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Statement in Response to Supreme Court Affirmative Action Ruling

Features [Tonya Allen](#)

(Minneapolis, MN – June 29, 2023) The following is a statement from McKnight Foundation president Tonya Allen, followed by a joint statement by funders and philanthropic organizations, in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s rulings in *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*. A full list of signatories follows.



MCKNIGHT STATEMENT

“Our ability to achieve a more just, creative, and abundant future for people and planet requires that we equip forthcoming generations with the knowledge, wisdom, and creativity that can only flourish when education is accessible to everyone, and our halls of education represent the richness and diversity of our country. Students having the opportunity to learn and engage each other in settings that reflect the multiracial, multifaceted society in which we live is a foundational component of a quality education.”

“Today’s Supreme Court decision is not simply disappointing; it is a devastating blow to generations of students who can now be denied equitable opportunities to advance their aspirations in this country. Despite this setback, we must work diligently to ensure all students—at all levels of learning—have equitable access to an education that allows them to make their dreams for the future a reality and to contribute fully to the betterment of their communities and our country.”

– Tonya Allen, President, McKnight Foundation

English

 JOINT STATEMENT

The Supreme Court's decision impedes colleges and universities from selecting their own student bodies and fully addressing systemic racial inequalities that persist. The ruling threatens to return this nation to a time when education and opportunity were reserved for a privileged class. It endangers sixty years of multiracial movements to challenge our nation to live up to the ideals enshrined in our founding documents. The decision erects new barriers to building a society in which everyone has the opportunity to improve their lives, communities, health, and education.

Today's ruling will make the vital work of building inclusive college campuses much harder. Experience has shown that substituting socioeconomic status as a proxy for race will not achieve the diversity that strengthens the fabric of all universities. Educators and communities dedicated to teaching and mentoring young people and adults from every imaginable background understand how *all* students—not just students of color—benefit from diverse racial and socioeconomic learning environments. Decades of research show that students educated with people from different backgrounds and experiences improve their analytical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. These skills are essential to building our future workforce, our military, and a healthy democracy. In the realm of health, research shows that racially and ethnically representative medical schools produce better-trained physicians and care teams that reflect the communities they serve.

Universities and colleges and those organizations supporting them deserve the resources and support to continue their critical mission. They need our resolve, too. Philanthropies are vital partners in our nation's progress. We will remain steadfast in our collective mission to create a more equitable nation within the bounds of the law. To forge ahead, we must continue to advocate for the human dignity of all people—regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, or country of origin—with renewed vigor and commitment.

Our nation's future prosperity, vitality, and unity depend upon America becoming a true multiracial democracy—an aspiration that requires racial equity and diversity in higher education. Despite today's ruling, our foundations will not waver in our commitment to those making the nation's high ideals a reality for all communities and all people.

[English](#)

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Affirmative action advocates rally outside the U.S. Supreme Court as justices heard oral arguments on two cases on whether colleges and universities can continue to consider race as a factor in admissions decisions. Credit: Francis Chung, E&E News/POLITICO via AP Images

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