

Alleged Discrimination against Conservative Students in Top Law Reviews Sparks Concerns



Allegations of a lack of representation for conservative students within the mastheads of prestigious law reviews at three prominent American law schools have raised questions about possible discrimination. The controversy stems from claims that center-right students and members of the Federalist Society are facing challenges when attempting to secure positions within these esteemed publications, sparking a debate about political bias within academic circles.

Law reviews are regarded as prestigious symbols of legal pedigree within the realm of law schools. Benjamin Ogilvie, a student at the [University of Chicago Law School](#), conducted research that shed light on what he believes to be a bias against conservative law students at Columbia, Northwestern, and [Stanford Law Schools](#). By analyzing the presence or absence of conservative law students on mastheads, Ogilvie contends that these institutions may be engaging in discriminatory practices against right-leaning law students.

Ogilvie's findings, published in UChicago's independent student publication, the *Chicago Thinker*, underscore the pivotal role that law reviews play in the world of legal academia. These publications wield significant influence, as they determine which legal scholars receive tenure and which legal and policy concepts gain circulation. While law reviews are often nominally managed by campus officials, selecting masthead members typically falls to student editors, potentially leading to the underrepresentation of conservative voices.

Columbia Law School reportedly faces allegations of discrimination against conservatives, particularly those affiliated with the Federalist Society. Despite the accomplishments of right-leaning students, none of the nine Columbia FedSoc Chapter's executive board members hold positions on the Columbia Law Review's masthead.

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Similar claims have been directed towards Northwestern University, where only five out of seventeen members of the FedSoc executive board are listed on the Northwestern Law Review's masthead, and none in senior positions. This alleged bias has led some Federalist Society members to assume positions within a less prestigious campus journal, Northwestern's *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*.

Ogilvie's investigation was prompted by reports from conservative students about political discrimination dating back to 2021. This pattern appears to extend even to [Stanford Law School](#), currently ranked as the top law school in the nation. Stanford has faced criticism for heckling and berating conservative speakers, raising concerns that conservative students may face obstacles within the institution.

One Stanford student and Federalist Society member disclosed that the school might use diversity statements to identify and exclude conservative students from certain opportunities. The significance of law review membership cannot be understated, as it often serves as evidence of a student's research, critical thinking, editing, and writing abilities—qualities sought after by employers, including prestigious judicial clerkships and elite-firm associate positions.

Legal professionals, such as criminal defense lawyer Michael Cicchini, emphasize the importance of meritocratic selection in law reviews. Cicchini argues that factors like race, gender, sexual orientation, political views, and religious beliefs should not play a role in the admission process. This controversy has ignited debates over whether law reviews truly uphold meritocracy and whether admissions should be influenced by factors other than academic prowess.

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Ogilvie and other concerned parties worry that the alleged bias against conservative students indicates a potential departure from the meritocratic ideals law reviews are supposed to represent. Membership in a law review is not just a resume-booster; it holds significant value for aspiring lawyers in terms of both their professional growth and the opportunity to shape legal discussions.

As these allegations continue to fuel discussions surrounding diversity, bias, and meritocracy within the realm of legal education, legal professionals and institutions are grappling with how to ensure that law reviews remain a fair and inclusive platform for all students, regardless of their political leanings.

Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.

