



# Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education, Inc.

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## **Statement on *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc v. University of North Carolina et al.***

Last week, the Supreme Court ruled that admissions policies at Harvard and the University of North Carolina violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment by using race as a deciding factor in admission. The opinion of the court, written by Chief Justice John Roberts for the Conservative majority, says that colleges and universities can no longer consider race as a specific basis in granting admission because they have [for far too long], “concluded, wrongly, that the touchstone of an individual’s identity is not challenges bested, skills built, or lessons learned, but the color of their skin.” This decision effectively ends race-conscious admissions practices in college admissions nationwide and makes it harder for schools to achieve and maintain diversity in student populations. It also disproportionately impacts Black and Latinx students who have the greatest achievement gaps compared to their White counterparts, and diversity at highly selective institutions that are more likely to consider applicants’ race in admission.

While not unexpected, the ruling deals another crushing blow to diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education; some also view it as another victory for Conservatives pushing a race-neutral agenda. In the dissent, authored by Justice Sonia Sotomayor and joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson, she writes, “The Court subverts the constitutional guarantee of equal protection by further entrenching racial inequality in education, the very foundation of our democratic government and pluralistic society.” Brown Jackson adds, “With let-them-eat-cake obliviousness today, the majority pulls the ripcord and announces ‘colorblindness for all’ by legal fiat. But deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life.” This is not the first time that race has been part of a political agenda or on a legal docket, and it will not be the last.

The Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education will continue to be a tireless advocate for equal education for African Americans and other minorities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and we will stand with national organizations that work to combat the many faces of racism in higher education. We will also – as individuals and an organization – continue to ensure that our students are valued, supported, seen, and heard. We create safe spaces for students to be themselves; we fight for curriculum and faculty that represent the student body and tell both sides of history; and we recognize that the ongoing impact of this country’s past on Black and Brown people cannot be eliminated by a court ruling.