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Yale facing lawsuit over alleged discrimination against students with mental illness

BY LEXI LONAS - 11/30/22 4:17 PM ET

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in a Wednesday lawsuit, nonprofit LIS for Macraet, which helps Yale students with mental health struggles, and two other students detailed accounts saying Yale pressured them to leave school after a suicide attempt, or else they would force them to withdraw.

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The suit filed in the U.S. District Court of Connecticut is seeking for Yale to be forced to change its policies around students who have mental illnesses, and for their current actions to be deemed illegal.

In a statement, Yale said it is confident its policies are legal but has also “been working on policy changes that are responsive to students’ emotional and financial wellbeing.”

Yale’s alleged discrimination came to light earlier this month when The Washington Post [detailed experiences of several students](#) who attempted suicide and had Yale officials pressure them to leave school while they were in the hospital.

While one student was in the hospital, she told the Post she was forced to have a Zoom meeting with Paul Hoffman, the psychologist in charge of student mental



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The lawsuit says the process to reenroll is also challenging, as students have to go through a similar process of when they first applied to Yale and tell the school what they did during their medical leave, along with completing some coursework before returning.

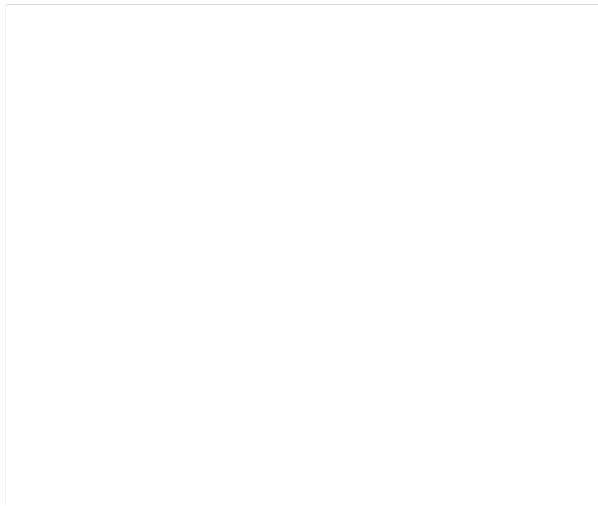
“When we make decisions and set policies, our primary focus is on students’ safety and health, especially when they are most vulnerable. We believe in creating and sustaining strong and sensible support structures for our students, and in many cases, the safest plan includes the student’s parents and family. We have taken steps in recent years to simplify the return to Yale for students on medical withdrawals and to provide additional support for students,” Yale’s statement reads.

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“Involuntary [medical leave of absence] policies can be coercive and exclusionary for some students. Involuntary MLOAs have occurred after students have disclosed mental health disabilities to counselors or fellow students and, in some cases, over the objections of students who wish to remain enrolled and on campus,” Markey wrote.

Markey, who cited the Washington Post report in the statement, is calling on the officials to issue guidance on involuntary medical leaves for students “that protect students’ access to higher education and strengthen nondiscrimination protections when they need medical leave.”

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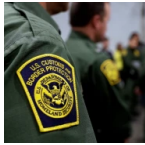
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