
Trump threatens Harvard's tax-exempt status after funding freeze



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President Donald Trump has escalated his clash with Harvard University by threatening to revoke its tax-exempt status, following his administration's decision to freeze over \$2.2 billion in federal grants and \$60 million in contracts. The move comes after Harvard rejected the White House's demands to overhaul policies related to hiring, admissions, and teaching—measures framed as efforts to combat rising antisemitism on campus.

In a Tuesday post on Truth Social, Trump wrote that Harvard should “lose its Tax Exempt Status and be taxed as a political entity” if it continues to promote what he described as “terrorist inspired/supporting sickness.” He emphasized that tax exemption is contingent upon acting in the public interest.

The administration’s letter outlined ten sweeping reforms, including: reporting students with “hostile” views to federal authorities, mandating political diversity in academic departments, auditing certain programs for antisemitic content, and scrutinizing faculty for plagiarism.

Harvard President Alan Garber rejected the conditions, calling them a violation of the university’s First Amendment rights. “We will not relinquish our independence,” he said, arguing the proposals amount to direct government control over intellectual freedom.

The Department of Education accused Harvard of entitlement and failing to protect Jewish students during pro-Palestinian protests that have spread across U.S. campuses amid the Gaza conflict.

Critics, including Harvard professor David Armitage, labeled the administration’s actions “vengeful” and “an attack on free speech.” With a \$53 billion endowment, Harvard can likely withstand the freeze, but the broader implications extend to other elite institutions. Columbia University, under similar pressure, complied with the administration’s demands after losing \$400

million in federal funding.

The standoff continues as lawsuits mount and concerns grow over political interference in academia amid declining public trust in U.S. higher education.