

Law School Students Support HUDS Diversity Task Force

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Comrades,

Reclaim Harvard Law and the Harvard Law Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild affirm their support for the Harvard University Dining Service (HUDS) workers' demand for a Diversity Task Force to remedy severe racial and gender-based inequality. The workers demand a task force made up of workers, union leaders, and senior Harvard management.

While HUDS workers lucky enough to work the entire year might earn \$35,000, workers of color under 40 earn an average of \$7,000 less than that. Similarly, women of color under 40 working for HUDS make an *additional* \$4,000 less, for an average annual salary of about \$24,000. For comparison, the living wage in Cambridge for a single parent with one child is \$55,895. Furthermore, no women were among the 3 highest paying cook positions in 2015, but made up 90% of dining checkers. Dining checkers are some of the lowest paid HUDS employees and are mostly people of color. As one worker pointed out at Friday's speak-out, you would be hard-pressed to find a Black HUDS supervisor.

The increasing cost of living, not matched by a proportionate increase in wages, has steadily reduced the standard of living for workers. Long-time residents of Cambridge and Somerville, although working at Harvard, can no longer afford to live in their neighborhoods. This hardship is compounded by the proposed changes in healthcare coverage, which will make essential services even less accessible, especially for people of color. Students at the Harvard Medical School have shown that the plan is in fact "unaffordable" under the Massachusetts Health Connector Guidelines.

These statistics indicate that low wages, discrimination, and limited access to promotions in HUDS replicate the hierarchies in our society. It is unacceptable for HUDS workers of color to commit decades of their lives to serving this institution, only to be passed over for promotions time after time. While demographic disparities across positions indicate pervasive racial and gender-based discrimination, the practical consequences mean people of color are restricted in their access to capital, and are deprived of control over their time, labor, and dignity. We believe a Diversity Task Force would put control back in the hands of those most affected, and would allow Harvard dining workers to directly address the ways that racial and gender oppression are reproduced in the workforce.

As such, we reaffirm our commitment to the HUDS Strike, and to the specific proposals of the workers. Reclaim Harvard Law and the Harvard National Lawyers Guild are in full and emphatic support of the HUDS workers' demand for a Diversity Task Force.

In Solidarity,

Reclaim Harvard Law
Harvard NLG