

# Rep. Stubbs: Statement on Supreme Court decision to end affirmative action for college admissions

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MADISON—WI, On Thursday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the United States Supreme Court issued a ruling that ends Affirmative Action for college admissions.

Rep. Shelia Stubbs (D-Madison) released the following statement:

“Yesterday, our United States Supreme Court struck down decades-long precedent that allowed for affirmative action to be used during the college admissions process. Today, I am left reeling from this decision that will effectively end the use of a tool to ensure equal opportunity is given to students of color as they seek a higher education. Affirmative action has worked to protect and enhance the life chances of groups that have been historically marginalized and excluded from critical spaces and processes in our society. For our students of color, affirmative action has leveled the playing field, giving them a chance at upward mobility and prosperity, which in the past they have been so unjustly denied. The ruling issued by the Supreme Court will radically alter the landscape of higher education and result in harm to our communities of color.”

“We must now contend with a world in which colleges and universities are not kept to an equitable standard in their admissions process. The decision by the Supreme Court to end affirmative action will harm students of color today and for generations to come. Not only will this ruling directly impact enrollment rates of people of color in universities, we will also see a significant decrease in the representation of people of color in positions of power and influence. We know from history, that a lack of representation results in an unbalanced power dynamic that favors few and harms many. This lack of balance creates great instability and widens the cracks

that run through the foundation of our society; the cracks that were initially created by the systematic genocide, enslavement, oppression, and discrimination of nonwhite groups of people in our nation. There is no denying our nation's history of cruel discrimination and harm, nor how this history continues to take a toll on our students well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So why now, do we choose to rollback a policy that properly addressed some of the ripples created by this historical injustice?"

"This decision by the Supreme Court fails to reflect the importance of diversity in higher education. Instead, this ruling puts at jeopardy years of precedent and the work of generations of leaders who fought so hard for racial equality in the United States. Affirmative action has served for years as a mechanism of opportunity for children of color and a gateway for their success in higher education and in their careers. The court's ruling threatens this reality. It threatens the future of Black and Brown students who aspire to go to college and it threatens a truly equitable future for our nation."

"Diversity is not a threat nor a weakness, but a strength. As President Joe Biden urged in his statement in response to this decision, we must find ways to continue our commitment to build diverse student bodies with diverse perspective and experiences on our university campuses. His guidance in accordance to the ruling calls for universities to take into account the adversity students have overcome when selecting among qualified applicants. This is just one way we can overcome this major setback to equity and inclusion."

"Dissenting opinion Justice Kentanji Brown Jackson expressed great concern at the ruling and labelled the majority opinion an "oblivious, 'colorblindness for all,' legal fiat." As I process this massive change, I find strength in my fellow Democratic leaders, including our president, and echo the words of Justice Brown Jackson, who in her dissenting opinion stated,

"It would be deeply unfortunate if the Equal Protection Clause actually demanded this perverse, ahistorical, and counterproductive outcome. To impose this result in that Clause's name when it requires no such thing, and to thereby obstruct our collective progress toward the full realization of the Clause's promise, is truly a tragedy for us all."

"And in the wake of this decision, let us remember the profound words of civil rights leader and former U.S. Congressman John Lewis:

“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”