

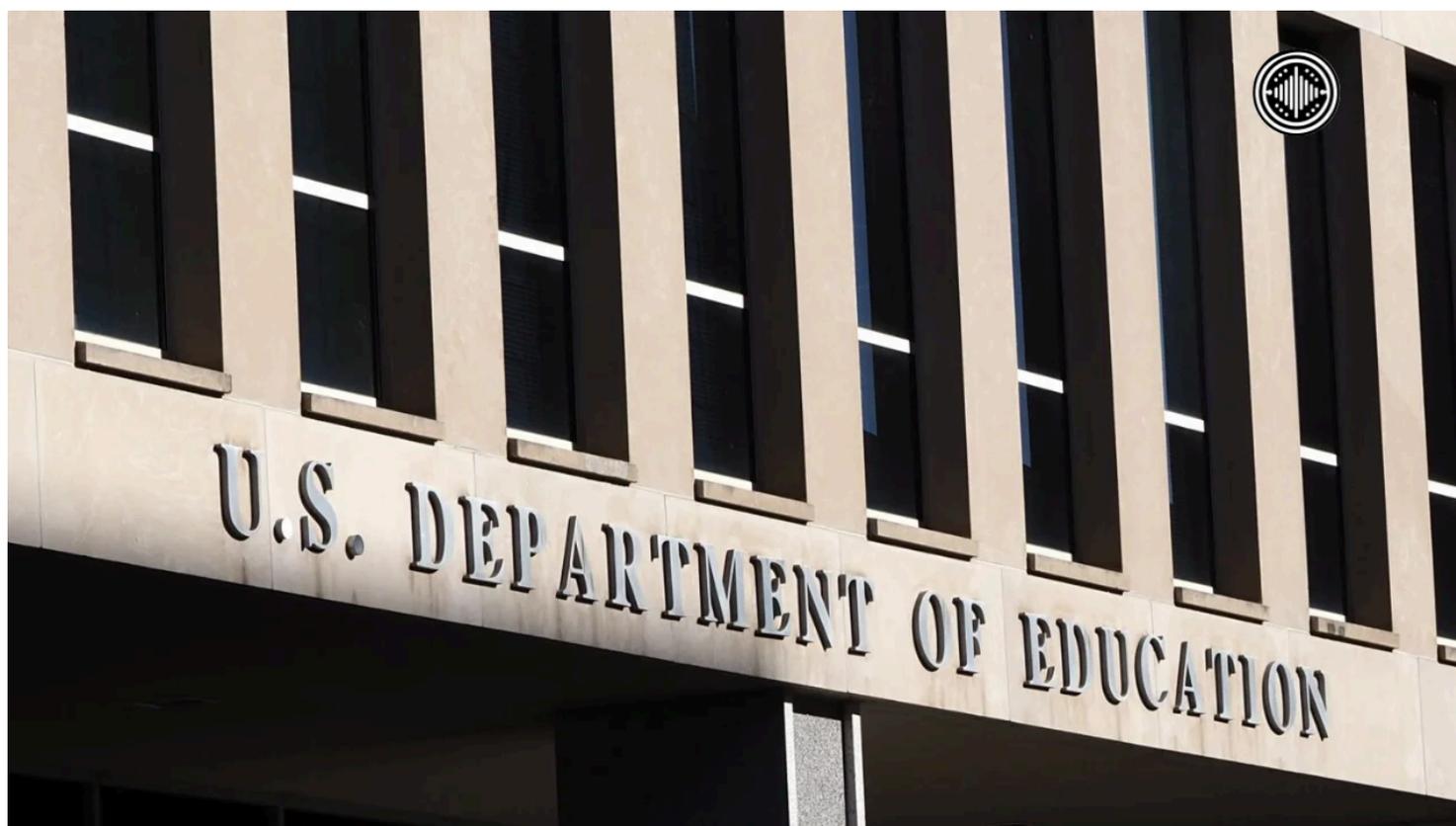
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## Federal Civil Rights Office Probes Universities Over DACA-Focused Aid

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The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has launched investigations into five universities accused of favoring certain student groups, specifically recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, in scholarship offerings, potentially violating federal anti-discrimination laws.

DACA, short for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, is an Obama-era policy that permits certain undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to live, work, and study without immediate risk of deportation. While it does not grant legal status, the program has allowed hundreds of thousands of individuals to remain in the country under limited protection.

The civil rights office is reviewing whether universities have restricted scholarship eligibility exclusively to DACA recipients or other identity-based groups, which may breach Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law prohibits any institution receiving federal funds from discriminating based on race, color, or national origin. The investigation also includes scholarship programs directed at Hispanic or Latino students, African American students, Native American students, and other minority categories.

The institutions under review include the University of Louisville, the University of Nebraska Omaha, the University of Miami, the University of Michigan, and Western Michigan University. The inquiries stem from complaints filed by the Equal Protection Project, part of the conservative nonprofit Legal Insurrection Foundation.

William A. Jacobson, founder of the Equal Protection Project, emphasized the need for fairness in educational opportunities: “Protecting equal access to education includes protecting the rights of American-born students,” Jacobson stated. “Discrimination against American-born students must not be tolerated.”

Universities have issued limited responses. John Karman, interim vice president for communications at the University of Louisville, confirmed that the university had just been notified and is reviewing the claims. Kay Jarvis, director of public affairs at the University of Michigan, acknowledged receipt of the notice but offered no further comment.

This investigation forms part of the Department of Education’s wider enforcement efforts to ensure civil rights compliance across all federally funded educational institutions. The Office for Civil Rights has recently issued similar notifications to other universities over allegations of antisemitic harassment, reinforcing its role in ensuring all students are treated fairly and equitably.

However, the agency itself is grappling with internal staffing issues due to layoffs and voluntary departures, which could hinder its ability to conduct and conclude investigations

efficiently. The long-term direction of the office remains uncertain amid broader debates over federal oversight and institutional accountability.