

Harvard Black Law Students Association
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To Whom It May Concern:

Members of the Harvard and Greater Boston community have come together to address an incident that occurred at an after-party for the Harvard-Yale game on Saturday, November 20, 2010. During this incident, a group of primarily black patrons were asked to leave a downtown Boston nightclub. Others on the guest list were refused entrance altogether.

Upon arrival at the party location, Cure Lounge, partygoers were required to provide a Harvard ID in addition to valid state identification, despite the fact that their names were on an official list provided by the party organizers. Those waiting in line were not put on notice of this additional requirement beforehand, and in the wake of this, people who had pre-registered and paid to attend the event were turned away at the door. Those patrons that did make it inside Cure Lounge eventually were asked to leave the establishment. The party planners reported that “[M]anagement decided to shut the party down as to avoid the hypothetical chance of attracting the ‘wrong crowd.’” This assumption was expressed as the basis for their requirement of Harvard IDs. The implications of these statements and the collective events of Saturday are beyond troubling.

Our united message is simple: Prejudicial assumptions and manifestations of racial and social inequality are social justice issues that concern every group, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or other societal positioning. An affront to one member of our community is an affront to us all, and we will not stand for close-minded behaviors or assumptions. We will not support or patronize any establishments that use such assumptions as a basis for exclusion and/or discrimination. It is with this awareness and solidarity that we stand together to fight injustice, whatever its form may be.

While the incident on November 20th was deeply disturbing, we recognize that it is not substantively equal to issues that so many other people of color face in Boston and across the nation. The larger community is still mourning the devastating loss of four individuals slain just a few short months ago in Mattapan. The skyrocketing incarceration rates of minorities continue to leave voids in the families and communities left behind. The recent cholera outbreak continues to wreak havoc on the people of Haiti, and this impact resonates through the Boston area, which proudly boasts a robust Haitian community.

The reality is that discrimination and racial injustice know no boundaries. This recent incident is only one narrative in a larger story of continued stereotyping and profiling that plagues countless Bostonians and Americans; there is nothing special about the fact that many of the partygoers were from Harvard, Yale and other educational institutions. We are not immune from the threat of bigotry and ignorance, but we are committed to using this incident as a platform to draw attention to greater issues of injustice occurring regionally and nationally.

We are writing this letter with the hope that it will provide a forum for candid, open and deliberative conversations about societal inequities, the danger of stereotyping, and the ways people interact with each other. It is our collective hope that as a community we will emerge more informed about issues of injustice, more engaged with our fellow community members and more committed to not only acting upon issues when they affect us personally, but also addressing them when they affect our neighbors. More than ever, we recognize that injustice anywhere truly is a threat to justice everywhere. Today we stand, committed to fighting that threat regardless of its form or intended victim.

Our efforts will not end here. Our resolve is strong. Our peers are engaged. We look forward to expanding the dialogue on the impact of these issues on all people. We will work collaboratively to fight back against prejudicial assumptions and manifestations of social inequality.

Sincerely,

Harvard Black Law Students Association

American Constitution Society- Harvard

Asian Pacific American Law Student Association- Harvard

Black Student Health Organization of Harvard School of Public Health

Harvard Caribbean Law Association

Harvard Graduate School of Education Black Student Union

Harvard Graduate School of Education Policy and Management

Harvard Immigration Project

Harvard Jewish Law Students Association

Harvard Journal of Law and Gender

Harvard Journal of Racial and Ethnic Justice

Harvard Lambda

Harvard Law and Health Care Society
Harvard Law School Advocates for Human Rights
Harvard Law School Alliance for Israel
Harvard Law School Justice for Palestine
Harvard NAACP
Harvard Law School National Lawyers Guild
Harvard Law School Student Bar Association
Harvard Law Students for Reproductive Justice
Harvard Transfer Student Organization
Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys
Middle East Law Students Association- Harvard
National Black Law Students Association
National Lawyers Guild- HLS Chapter
Prison Legal Assistance Project
Project No One Leaves
Scales of Justice A Cappella
South Asian Law Students Association- Harvard
Women's Law Association- Harvard
More than 200 Individuals from the Harvard and Greater Boston Community