

Federal Judge Rules Trump Administration Illegally Terminated Harvard Research Funding

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Selendy Gay celebrates major First Amendment victory in defense of academic freedom.

Selendy Gay, representing the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), secured a significant legal victory in a high-profile case challenging the Trump administration's termination of more than \$2 billion in federal research funding to Harvard University. On September 4, 2025, U.S. District Judge Allison D. Burroughs ruled that the administration acted unlawfully and in violation of Harvard's constitutional rights.

The court found that the administration's actions were a retaliatory response to Harvard's refusal to comply with demands to alter its academic governance, hiring, and diversity programs. In her opinion, Judge Burroughs wrote that the government had "used antisemitism as a smokescreen for a targeted, ideologically-motivated assault on this country's premier universities."

The ruling prohibits the government from further terminating or freezing Harvard's federal research funding and affirms that public institutions cannot be coerced into abandoning core academic and constitutional principles.

Selendy Gay's legal team, led by Special Counsel Corey Stoughton and working alongside civil rights attorney Joseph Sellers, successfully argued that the administration's actions violated Harvard's First Amendment rights.

"This is a decisive victory for academic freedom and research in the public interest," said Stoughton. "The ruling makes clear that the federal government cannot use its funding power to punish universities for their viewpoints."

The case and its broader implications for higher education received extensive national media coverage, including front-page reporting by *The New York Times* and a detailed analysis by *Reuters*.

While settlement discussions between Harvard and the White House continue, the ruling significantly strengthens the university's position and reinforces the legal limits on government overreach.

The Selendy Gay team features Philippe Selendy, Julie Singer, Corey Stoughton, Aine Carolan, Drake Reed, Sylvia Woodmansee, and Zarah Zhao.

Selendy Gay is proud to have played a key role in this landmark case and remains committed to protecting the rights of institutions and individuals facing unlawful political interference.

Read the full court order [here](#).

Attorneys

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- Julie Singer
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