

CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH TO THE SUPREME COURT

Dear Union Activist,

What follows is a letter endorsing the Civil Rights March to the Supreme Court. This March will be held on the day the Supreme Court hears the Two University of Michigan affirmative action cases (*Grutter v. Bollinger* And *Gratz v. Bollinger*).

If you are a local union officer, or hold a higher union post, please Sign onto this letter by emailing your endorsement, name and union title to afscmelocal207@aol.com. If you are not an officer please urge your Local, Regional or International officials to sign on. Please forward this letter to any union member who may be interested.

SUPPORT AND BUILD THE CIVIL RIGHTS MARCH TO THE SUPREME COURT

Save *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Supreme Court will hear the University of Michigan affirmative action cases in just over three months. These are the most important civil rights cases of our generation.

As labor leaders and activists, we are proud to endorse the Civil Rights March to the Supreme Court supporting integration, equality and affirmative action. The March will coincide with the hearing of the cases (late March/early April -- date to be announced soon).

Only a strong show of public support for affirmative action can convince the Court to rule for equality and save *Brown v. Board of Education*. The future of our nation hangs in the balance.

The Court's ruling will immediately affect access to public and private higher education, and set the tone on other issues vital to labor. If the Court' rules to maintain affirmative action, then integration and equality in education, which was promised by the Court's 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, can be realized. If the Court rules against affirmative action, *Brown* will be reduced to a mere platitude, opportunities for minorities and women will diminish, and the hopes of a new generation will be dashed.

We can win this crucial fight, despite the current Court's conservative agenda. Remember how conservative the Court and the nation was when the unanimous *Brown* decision was rendered.

The right wing has chosen affirmative action as their battleground over all the questions of equality and integration. The overwhelming majority of Americans believe in the ideals of equality and integration. We can't let a tiny minority of right-wing zealots resegregate our nation. Many unions have a proud history of supporting civil rights.

For our unions to grow -- and grow stronger -- we must prove to a new generation of potential members that organized labor is willing and able to fight for social justice. This is our issue, our test, our hour. Let us face it with pride and full commitment.

The Michigan AFL-CIO is participating in the March. The Detroit Federation of Teachers has pledged \$30,000 to build it. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association national conventions voted to support the defense of affirmative action in these two cases.

We urge all unions to publicly endorse, finance and build this March. Please donate money for nationwide publicity, staff support, logistics, bus rental, etc. to UNITED FOR EQUALITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION (the coordinating organization for the student defendants in Gruter v. Bollinger), P.O. Box 24462, Kensington Station, Detroit MI 48224 (Phone: 313-526-9023).

All unions, especially those within a day's drive of Washington, D.C., should bring busloads of members to the March. Union members should start volunteer committees to coordinate support and participation in their locals.

Despite recent Republican electoral successes, let's show that the voices of equality and justice still wield powerful influence in our nation. Let this March shine a beacon of hope toward a bright future.

In Solidarity,

John Riehl, President
AFSCME Local 207
Detroit, MI

Emily Kunze, President
AFSCME Local 2920
Detroit, MI

Percy Jackson, President
AFSCME Local 345
Detroit, MI