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### **ERASE Racism Issues Report on the Federal Government's "Civil Rights Rollback"**

#### **The Report Highlights Efforts by the US Government to Reverse Civil Rights Gains in Housing and Education, and It Encourages Citizens to Track and Speak Out About Proposed Changes**

**Syosset, NY – October 15, 2019** – Elaine Gross, President of ERASE Racism, announced today the publication of a report titled "Civil Rights Rollback: U.S. Government Actions to Reduce Civil Rights In Housing and Public Education." The report has been created by ERASE Racism – with essential research by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law – in response to the startling reality that civil rights in America are under attack from the federal government in a way that has not been seen since before the early 1960s.

The report provides an analysis of the federal government's latest efforts to roll back civil rights in the areas of housing and education. It includes spotlights that highlight implications for New York's Long Island, because that is where ERASE Racism is based and because the spotlights illustrate how federal changes affect specific communities.

The report calls for a new level of monitoring, vigilance, and activism on the part of all Americans who care about civil rights. The end of the report includes two Civil Rights Trackers—one for housing and one for education. They are designed to help concerned citizens keep track of numerous government activities that deserve to be addressed with relentless activism to defend and restore the essential civil rights that underpin our nation's stated commitment to equal rights under the law.

"In recent decades, Americans have become accustomed to the idea that the US government is a catalyst for and protector of civil rights, but that is no longer the case," said ERASE Racism President Elaine Gross. "As this report makes clear, the federal government is attacking civil rights in America, and relentless citizen activism is now required to turn this situation around.

This report provides a pathway, illuminated by the reality of recent government actions, for citizens to proceed together to protect our vital civil rights.”

A snapshot of the report’s sobering findings includes the following:

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has acted deliberately to gut critical components of the enforcement infrastructure for the Fair Housing Act of 1968. It has done so in several key ways, among others: suspending the policies, procedures, and tools instituted to effectively improve municipal planning efforts to further fair housing; and, proposing to nullify the Fair Housing Act’s Discriminatory Effects Standard, also known as Disparate Impact, by shifting the burden of proof onto the plaintiff at every step of a Disparate Impact discrimination claim.
- The U.S. Department of Education is systematically shifting policies to withdraw protections against racial discrimination and civil rights enforcement. It is doing so by, among other things, rescinding federal guidance related to the voluntary use of race in K-12 student assignment and college admissions; withdrawing federal support for voluntary affirmative action measures, which the US Supreme Court has consistently ruled are constitutionally permissible; and, rescinding guidance related to disparities in school discipline and issuing a report that shifted responsibility for disparate treatment of students of color from schools to societal factors, despite federal studies pointing to different treatment for similar behaviors between white and “Minority” students. The Department is also advocating school choice (vouchers and charters), despite evidence of discriminatory and disparate treatment and outcome trends in these settings.

The entire report “Civil Rights Rollback” is available here [Insert link]. To speak with Elaine Gross, President of ERASE Racism, contact Henry Miller at [hmill@highimpactpartnering.com](mailto:hmill@highimpactpartnering.com).

*ERASE Racism is a regional civil rights organization based on Long Island that exposes and addresses the devastating impact of historical and ongoing structural racism, particularly in public school education and housing. It does so through research, policy advocacy, legal action, and educating and mobilizing the public – driving policy change at local, regional and statewide levels and through national coalitions. It has been recognized locally and nationally for its cutting-edge work.*