



The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

To: Interested Parties

From: The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Subject: Why Harmeet Dhillon Should Not be Elevated

Date: April 2026

INTRODUCTION

Harmeet Dhillon was confirmed as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights on April 3, 2025, by a vote of 52 to 45, over the strong objections of civil rights organizations who warned that she had spent the bulk of her career actively working against the civil rights laws she would be confirmed to enforce.

Her record before DOJ was clear. As a lawyer for the Trump campaign in post-2020 election litigation, she promoted unsubstantiated claims about election fraud. She opposed the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, designed to ensure that voters would be protected from racial discrimination. She also filed more than ten unsuccessful lawsuits challenging California's voting programs. As [we](#) have said: "Harmeet Dhillon is not a civil rights lawyer and has no business leading the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division."

Following the firing of Attorney General Pam Bondi, reporters and conservative commentators have floated Dhillon as a candidate for Attorney General. Her record in office disqualifies her for any promotion. This memo explains why.

DHILLON'S RECORD AT THE CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Since taking office, Dhillon has operated not as a law enforcement official faithfully executing civil rights statutes but, like Bondi, as a partisan operative dismantling and perverting the very infrastructure she was confirmed to lead.

Under Dhillon, 75% of the division's staff have left or been forced out of the office. In December 2025, more than 200 former Division attorneys signed an open letter warning of the "near destruction" of the Division and describing a culture in which staff were "demanded to find facts to fit the Administration's predetermined outcomes." A career attorney of 18 years who resigned

told the [San Francisco Standard](#) that Dhillon's agenda is "the definition of politicization and weaponization."

Since taking over the Civil Rights Division, she has worked to dismantle civil rights, roll back voting rights, and target the very people the Civil Rights Division is supposed to serve. For example, she has:

- **Freed police departments from federal oversight.** Dhillon canceled consent decrees with the Minneapolis and Louisville police departments reached after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and closed Biden-era investigations and findings of constitutional violations against six additional departments including Louisiana State Police, Memphis, Phoenix, and Trenton. ([MSNBC, Dec. 28, 2025](#))
- **Abandoned voting rights enforcement.** The DOJ [withdrew election-related lawsuits in Georgia, Virginia, and Alabama](#), including the challenge to Georgia's 2021 voting law that civil rights groups argued suppressed Black voter access. ([Leadership Conference](#))
- **Dropped a lawsuit protecting migrant children from sexual abuse.** A suit alleging widespread sexual abuse of unaccompanied migrant children was dismissed without explanation as part of the Division's first-months case-closing sweep. ([The Hill, Dec. 9, 2025](#))
- **Erased the Fair Housing Act from the Division's mission.** Dhillon's new mission statements dropped all mention of the Fair Housing Act, the landmark 1968 law prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. ([The Hill, Dec. 9, 2025](#))
- **Refused to investigate the killing of a U.S. citizen by an ICE agent.** Dhillon declined to open a civil rights investigation into the killing of Renee Good, triggering the [simultaneous resignation of four senior career officials](#) in the criminal section. The DOJ subsequently moved to investigate Good's widow rather than her killer.
- **Gutted 50 years of anti-discrimination law without public input.** On the 68th anniversary of the Division's founding, Dhillon finalized a rule [eliminating disparate-impact liability from Title VI regulations](#) without the public notice-and-comment period required by the Administrative Procedure Act, stripping away the legal tool that for five decades has underpinned enforcement in housing, lending, and school discipline cases. ([Bloomberg Law, Aug. 25, 2025](#))

- **Weaponized the Division against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - programs designed to advance the goals of civil rights laws - in higher education.** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs are broad and vary from one institution to another, often focused on supporting student relationships and success, as well as promoting and supporting diverse learning environments. Dhillon launched investigations into these programs at [George Mason University, the University of California system](#), and dozens of other institutions receiving federal funding. The pressure campaign forced the [resignation of the University of Virginia president](#) and cost UVA over \$60 million in research grants. She has separately [sued Harvard twice](#) — once over admissions data and once over antisemitism — with Trump publicly boasting she would make the university "pay a lot of money." Former U.S. Attorney Barbara McQuade has written that under Dhillon, the Division has been recast to ["attack the very interests it once protected."](#)
 - **The collateral damage to legitimate research has been severe.** [Harvard's funding freeze](#) alone endangered research into cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and climate change, and could cost the university as much as \$1 billion annually. [Harvard's own legal filings](#) described grants supporting Parkinson's and Alzheimer's drug development, nanofiber research to protect servicemembers and first responders, and an AI system to diagnose and treat cancer as casualties of the freeze.

- **Turned the Division's resources against LGBTQ+ Americans.** Dhillon refocused the Division's mission from day one to include opposition to transgender rights, replacing enforcement priorities on employment discrimination and housing. The Division intervened in [two Georgia prison cases](#) to oppose gender-affirming care for transgender inmates, and [joined a lawsuit against Loudoun County, Virginia](#) siding with students who harassed a transgender classmate. Before taking office, she had called doctors providing gender-affirming care "butchers" and argued transgender women should be [excluded from Title IX protection entirely](#).

- **Used the Voting Rights Act as a partisan gerrymander tool.** Dhillon sent a [letter](#) directing Texas to redraw minority-majority congressional districts, providing legal cover for a mid-decade GOP gerrymander. A federal three-judge panel found the resulting map was an [unconstitutional racial gerrymander](#), before the Supreme Court allowed it to stay in place for the 2026 election, and Senate Democrats [requested a Hatch Act investigation](#) into DOJ's involvement.

- **Demanded access to state voter registration data infringing on states' constitutional authority.** Dhillon and the DOJ have sued 29 states and the District of Columbia to turn over protected state voter rolls that not only infringes on states' authority to administer elections but also perpetuates false narratives that erode trust in

elections and unjustly targets immigrants, raises urgent concerns about the privacy, legality, and the potential for misuse of the sensitive personal information contained in voting records, and undermines crucial and vital trust in the collection and use of public data.

- **Conducted herself in ways that undermine the Division's credibility.** Dhillon publicly amplified a false identification of a shooting suspect at Brown University tied to their political identity; a career attorney who resigned told Rolling Stone she "threatens individuals and entities on social media," making Division integrity impossible; and in December 2025 used a disability slur on X that prompted protests at her own law school alma mater.

CONCLUSION

Dhillon is not a steward of the Civil Rights Division. She is an instrument of its dismantling, and the dismantlement of civil rights protection in general, and that record disqualifies her for any advancement.