

One solution to the dismantling of affirmative action programs, is a robust, comprehensive course that prepares diverse students for academic achievement in law school.





JD-Next is proven to predict a law student's first year grades at similar levels to the LSAT and GRE, but without the large racial disparities that exist in the LSAT and other in standardized testing.

Recently, the ABA's Council on Legal Education and Bar Admissions ("Council") granted the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law a variance from Standard 503 that will allow the law school to consider the JD-Next score in lieu of GRE or LSAT scores for the next five years. Law schools that are interested in considering JD-Next scores must request a variance by July 31 for consideration at the Council's August 18 meeting.

Here is a link for more information on the success of JD-Next: <https://jd-next.org/>. JD-Next will not only ensure diversity in our law schools but also in our profession and the judiciary. Implementing JD-Next will undoubtedly have a long term beneficial, education, professional and societal impact. To this end, CABL encourages and continues its tradition of leadership and innovation in legal education by adopting JD-Next.

The deadline to act is July 31.

Sincerely,

Shanae Buffington

Shanae Buffington, President
California Association Of Black Lawyers
Website: <https://calblacklawyers.org/>

ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS (CABL)

CABL was established in 1977 primarily to change the face of California's judiciary. Other objectives and purposes included seeking out and eradicating the roots and causes of racism, and vigorously defending Black people from those who would consciously or otherwise deny us basic human and legal rights. Today, CABL is organized around 10 affiliate bar associations in California and represents the interests of more than 5,000 African American attorneys, judicial officers, law professors and law students. CABL is an affiliate of the National Bar Association.



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