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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

***Equal Rights Center Wins Key Ruling in Fight Against Meta's Alleged
Discriminatory Ad Delivery Practices***

Court Denies Meta's Motion to Dismiss

***Meta Must Face Lawsuit Over Racial Steering Claims That Meta Delivers
For-Profit College Ads Disproportionately to Black Users***

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - The Equal Rights Center (ERC) is represented by the law firm Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and the Washington Lawyers' Committee. The court [denied](#) tech giant Meta's motion to dismiss, allowing the case to proceed. The lawsuit, filed earlier this year, alleges that Meta engaged in discriminatory practices by denying information and educational opportunities to Black users on its social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram.

"While sites like Facebook and Instagram are relatively new places for Black consumers to encounter discrimination, racial steering is not a new practice," **according to ERC Executive Director Kate Scott**. "Today's ruling makes it even more clear that Meta may be held responsible for ensuring its ad delivery system is fair. The Equal Rights Center remains committed to holding Meta accountable for doing so."

"Today's ruling is an important step forward in the fight against discriminatory practices in algorithmic advertising," said **Diane L. Houk, Partner at Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP**. "The court rejected all of Meta's arguments, denied their motion in full, and allowed this case to move ahead. Meta's failure to recognize how it steers for-profit college ads disproportionately to Black users has real consequences. We're committed to making sure Meta's technology doesn't reinforce systemic racism."

"The D.C. Superior Court's decision allowing our case against Meta to move forward is a critical step in the fight against algorithmic bias. As algorithms and AI become more embedded in decisions that shape educational and economic opportunity, we must confront automated discrimination head-on," said **Leah Frazier, Director of the Digital Justice Initiative at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law**.

“All students deserve an equal shot at discovering educational opportunities that will help them thrive,” says **Kaitlin Banner, Deputy Legal Director at the Washington Lawyers’ Committee**. “The decision denying Meta’s Motion to Dismiss ensures that District residents can fight back against algorithmic discrimination that would limit their opportunities.”

Background

The [lawsuit](#), filed this past February, argues that Meta’s advertising system disproportionately steers ads for for-profit colleges and universities to Black Facebook and Instagram users while disproportionately steering ads for public nonprofit colleges and universities to white users. These practices, the suit argues, violate the District of Columbia’s Human Rights Act and its Consumer Protection Procedures Act.

As the allegations in the Complaint explain, many for-profit colleges have a documented history of selling students the false promise of upward mobility but instead delivering sub-par education, leading to diminished earning potential and employment opportunities. Research shows that people who attend these schools — especially Black students — are often saddled with high debt and go on to make lower salaries than those who attend nonprofit colleges and universities. From 2017 until March 2019, nearly 24,000 federal fraud complaints were filed against for-profit colleges by students who claimed that the schools either lied about earning potential or employment statistics.

This lawsuit marks a significant step in holding Big Tech companies like Meta accountable for their role in maintaining and exacerbating racial and economic inequities.

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Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel LLP is a nationally-recognized litigation boutique that focuses on civil rights, commercial, criminal, and ethics matters. Our civil rights practice includes wrongful convictions, sexual harassment and assault, police and prison misconduct, children’s and disability rights, housing rights, election law, all forms of discrimination, and class actions. Our commercial practice includes complex commercial litigation, partnership disputes, real estate and land use, investigations, ethics and discipline, and appeals. www.ecbawm.com

Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to mobilize the nation’s leading lawyers as agents for change in the Civil Rights Movement. Today, the Lawyers’ Committee uses legal advocacy to achieve racial justice, fighting inside and outside the courts to ensure that Black people and other people of color have the voice, opportunity, and power to make the promises of our democracy real. The Lawyers’ Committee implements its mission and objectives by marshaling the pro bono resources of the bar for litigation, public policy, advocacy and other forms of service by lawyers to the cause of civil rights.

The Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs partners with community members and organizations on scores of cases to combat discrimination in housing, employment, education, immigration, criminal justice reform, public accommodations, based on race, gender, disability, family size, history of criminal conviction, and more. The Washington Lawyers’ Committee has secured a relentless stream of civil rights victories over the past five decades in an effort to achieve justice for all. For more information, please visit www.washlaw.org

The Equal Rights Center is a civil rights organization that identifies and seeks to eliminate unlawful and unfair discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations in its home community of Greater Washington D.C. and nationwide. The ERC’s core strategy for identifying unlawful and unfair discrimination is civil rights testing. When the ERC identifies discrimination, it seeks to eliminate it through the use of testing data to educate the public and business community, support policy advocacy, conduct compliance testing and training, and, if necessary, take enforcement action.