



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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March 6, 2007

The Honorable J.B. Van Hollen, Attorney General
Wisconsin Department of Justice
PO Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Attorney General Van Hollen:

Recently several legislators requested a formal opinion from you regarding the University of Wisconsin (UW) Board of Regent's admissions policy as it relates to Wisconsin State Statute 36.11(3)(a). We are confident that as you review this section of the statutes you will agree that the UW's admissions policy, which has been in effect at the UW-Madison campus for a number of years, does indeed conform to both state law and the U.S. Constitution.

In implementing this new policy system wide, UW officials recognize that by enrolling a racially and ethnically diverse student body it is creating an environment that fosters the ability of all racial and ethnic groups to participate fully in American society. Businesses who recruit our students are also looking for this diversity. It is important that our students are prepared in every way possible to compete in a global economy.

The University of Wisconsin's freshman admission's policy has been thoughtfully and carefully written to allow admission officials the flexibility they need to select the student body necessary to ensure the continued success of the institution. Race is only one among many other factors considered in the admissions process, it is not a "test" which is the focus of section 36.11(3)(a). Academics have been, and always will be, the number one factor in that process. However, there are numerous other aspects of a potential admit that should be considered.

According to your own website "DOJ operates as a large, multi-faceted law firm created by the legislature to **represent the interests of the State of Wisconsin on behalf of the people of Wisconsin**" [emphasis added]. The interests of the State of Wisconsin and the people of Wisconsin are best served by ensuring that our public University system is accessible to a diverse student body.


It is a laudable goal to believe that we can achieve a colorblind society where these policies are no longer necessary. A society where people truly are judged by the content of their character and not the color of their skin, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., dreamed of more than 40 years ago. But we are not there yet. Until racial and ethnic minorities are able to fully participate in every aspect of American society we must continue

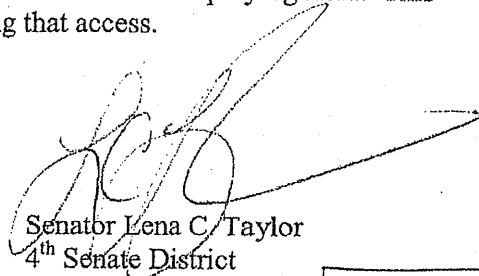
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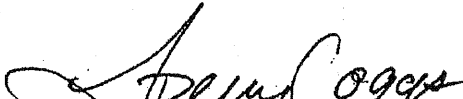
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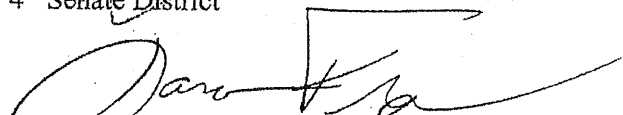
to ensure they have access to higher education in order to level that playing field. This policy is just one small, necessary step to providing that access.

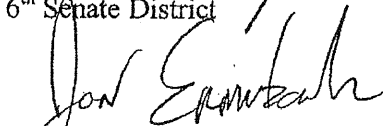
Sincerely,


Representative Tamara Grigsby
18th Assembly District



Senator Lena C. Taylor
4th Senate District



Senator Spencer Coggs
6th Senate District

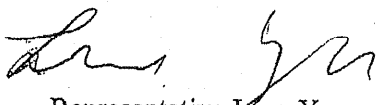

Representative Jason Fields
11th Assembly District

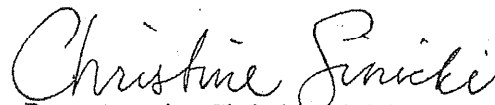

Senator Jon Erpenbach
27th Senate District

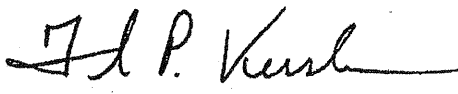

Representative Spencer Black
77th Assembly District

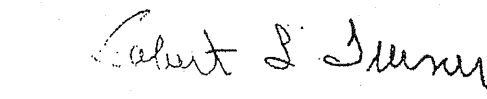

Senator Mark Miller
16th Senate District

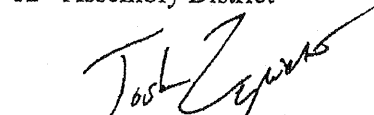

Representative Gary Hebl
46th Assembly District


Representative Leon Young
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20th Assembly District


Representative Fred Kessler
12th Assembly District


Representative Robert Turner
61st Assembly District


Representative Josh Zepnick
9th Assembly District

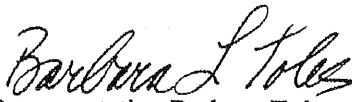

Representative Mike Sheridan
44th Assembly District

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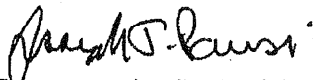
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Representative Barbara Toles
17th Assembly District



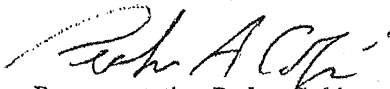
Representative Polly Williams
10th Assembly District



Representative Joe Parisi
48th Assembly District



Representative Donna Seidel
85th Assembly District



Representative Pedro Colón
8th Assembly District