

STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS, INC.,
v.
PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF
HARVARD COLLEGE and the
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, ET AL.

A Joint Statement of

District of Columbia Democratic Women's Club - Valca Valentine, President
District of Columbia Democratic Women's Federation – Celeste Garcia, President
Metropolitan Women's Democratic Club – Gaby L. Fraser, President
Woman's National Democratic Club – Rosalyn L. Coates, President
National Women's Political Caucus - Donna Lent, President

July 10, 2023

As we reflect on the Fourth of July, we are troubled that our nation is not living up to a hallmark of representative democracy – the right of all Americans to equal access to the opportunities and benefits attendant to American citizenship. With systematic precision, the Supreme Court has issued a series of decisions that have stripped people of their rights. A recent example is the Supreme Court's decision to strike down affirmative action in college admissions programs. The decision ignores what Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson refers to as the "Gulf-sized race-based gaps that exist with respect to the health, wealth, and well-being of American citizens...passed down to the present day through the generations."

As a collective of Democratic women's organizations from across the United States, we are disappointed. The remnants of our history have led to inequality in access to education. As Justice Sotomayor noted in her dissent: ". . . from this Nation's birth, the freedom to learn was never colorblind nor equal." Including race in the admissions process helps present a full picture of the applicant and in some situations levels the playing field for those applicants who may not have had the same opportunities as others in the pool. While progress has been made – many of us and our children have benefited -- equality has not been achieved, nor is it in sight. This decision will have adverse consequences for traditionally excluded groups, not just in college admissions, but also in employment, housing, health care, and other significant areas of American life.

We are a group who believes the words of the Constitution, "liberty and justice for all," should be the basis of the work of the Justice System. However, SCOTUS's ruling on affirmative action alongside recent rulings rolling back voting rights, LGBTQ rights, and women's rights make it clear to us that the Supreme Court disagrees. Therefore, the fight for liberty and justice for all is one we must all take on with urgency. In addition to national elections, we must focus on state legislatures and school boards. We must emphasize that Americans vote in every election and for all offices. We must increase our efforts to identify potential candidates for political office, get them elected, and support them after they take office.

We are heartened by the commitment of the Biden Administration to ensure that applicants who belong to traditionally excluded groups will receive fair consideration. As articulated by U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona ". . . our commitment to educational opportunity for all Americans is unshaken, and our efforts to promote diversity in higher education are undeterred. The Department of Education is a civil rights agency, committed to equal access and educational opportunity for all students."

Our coalition will not stand by and witness efforts to undermine American democracy without taking bold action to ensure that America is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

