



NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO RESTORE CIVIL RIGHTS

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO RESTORE CIVIL RIGHTS DENOUNCES SUPREME COURT RULINGS: COURT RULES AGAINST EFFORTS TO END RACIAL ISOLATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New York, NY – Today the National Campaign to Restore Civil Rights denounced two rulings and voiced strong concern about the future of diversity in education. The Campaign reacted to a pair of critical rulings in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, in which the Supreme Court held that local school districts may not take voluntary steps to overcome racial inequality and unequal educational opportunities.

Just weeks ago the Campaign held a press conference announcing the winners of their national essay contest, “Does Diversity Matter?” “The National Campaign to Restore Civil Rights launched the essay contest in response to the Supreme Court’s consideration of these cases that could overturn or curtail historical advancements to promote diversity in schools,” said Cristóbal Joshua Alex, Campaign Coordinator. “Unfortunately, the Court did just that. While our society is becoming more diverse, the Supreme Court took a giant step backward today and rolled back the opportunities for children to attend schools that reflect the world in which they live,” Alex continued.

The Campaign received more than 1600 essays from young people across the country with their views on why diversity in the public schools is important. Jody Leung, the winner of the contest, wrote “*Brown v. Board of Education*...paved the way for integration and the Civil Rights Movement” and “made America a better place.” She closes her “Diversity is our Strength” essay with a call to action: “The time is now and we must encourage racial integration in classrooms.” Instead, the Supreme Court held the Seattle and Louisville’s policies designed to promote racial equality are unconstitutional.

“A majority of the Court recognized the importance of diversity to education and, also, the legitimate interest of school districts in taking action to overcome racial isolation,” said Sandra DelValle, a civil rights lawyer who has worked on issues of educational opportunity. “As a nation, we have to keep moving toward more equal educational opportunity for all children.”

Several of the Campaign’s partners also expressed extreme disappointment in the Court’s rulings. “The Court today resurrected ‘separate but equal’ in our schools. Because of today’s rulings, schools like those in Seattle and Louisville will become more segregated, and children of all races will have fewer opportunities to learn together and become prepared to live and work in a diverse world,” said Marianne Engelman Lado, general counsel to the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. “Today’s Supreme Court decision is a devastating loss for all of America’s children. Parents across the nation should be concerned about their children’s right to equal educational opportunity,” said Engelman Lado.

The pair of decisions comes on the heels of two Bush appointments to the Supreme Court that has moved the Court markedly to the right. “Today’s decision is yet another move by a Court that is out of touch with the issues in our society—a Court that continues to roll back civil rights and opportunities for advancement for our nation’s children,” Engelman Lado said. She commented, “Chief Justice Roberts expressed the view that diversity may be a compelling basis for educational policy at the college level but not for our nation’s school children. This is incomprehensible.” “These cases illustrate the important role the Supreme Court has in shaping our society. The Court can make this a stronger, better country. Or it can turn back the hard-earned victories from the civil rights struggles of the past. We must take back the courts in order to strengthen our communities and our country,” said Eva Paterson, president and co-founder of the Equal Justice Society.

The National Campaign to Restore Civil Rights is a non-partisan movement working to ensure that our courts protect and preserve equal justice, fairness, and opportunity. We achieve these goals through raising awareness, outreach, and building alliances.

For more information about NCRCR go to: <http://www.rollbackcampaign.org>