



### Lieutenant Governor Robinson's Remarks

First, I want to say thank you to everyone for being here today, especially our friends in the Asian-American community who have traveled from across our state to join us.

Last Tuesday, I joined Lt. Governor Sears of Virginia on an Amicus Brief that was sent to the United States Supreme Court regarding the use of racial preferences in college admissions. This was in support of *Students for Fair Admissions v. Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina*.

It is time to ensure that all the students in our state and nation have the same access to higher education, regardless of their race or ethnicity. Preferences for historically disadvantaged groups have been in place for decades, and gaps in college enrollment and achievement have significantly declined. When the Supreme Court decided the case *Grutter v. Bollinger* in 2003, it said that it expected that the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary in twenty-five years. Well, we are coming up on the 20<sup>th</sup> year since that decision, and we can now plainly see that the negative effects of racial preferences outweigh any good they can do in 2022. While it can be argued that these policies had a role in helping black Americans to overcome the persistent effects of historical and past discrimination in higher education, those effects are becoming less impactful the further we as a people travel from the dark days of Jim Crow and state-sanctioned discrimination. Instead, they now function to unfairly discriminate against and deny opportunity to other ethnic and racial groups. Discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity is immoral in all of its forms, and we can do better. We must do better.

It is time to end the policies of racial preference for college admissions. Now is not the time to restrict any students access to the highest quality and most rigorous education they can handle, but instead to fight to see that everyone is given the same opportunity to challenge themselves and compete against their peers. In this age, our nation desperately needs our best and brightest to be our most highly-educated and prepared to meet the challenges of a dynamic global economy. Our international competitors in China and around the world aren't having the economic success they are because they prioritize diversity and equity and inclusion. They are rivaling the American economy because their priority is that their very best and brightest students are empowered to do great things and afforded the very best educational opportunities available.

Our Amicus Brief discusses how the University of North Carolina and Harvard University have placed such an emphasis on racial preferences that it has begun to disproportionately affect students of Asian, Indian, or Pacific Islander ethnicity by declaring them “overrepresented.” Admissions should be based solely on merit, ability, and achievement. I can’t speak for everyone, but if I’m choosing a doctor, I want to know that he or she scored the highest on their medical exams – I don’t care where their grandparents were born or about the shade of their skin. I want the best, and that should be determined by merit, ability, and achievement – not skin color. No matter how well-intended at the start, government policies and programs must be addressed when they begin to have negative and unintended consequences for our fellow citizens.

The way to ensure the future success of higher education – and of our workforce, economy, state, and nation – is by encouraging our universities to select the best applicants not on the basis of the color of their skin, but on the basis of what those applicants have achieved and what they are capable of achieving in the future. Educational opportunities should be equally available to everyone, and the current rules in place reject that idea in favor of a system that often punishes merit and achievement. We hope the Supreme Court will look favorably on the arguments in our brief.

The right to pursue happiness begins with a quality education, and that right is guaranteed to all. If disparities in educational outcomes continue to plague our communities, it is not because deserving young people will find the doors to the university unfairly closed to them. This office has highlighted the many challenges that we face in education today, and the troubling outcomes that these challenges have created.

We need our best and brightest citizens working on finding solutions to these problems, and I invite them to join me in this fight.

Thank You.