



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Justice Announces Civil Rights Investigation into the Consideration of Race in Prosecutorial Decision making by Minnesota's Hennepin County

Monday, May 5, 2025

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Under our Constitution, no government may distribute different burdens or benefits on the basis of race without facing strict judicial scrutiny. This is especially true in the criminal justice system. Any attempt to subject Americans to different punishments or penalties based on race violates the Constitution and a number of federal civil rights laws.

Today, the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division announced an investigation into the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, led by County Attorney Mary Moriarty, to determine whether the Office is depriving its residents of their federal rights to be free from race-based prosecutorial decision making. According to public reporting, the Hennepin County Attorney recently adopted a policy requiring her prosecutors to consider "racial identity" during prosecutorial decision making, including when negotiating plea agreements that influence the burdens that criminal defendants face, and the benefits that they receive, in criminal prosecutions. The investigation announced today will involve a comprehensive review of all relevant Hennepin County Attorney's Offices policies and practices that may involve illegal consideration of race.

"As a longtime prosecutor, I firmly believe in the paramount importance of a colorblind criminal justice system," said Attorney General Pamela Bondi. "This Department of Justice will avail itself of every tool at its disposal to protect all Americans from illegal DEI discrimination."

"It is unconstitutional and morally abhorrent to make different prosecutorial decisions based on a person's race," said Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Civil Rights Division will not tolerate any attempt to do so."

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