

Attorney General Raoul Takes Action To Support Black Women Entrepreneurs

December 18 2023 9:35 AM



CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 19 attorneys general, urged the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit to permit the Fearless Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides grant opportunities to Black women entrepreneurs, to continue its philanthropic efforts.

“Like thousands of other private organizations around the country, the Fearless Foundation provides crucial support to entrepreneurs and companies that have

historically been denied access to capital,” Raoul said. “I am proud to stand with my fellow attorneys general in strong opposition to this cynical attempt to end the Fearless Foundation’s important work by mischaracterizing the intent of a statute enacted to protect the rights of newly free slaves.”

The plaintiff in this case, the American Alliance for Equal Rights, is claiming that a section of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which was enacted in the wake of the Civil War to protect newly free slaves from discrimination, would prohibit the Fearless Foundation from implementing its grant program for Black women entrepreneurs.

Raoul and the coalition argue in their [amicus brief](#) that this argument is flawed because the law should not be applied to private charitable donations aimed at historically marginalized communities. The coalition further notes that the legislation itself was intended to facilitate the entry of marginalized persons and groups into economic life at a time when access to capital was severely limited on racial and gender lines.

Raoul and the coalition explain that Congress enacted the statute in question to outlaw discrimination that prevented African Americans from exercising basic economic rights, particularly the right to enter commercial transactions. The coalition notes that Congress passed this law against a background of charitable giving aimed at helping marginalized groups, especially the newly free slaves, and there is no indication that Congress intended to put an end to this practice. Based on these considerations, Raoul and the coalition urge the appeals court to reject efforts to shut down the Fearless Foundation and affirm the lower court decision in this case.

Joining Attorney General Raoul in filing the brief are the attorneys general of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.