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ROB BONTA
Attorney General

Attorney General Bonta Issues Guidance on Antidiscrimination Protections

Press Release / *Attorney General Bonta Issues Guidance on Antidiscrimination…*

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Reminds California residents and businesses that rights and protections remain in place, despite federal attacks

OAKLAND — California Attorney General Rob Bonta today issued guidance to ensure that California residents understand the rights and protections they are entitled to under state and federal civil rights laws. Since taking office, the Trump Administration has targeted longstanding civil rights protections, falsely describing them as "illegal" in executive orders, agency memoranda and guidance, grant terms and conditions, and the media. These actions have sown confusion for the workers, students, tenants, homebuyers, healthcare patients, and many other community members these laws are designed to protect. Neither the President nor federal agencies can rewrite laws passed by Congress, nor can they use executive orders, agency rules, or memoranda to change protections provided under the Constitution or federal or state laws. In light of these threats by the Trump Administration, it is critical for all residents, businesses,

and other institutions to understand the state of the law and know that civil rights protections remain legal, enforceable, and effective to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for everyone.

"The Trump Administration wants you to believe that our longstanding civil rights protections are now illegal. Let me say clearly: They are not," **said Attorney General Bonta**. "As the fourth largest economy in the world, California knows that our diversity is our strength. Today's guidance is a reminder for Californians of their rights and protections under the law; a call to action for business and other institutions to embrace principles of fairness and equal opportunity for all; and a promise that, as Attorney General, I will continue to uphold and enforce our civil rights laws."

State and federal civil rights laws prohibit discrimination both when it is intentional and when it occurs by effect. In some instances, discrimination may be intentional, such as when people are deliberately treated differently and denied opportunities because of a real or perceived protected characteristic. In other instances, actions that, on their face, seem neutral, may have a disparate impact on certain groups by causing unjustified and unfair harm, or unduly excluding groups of people based on certain protected characteristics. In light of increasing attacks on civil rights protections by the federal government, Attorney General Bonta, in partnership with a coalition of 13 other attorneys general, today issued guidance reaffirming that:

- Civil rights laws have long protected against intentional discrimination and disparate impact.
- Enforcement of disparate impact liability increases equal opportunity across many sectors.
- Proactive measures by businesses and other institutions to remove unjustified barriers and ensure more equitable opportunities are legal and cost-effective, and benefit everyone.

The guidance provides businesses, non-governmental organizations, local governments, and others with lawful policies and practices that further civil rights laws, including around housing and lending, language access, disaster and emergency preparedness, siting and permitting, employment, and education.

Attorney General Bonta is committed to upholding and enforcing state and federal civil rights laws. Attorney General Bonta has submitted more than a dozen opposition and comment letters in recent months opposing various federal agencies' proposals and actions to rescind and amend disparate impact and other critical regulations implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI). In these letters, joined by a coalition of attorneys general, Attorney General Bonta argues that the proposals and actions fly in the face of more than 50 years of civil rights law in this country, misread Title VI as well as important Supreme Court precedent, and violate the Administrative Procedure Act.

Attorney General Bonta previously secured an agreement permanently blocking the U.S. Department of Education's efforts to impose illegal conditions on $4.9 billion in federal education funding on California's acceptance of a new and legally incoherent interpretation of Title VI.

Attorney General Bonta joins the attorneys general of Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Delaware, Hawai'i, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington in issuing the antidiscrimination guidance.

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