



**MICHIGAN CIVIL
RIGHTS INITIATIVE**

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 6, 2005

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**MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVE TO END RACE
PREFERENCES SUBMITS OVER A HALF MILLION SIGNATURES
PLACING AMENDMENT ON BALLOT**

Jennifer Gratz, Ward Connerly, and Michigan State Rep. Leon Drolet (Macomb) announced this morning that the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative Committee's (MCRI) submitted 508,202 signatures to the Michigan State Board of Elections. This overwhelming number far surpasses the 317,757 signatures required, and is the highest number of signatures in recent Michigan history (at least since 1992). MCRI's proposed amendment to the Michigan Constitution would end the use of race and gender preferences in Michigan's public institutions.

Rep. Drolet and Jennifer Gratz (winner of U.S. Supreme Court race preferences decision against U-Michigan) introduced Ward Connerly, President, American Civil Rights Coalition (ACRC). Connerly, through ACRC, supported numerous efforts to end race and gender preferences across the U.S., including successfully ending race and gender preferences in California and Washington State as well as prompting the Governor of Florida to end them administratively.

"I'm honored and delighted that Ward Connerly is joining us for this momentous occasion," said Ms. Gratz, Executive Director of MCRI. "Ward's support and guidance have been instrumental to MCRI's gathering this overwhelming number of signatures to put the Initiative on the ballot."

Those essential to MCRI's success also participating include: Michigan St. Rep. **Robert Gosselin** (Troy); Michigan St. Rep. **Jack Hoogendyke** (Kalamazoo); **Dr. Carl Cohen**, The University of Michigan; **Chetly Zarko**, MCRI Treasurer & Director Media Relations; **Heidi Verougstraete**, National Signature Management Director of Operations; **John Mularoni**,

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Strategy and Communications consultant; **Dan Carlson**, MCRI Student Coordinator; **Debbie Schussel Esq.**, MCRI General Counsel; **Glenn Lenhoff Esq.**, MCRI counsel; **James Fett Esq.**, MCRI counsel; **Dr. Howard Schwartz**, President, Michigan Association of Scholars; and many others.

Signature collection for the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative started July, 2003, following the Michigan Court of Appeals unanimous decision that the Initiative language is constitutional and clear. Last week, the Michigan Supreme Court gave the Initiative's language and form final certification by declining to review the Appeals' Court ruling.

For the past six months, MCRI staff and volunteers have worked diligently to collect and process the half million signatures. MCRI carried-over its volunteer and organizational momentum from this Spring collecting more than the necessary 317,757 signatures within the traditional 180 day time period (July 2004 – Jan. 2005).

Jennifer Gratz, thanked everyone, "I have tremendous gratitude for everyone who helped. I wish I could personally thank each of the nearly half million people who signed the petition; the over 1,700 individuals who volunteered or contributed time, support, and resources; and the many full-time staff circulating and processing petitions. There are also so many who have devoted hundreds of hours to the Initiative and I know I can't thank them enough."

Following the announcement in the Capitol Rotunda, Ward Connerly, Jennifer Gratz, and Rep. Drolet lead key supporters to the Bureau of Elections for the final turn-in.

The Michigan Civil Rights Initiative Committee (MCRI), a Michigan-based Ballot Question Committee, is dedicated to giving the people of Michigan the opportunity to end preferential treatment based on race, gender, ethnicity, or national origin by State or local governments. MCRI will make Michigan a place of equal opportunity for all, not a State that uses discrimination as a tool to create "diversity." Achieving "diversity" and "affirmative action" should never be an excuse to discriminate!

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