

EXHIBIT 7

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON DIVISION**

STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS, INC,

Plaintiff,

v.

PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF
HARVARD COLLEGE (HARVARD
CORPORATION),

Defendant.

Civil Action No. 1:14-cv-14176-ADB

Leave to file granted on July 31, 2018

**DECLARATION OF MELISSA TRAN
(HARVARD VIETNAMESE ASSOCIATION)**

Melissa Tran, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Section 1746, declares the following:

1. My name is Melissa Tran. I am a rising senior at Harvard and expect to earn my bachelor's degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology in 2019. I am writing this declaration individually and on behalf of the Harvard Vietnamese Association ("HVA") in support of the consideration of race, as one of many factors, in Harvard's admissions policy.

2. I am a Co-President of the HVA. After consulting with HVA's Board, I have been given authority to submit this declaration on behalf of HVA. This declaration represents a collection of different experiences shared with me by members of HVA.

3. HVA is dedicated to promoting awareness of Vietnamese and Vietnamese-American culture, history, and community on campus. HVA maintains a strong commitment to building a warm community amongst its members.

4. HVA was founded in the early 1990s, serving as an outlet for Vietnamese students to socialize with one another and to learn more about Vietnamese culture. Since then, HVA has continued to promote culture, community, and educational/political awareness at Harvard. It has become a voice on campus for Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans and maintains a strong dedication to the needs of the greater Boston and Vietnamese community.

5. In areas of higher education, Southeast Asians, including Vietnamese students, are not well represented, but are often grouped with other Asian students despite significant cultural and socioeconomic differences. These differences have often resulted in HVA members feeling isolated due to expectations that we have had similar opportunities as other Asian students, when instead we come from a demographic with a distinctly lower educational and economic background.

6. Some members have also experienced stigma due to a perception by others that people from Southeast Asian countries are poorer, less intelligent, and even more barbaric than people from other Asian countries. We think that admissions policies should actually be more race-conscious in this regard, to understand how our Vietnamese history and heritage continue to affect our lives in ways that other Asian groups are unaffected.

7. Many of our HVA members come from families that lived through war-torn and refugee conditions, and therefore lack connections or mentorship to know how to navigate through networks of higher education. HVA provides a network and level of comfort for Vietnamese students who come from similar backgrounds and can share feelings of uncertainty and alienation in environments like Harvard. Having a Vietnamese community here helps us to know that we belong at Harvard, when we might otherwise feel lost. However, HVA is a relatively small organization due to the limited number of Vietnamese students, and we believe that prohibiting

race from admissions considerations would significantly harm our ability to create a cohesive community and support our members.

8. For some members' families, coming to America was not just a choice of pursuing a better life, but rather of trying to stay alive, which has come with repercussions, ranging from trauma to prioritizing survival above all else. For others, they are still recovering from the lasting economic and social damage of life in a country healing from conflict. Generations later, these memories and experiences continue to shape the lives of our members, some of whom are the first in their families and communities to enter an institution like Harvard. If not for race-conscious admissions policies, we believe these struggles could never be properly understood.

9. It is also important for us, HVA, to support race-conscious admissions because we strongly believe in the value of racial diversity, which allows the opportunity to learn from people from different backgrounds, such as Black, Latinx, and other Asian communities. We believe that race is an important, rich part of the identity of many students, and that it is irreplaceable in the pursuit of a diverse student body.

10. Lastly, we stand firmly in support of other underrepresented groups that race-conscious admissions policies seek to benefit. We believe that there are persistent, societal inequalities on the basis of race that cannot be corrected for by looking only at other factors, and that race-conscious admissions are necessary to close that gap. Other measures for admissions are insufficient due to inherent biases and their inability to fully capture the difficulties faced by marginalized groups.

11. We believe that it is important for our voices to be heard in this discussion pertaining to race-conscious admissions. As an Asian student group with members who also come

from underprivileged backgrounds, we believe we can offer a unique perspective on the positive impact of race-conscious admissions policies on Harvard students.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this day, July 27, 2018

/s/ Melissa Tran
Melissa Tran