To: Dean Manning, Dean Onken, and HLS Administration
From: The undersigned
Date: November 28, 2022

We, the undersigned, are concerned that the Harvard Law School administration is not doing enough to support equity and access for its students. Specifically, Harvard Law School's financial aid and postgraduate public interest student debt relief (LIPP) programs are (1) insufficient to support students who come from low-income backgrounds and/or hope to pursue careers in lower-paying fields and (2) inferior to those offered by peer institutions like Yale Law School and Stanford Law School.

In particular, HLS's LIPP program falls short. LIPP is less generous and less flexible than the loan forgiveness programs offered at HLS's peer institutions—despite how HLS promotes it. HLS uses LIPP to recruit public-minded students, many of whom belong to marginalized communities and/or come from low-income backgrounds. Yet, once on LIPP, many recipients struggle to:

- Make their monthly law school debt payments—especially students balancing other undergraduate or postgraduate debt;
- Accrue savings—including in retirement accounts, which, unlike HLS, both YLS and SLS entirely exclude from asset consideration when calculating their graduates' public interest loan repayment awards; and
- Purchase homes—the key path to upward class mobility and building generational wealth; unlike HLS, both YLS and SLS exclude primary residences from their graduates' asset considerations when calculating loan repayment awards.

LIPP in its current state is insufficient to ensure that students from all backgrounds—particularly students of color, who have less generational wealth than their white counterparts[1]—are able to pursue public interest careers, if they so desire. It is a problem that the average public interest student at Harvard Law School is someone who is white, cis, and comes from generational wealth. Justice is not built when only a small subset of Harvard Law School graduates consider a career in the public interest to be financially feasible. We are *all* worse off when students have their career choices financially constrained by crushing educational debt.

The undersigned groups call upon the HLS Administration to improve LIPP as well as front-end financial aid, without cutting any other existing student benefits to offset the change. The undersigned groups clearly state their support for student organizing to improve LIPP, as well as clearly state their expectations that the HLS administration will continue to work with students to improve LIPP.

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[1] *See, e.g.,* Bhutta, Neil, et al., *Disparities in Wealth by Race and Ethnicity in the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances*, FEDS Notes, Sept. 28, 2020, https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/disparities-in-wealth-by-race-and-ethnicity-in-the-2019-survey-of-consumer-finances-20200928.html. ("In the 2019 survey, White families have the highest level of both median and mean family wealth: $188,200 and $983,400, respectively...Black and Hispanic families have considerably less wealth than White families. Black families' median and mean wealth is less than 15 percent that of White families, at $24,100 and $142,500, respectively. Hispanic families' median and mean wealth is $36,100 and $165,500, respectively.").

Signed,

La Alianza at Harvard Law School

Harvard Asian Pacific American Law Students Association

Harvard Women's Law Association Executive Board

Harvard Black Law Students Association Executive Board

Harvard South Asian Law Students Association

HLS Middle Eastern Law Students Association

Harvard Native American Law Students Association

HLS Lambda

Harvard Law School Queer Trans People of Color (QTPOC)

Harvard Jewish Law Students Association

Harvard Armenian Law Students Association

Harvard African Law Association

Harvard Muslim Law Students Association

First Class at Harvard Law

Harvard Catholic Law Students Association

Harvard Disabled Law Students Association

Harvard Law Review

Harvard Law School Student Government

Harvard Legal Aid Bureau

To: Dean Manning, Dean Onken, and HLS Administration
From: The undersigned
Date: November 2, 2022
Re: Support for LIPP reform

We are the five student leaders on the Executive Board of the Board of Student Advisers (BSA). We do not represent the views of the BSA as a whole. We are speaking in our individual capacities.

In our individual experiences as student leaders and 1L mentors, we have seen firsthand how financial circumstances affect student career choices. Many of our 1L advisees express an interest in pursuing public interest careers but report numerous obstacles. Many changes, including LIPP reform, are needed to address these obstacles.

We support the LIPP reform proposal presented by fellow HLS students.

Sincerely,

Sudheer Poluru
Babs Tsao
Cristina Dan
Juan Castano
Zach Tauscher