

**Open Letter to the Georgetown University Law Center Administration  
Regarding Law Firm Employers' Mandatory Arbitration and Non-Disclosure Agreements**

April 5, 2018

Dean Treanor, Dean Shannon, and the Office of Career Strategy,

On March 24, 2018, news broke that a prominent law firm was forcing its incoming summer associates to sign an arbitration agreement with a non-disclosure provision. That firm's mandatory arbitration and non-disclosure provisions covered all employment-related claims between the employee and the firm, including discrimination and harassment claims. Mandatory arbitration agreements and overbroad non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) are harmful in the employment context because they silence victims, conceal wrongdoing, and push discrimination and harassment claims into secretive proceedings that favor employers over employees.

Fortunately, a group of law professors and students focused attention and applied public pressure on this particular law firm's policy. The firm then [decided to drop the NDA and mandatory arbitration requirement](#) not only for summer associates, but also for all associates and staff. Since then, at least [two other](#) prominent law firms have publicly announced that they too will no longer require employees, including associates, to sign contracts containing arbitration agreements.

Berkeley Law Students sent an [open letter](#) to Berkeley Law's Career Development Office asking it to prohibit employers from using its services if that employer requires any employee, including associates, staff, or summer associates to agree to, as a general condition of employment: (1) a mandatory arbitration agreement, or (2) a non-disclosure agreement that covers discrimination, harassment, or other workplace misconduct.

We call on Georgetown to do the same.

These types of agreements may be legal, but they cut against core Georgetown values. Our community is grounded in a Jesuit tradition that supports the well-being of the whole person—the “cura personalis.” And the law school's motto is, “Law is but the means; justice is the end.” In order to live up to these values, Georgetown must do its part to end the use of mandatory arbitration and NDAs in ways that silence the victims of sexual harassment and workplace abuses.

Sincerely,

*Students, Alumni, Faculty, and Employees*

Signatories: <https://www.coworker.org/p/georgetown-arbitration> *(now accepting signatures)*

Contact: Stephen Schultze (sjs280@law.georgetown.edu), Rachel Lee (sp497@law.georgetown.edu), Nicholas Wertsch (nmw9@law.georgetown.edu)