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Contact:

Sarah E. Barrett or Delia Marrero
sbarrett@ywcaallentown.org delia@ywcabethlehem.org
(610) 871-5060 (610) 867-4669



YWCAs Allentown and Bethlehem 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*

Lehigh Valley, PA, July 1, 2023 – At YWCA Allentown and YWCA Bethlehem, we are disheartened by the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College and Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. University of North Carolina*, a decision that increases limits on the consideration of race in college applications. In issuing this decision, again the Supreme Court has chosen to ignore decades of precedent.

“I continue to be disappointed by the Supreme Court rulings. Last year it was *Roe v. Wade* and here we are again. I worry about what’s next,” says Delia Marrero, Executive Director of YWCA Bethlehem. “This ruling aims to dismantle the protections that were instituted to provide access to opportunity for marginalized communities in this country. We forget that women and people of color have not always had rights in this country. This country has a long history of racism, and we should acknowledge that we still have a long way to go in creating an equitable society that recognizes the shared humanity of everyone. *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* was passed in 1978. To put this into perspective my mother was born in 1965 and she was 13 years old when this passed.”

“This decision is a full attack on access to education in its many forms,” continues Marrero. “A well-educated population questions injustice and tries to find solutions to problems. I believe that we need to be united in our efforts to create more equitable communities. Our elders fought for the opportunity to do things so many of us take for granted today and I am worried about what this means for our younger generations.”

Access to higher education in the United States was intentionally exclusive and actively denied to members of marginalized communities. For nearly 50 years, affirmative action helped address this inequity, providing a path toward a college education and the socioeconomic mobility a degree provides.

"The impact of affirmative action and other admission policies that ensure a student body reflective of our beautifully diverse country benefits all of us; it is not limited to individuals or communities who have historically and intentionally had access to fewer educational opportunities," says Sarah Barrett, Executive Director of YWCA Allentown. "With purposeful measures to include and support students of color, we retain the potential of their voices and brilliance to move us forward through innovation and imagination. Our future as a country needs and deserves all of us."

We worry for the young folks in this country. We applaud the college communities that are taking a stand to ensure that learning communities continue to hold space for people of color, gender-diverse individuals, and other marginalized communities who face constant legislative attacks on their rights, safety, and opportunities.

This decision was not accidental, and it did not happen overnight. Here at YWCA Allentown and Bethlehem, we remain steadfast in our goals of advancing equity in our communities. We all deserve better.

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About YWCA Allentown and YWCA Bethlehem: YWCAs Allentown and Bethlehem are on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen our community. Throughout our history, YWCA has boldly led efforts to secure the rights that are essential to the pursuit of racial and gender justice. The vision of YWCA is a world in which all women and girls, especially women and girls of color, are free from racism and sexism, and can thrive. YWCAs Allentown and Bethlehem are part of an international movement serving more than 2 million in the United States and 25 million worldwide. To learn more about our work, visit www.ywcaallentown.org and ywcabethlehem.org.