Eighteen civil rights organizations condemn appointment of Craig Trainor as acting head of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division

November 17, 2026

The National Center for Youth Law and 17 other civil rights and education organizations condemn the Trump Administration's appointment of Craig Trainor as Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice and call on the President to withdraw it. Trainor's record makes him unqualified to serve as the federal government's chief civil rights enforcement officer.

In two senior roles in this administration, Trainor has worked to undermine the very laws this position is responsible for enforcing. On Feb. 4, 2025, as Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, he issued a "Dear Colleague" letter applying the anti-survivor 2020 Title IX rule to student complaints and pledging to advance the President's agenda to erase transgender, nonbinary, and intersex students through redefinition. On Feb. 14, 2025, he issued a second letter that grossly misstated the law and threatened to cut funding to schools working to level the playing field for students, faculty, and staff. Within months, three federal courts in different parts of the country blocked its enforcement. As Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Trainor turned the Fair Housing Act against the people it was written to protect, freezing hundreds of civil rights investigations and leaving people exposed to ongoing unlawful discrimination.

In the midterm elections, the American people rejected an agenda to divide, discriminate against, and diminish our communities. Instead of rebuilding a Civil Rights Division decimated under Harmeet Dhillon, the Administration has chosen to elevate the official behind a court-blocked classroom censorship agenda who seeks to undermine the rights of survivors and equal opportunity in our schools and communities.

The American people deserve a Department of Justice and a Civil Rights Division that respect the rule of law, hold perpetrators of unlawful discrimination accountable, and protect the rights of all people. Trainor's appointment, even on an acting basis, betrays those values.

In solidarity,

Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

ED/OCR Alumni Collective

Human Rights Campaign

Juvenile Law Center

Legal Council for Health Justice

National Center for Youth Law

National Council of Jewish Women

Poverty & Race Research Action Council

Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)

Save Our Schools Arizona

S.T.A.N.D. UP Minnesota Parents United

State Wide Education Organizing Committee

Stop Sexual Assault in Schools

Students Engaged in Advancing Texas (SEAT)

The Advocacy Institute

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

The Sikh Coalition