



# NATIONAL BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

80 M Street SE, Washington, D.C. 20003 | [www.nblsa.org](http://www.nblsa.org)

November 4, 2021

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA) supports the Midwestern Region's challenge to the decision made by the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law (UIC Law) to reinstate Professor Jason Kilborn as a full-time professor.

On December 2, 2020, UIC Law students in Civil Procedure II sat for their final examination. While taking that exam, students came across a question where the phrase "n\*\*\*\*s" and "b\*\*\*\*s" (profane expressions for African Americans and women) appeared. The hypothetical question involved a wrongful termination claim for workplace discrimination, but the call of the question was focused on civil procedure. Several students experienced emotional and physical distress after seeing this language appear. Some were so taken aback, that one student endured heart palpitations.

This is not Professor Kilborn's first instance of racial prejudice and rampant xenophobia. Following a complaint filed with the Office of Access and Equity (OEA) against Professor Kilborn, he confessed to directly telling a Black student that they would "become homicidal." The UIC Law Students of Color and their allies are extremely alarmed that the UIC Law administration would reinstate Professor Kilborn and demonstrate a callous disregard for their Black, Asian, Latino, and other Students of Color. Jason Kilborn is a direct threat to the safety of the entire UIC Law community, a harmful disruption to UIC Law's academic environment, and a danger to Students of Color especially after publicly stating that they are "his enemies." These statements, if left unresolved, will foster an atmosphere that is not conducive nor safe for any Students of Color at UIC Law and should warrant the **immediate** removal of Jason Kilborn.

There is no reason or instance meriting the use of even redacted versions of these insensitive and hateful words on a law school examination. His use of "n\*\*\*\*s" and "b\*\*\*\*s" was completely unnecessary given the purpose of the examination, causing only trauma to students during an extremely stressful point in their lives. The fact that the question has been used in the past without outrage is no excuse. Something that has always been wrong does not suddenly become right simply because it has existed without challenge. We must, as future attorneys continue to challenge all injustices no matter how long they have been established.

Freedom of academia is also not an excuse in this case. Such freedom supports ideas that contribute to the overall expansion of our collective knowledge. In this case, there is absolutely nothing to be gained by the use of "n\*\*\*\*s" and "b\*\*\*\*s" on any examination let alone one focused on civil procedure. Its use is not necessary to understand such a question, nor does it contribute to student's understanding of civil procedure. The only purpose of such language, explicit or implicit, is to cause trauma.

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Professor Kilborn's use of "n\*\*\*\*s" and "b\*\*\*\*\*s" on a Civil Procedure II exam question, along with other incidents of discriminatory conduct, warrant his removal and termination. Black law students at UIC and across the nation deserve to be able to pursue their education in an environment that does not unabashedly allow the unnecessary use of discriminatory and traumatic language.

NBLSA stands with the Midwest Black Law Students Association (MWBLSA) and the Black students at UIC Law in their mission to demand that UIC Law:

1. Immediately terminates Professor Kilborn;
2. Implements mandatory anti-racism and anti-bias trainings from an independent agency;
3. Provides a space for Black law students to feel safe and confident; and
4. Creates a Student and Faculty Oversight Committee to review student discrimination complaints regarding faculty and hold students/faculty accountable.

These measures will begin the process of ensuring that UIC Law students are able to focus on their education and personal upliftment without concern for a discriminatory environment.

Racism and the resulting trauma should not be a pre-requisite for rising Black nor attorneys of color. NBLSA supports Black and minority students across the nation and has a long-standing commitment to advocacy and empowerment. We call on our membership to provide support in the efforts of MWBLSA and UIC Black law students.

In NBLSA Service,

The 54th National Board of Directors  
National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA)