



NEWS RELEASE
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Media Contact:
Lenore Ostrowsky
publicaffairs@usccr.gov

U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Statement in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* Supporting the University's Affirmative Action Admissions Policy

Washington, DC – The U.S. Supreme Court will soon decide an affirmative action case, *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, in which for the second time it analyzes the constitutionality of the University's admissions plan. The plan affects only a very small portion of applicants and includes race among a long list of other factors, such as leadership qualities, extracurricular activities, and socioeconomic status.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, by majority vote, has issued a [statement](#) agreeing that the University's plan is constitutional, and urging the Court to uphold the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals' determination that the University's admissions process taking race into account does not violate the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Furthermore, the Commission strongly supports its long-held belief in the benefits of diversity in educational settings.

In 1975, the Commission issued a report, *Twenty Years After Brown: Equality of Educational Opportunity*, in which the Commission emphasized the importance of providing equal educational opportunity that segregation inherently denies. Many experts agree that a diverse campus is of great value to higher education, in which, as Justice O'Connor wrote in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the educational benefits of diversity include breaking down stereotypes and fostering lively classroom exchanges of views.

The Association of American Law Schools argues that the "Court should resist any temptation to announce a general rule foreclosing the use of race as one factor in a holistic admissions process."

Chairman Martin R. Castro stated, "As a product myself of the affirmative action program at the University of Michigan Law School, I am pleased that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, under my chairmanship, has clearly articulated our continued support for diversity and opportunity in higher education for succeeding generations of Americans."

The Commission's complete statement is posted on its website at www.usccr.gov.

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