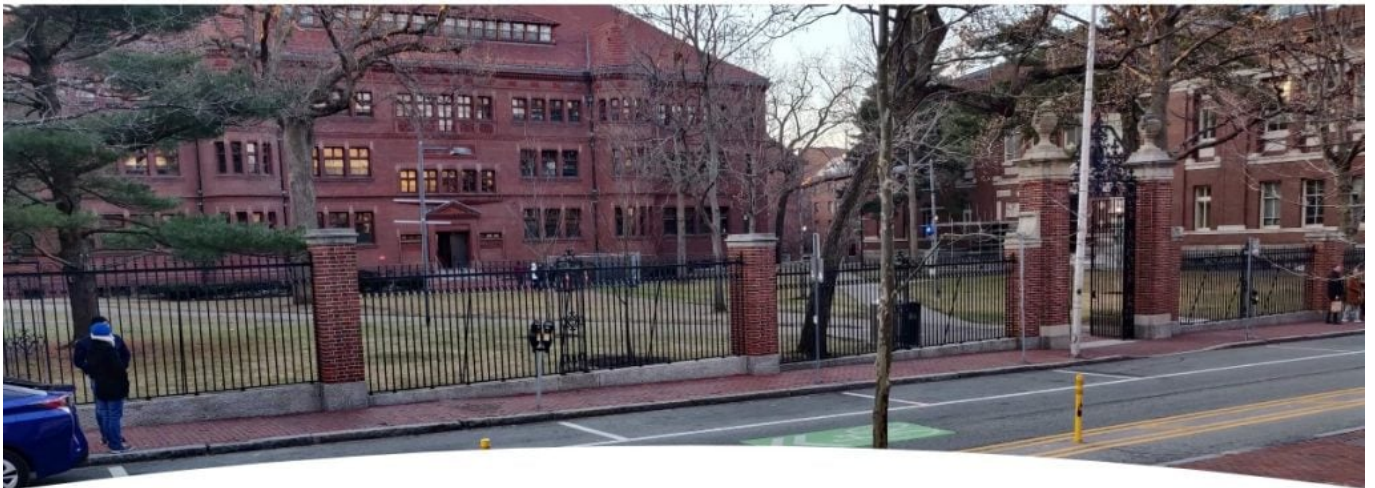


Will Harvard Go Full Hillsdale?

By Victor Davis Hanson

Harvard University has rejected various demands of a presidential commission on anti-Semitism.

The task force wants to persuade Harvard to ensure Jewish students on its campus are no longer harassed, or else lose its federal funding.



Harvard retorts that it won't be bullied by Washington.

Among its other requirements, the Trump administration also warned Harvard to cease using race as a criterion in its admissions, hiring, and promotion, contrary to law.

And it also directed the campus to ban the use of masks that, in the post-COVID era of protests, have emboldened violent demonstrators with anonymity.

The administration's order to stop race-based bias was in accordance with civil rights statutes, and a recent Supreme Court decision specifically banning affirmative action at Harvard and elsewhere.

No matter. Harvard claimed that the Trump administration infringed upon its First Amendment rights.

So, it has temporarily rejected the administration's orders. At least for now, Harvard has lost its annual \$2.2 billion grant of federal funds.

Former President Barack Obama, among others, lauded Harvard's rejection of the demands of the administration's anti-Semitism task force. He claimed the Trump administration's efforts were ham-handed.

But what academic freedom are Harvard and Obama talking about? The freedom to discriminate and segregate by race in hiring, admissions, dorms, and graduations?

The freedom of 500 Harvard students to crash the classes of others, shut down traffic, and harass students on the basis of their religion or views on Israel?

Despite all of Harvard's platitudes, its classrooms are still being disrupted. Jewish students remain fearful.

And what would Obama say if, for example, African-American students at Harvard were harassed on campus by masked disrupters?

Or black studies classes were crashed by students wearing scarves over their faces as they vented their hatred? Would he press the Trump administration to force Harvard to honor federal civil rights protections?

Remember, Harvard is a private university with a largely untaxed endowment of over \$50.2 billion. Yet again, it still receives some \$2.2 billion—now suspended—in federal funds.

The administration task force is not forcing Harvard to run its university according to its version of federal dictates.

Instead, the Trump commission is simply warning Harvard that

if, in addition to its huge sources of private funding, it still wishes continuance of some \$2.2 billion in public money from the federal government, then it must comply with existing laws and executive orders.

Does Harvard remember the embarrassing testimony of its former president, Claudine Gay?

She failed to assure a congressional committee that Harvard had taken action against openly hostile anti-Semitic student protestors during its growing protest movements.

Does Harvard understand why the Supreme Court ruled it had violated the "Equal Protection Clause" of the Fourteenth Amendment and was culpable of prejudice against Asian-Americans?

Does Harvard have any clue why it has lost some \$150 million per annum of donor giving?

Does Harvard realize that no one believes its pretenses anymore that it "cannot and will not tolerate disruption" of classes—given that it still happens all the time at its various professional schools and undergraduate courses?

Perhaps Harvard should follow the strategy of independent Hillsdale College, which long ago wished to be free of federal dictates.

So, unlike Harvard, the college put its proverbial money where its mouth was and agreed unilaterally to give up all federal funding to be free of Washington's octopus tentacles.

Yet, there is one critical distinction between Hillsdale and Harvard.

Hillsdale does not take federal money, period—whether doled out by either a Democrat or Republican administration.

It sincerely believes that too often the federal government

itself does not follow the Constitution, impinges on freedom, and forces colleges to violate equality under the law when discriminating by race and gender.

Harvard has no such principles.

Its beef is not with the notion of an overweening federal government, eager to coerce private colleges to follow particular protocols.

Instead, it is at war only with the Trump commission or, in theory, any other similar conservative administration that might wish it to adhere to the law as a condition of being federally funded.

Otherwise, Harvard has no problem with an activist federal government, as long as it is a liberal one forcing all sorts of Title IX or DEI initiatives on private and Christian colleges that apparently lost their autonomy by accepting federal money. It has said nothing when state and federal governments in the past gratuitously hounded Hillsdale.

So, Harvard loudly can set itself free by permanently pursuing its agenda on its own \$50 billion, in the same manner Hillsdale does quietly with its \$1 billion—without the taxpayer's dime, whether Democratic or Republican.

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