



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVE CHALLENGES GOVERNOR GRANHOLM, POLITICIANS FOR REAL SOLUTIONS

After the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (MCRI) Committee turned in 508,202 signatures on January 6th, Michigan's Governor Jennifer Granholm attacked the initiative backers as being from out-of-state. In her *ad hominem*, Granholm ignores the real issues in education that need to be addressed. The Michigan Civil Rights Initiative challenges (see attached letter) the Governor, and politicians from both parties, to work together to find real solutions to the problems and disparities currently found in K-12 education, the economy, and other social areas. All of these social problems transcend race, and an inability to make progress with real solutions in these areas reduces opportunity *for all*, regardless of race or gender.

Preferences, in college admissions or government hiring, simply fail to solve the problems their supporters claim they are intended to address. According to Gregory Creswell, a resident of Detroit, "Politicians insult me when they claim that we '*need*' race preferences, or even more boldly, that preferences really help anyone '*in need*' of assistance. Look at the results over the last 30 years. The idea that individuals with less preparation can perform well by simply being given a pass is something we all know doesn't work. We need to expect more, not less, from our children, our schools, and our politicians." The Michigan Civil Rights Initiative's purpose is not to dictate precisely what such solutions both political parties should agree upon – but rather only guarantee that those governmental programs intended to address such problems are *universal, not preferential*.

In her statement against MCRI, Granholm asserted, "I am so disheartened by this out-of-state group coming in to foment division." Granholm's statement is ironic from two perspectives. First, she is a naturalized citizen from Canada and should appreciate the importance of Michigan politics to non-Michiganders, and the right of all U.S. citizens to participate in the political process. Hundreds of *Michiganders* have donated to MCRI, but all Americans are welcome. Thousands of *Michiganders* have worked on the effort, a half-million *Michiganders* have signed the petition, and *only Michiganders* will have the opportunity to vote on the Initiative. Granholm

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belittles the work, beliefs, and intelligence of her own constituents by suggesting that the non-Michigan Americans supporting the Initiative are somehow more important than the issue itself. Finally, although MCRI respects the right of any American to contribute to Granholm's campaigns, if the Governor were to maintain moral consistency, she'd return all the contributions from non-Michiganders she has received or will receive in her two campaigns for Governor.

Second, politics is, by definition, "divisive." MCRI's position is clear – that the current government policy of dividing people into categories based upon their race and gender is ultimately more divisive than any attempt to eliminate the practice.

As importantly, it is the Governor's responsibility as a representative of the people to respect and listen to their voices. It is also the Governor's duty to accept responsibility for the underlying conditions and disparity and to work with legislators and others to pass and implement real solutions. Since all of these conditions transcend race, such policies can be designed to benefit everyone universally, regardless of race. Fixing *every* underperforming school, assisting *every* person coming from a 'disadvantaged' background, and setting higher standards for *everyone* are policies that would enjoy widespread support. The specific roadmaps to such solutions though can only come from politicians on both sides of the aisle working together. MCRI challenges the Governor and politicians work together in doing so.

In a letter (see attached) to Governor Granholm, Jennifer Gratz, Executive Director of the MCRI Committee, wrote, "I respect the fact that as a naturalized American citizen, you have the right to voice your personal opinion. However, you do not have the right to distort the facts and to abuse the people's right to disagree with you." Gratz concluded, "Nor do you have the right to demean over 508,000 citizens who signed petitions by suggesting that their opinions don't matter or that they have been duped by some outside group" In concluding, Gratz challenged the Governor to "to recognize the error of [her] position and join us in moving Michigan toward true equality for all."

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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Michigan Civil Rights Initiative Committee

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January 13, 2005

The Honorable Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor State of Michigan
PO Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Granholm,

I am disappointed that you believe—or profess to believe—that the people who support the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (MCR) and have worked on the MCR campaign are an “out-of-state group coming in to foment division.” The MCR petition was signed by over 508,000 *Michiganders*. The staff and volunteers have all been *Michigan residents*. It will only be voted on by *Michigan voters*. And a significant amount of funds have come from *Michigan supporters*. The MCR is lucky to have support nationwide, including from Ward Connerly. As a naturalized citizen from Canada, I’m sure you can appreciate the importance of Michigan politics to people other than Michigan residents.

Politics, by nature, are divisive. And policies that segregate people by race are also divisive. Michigan has debated race preferences for years – and I’m confident that the people of Michigan won’t be fooled by your comments that attempt to distract people from the issue – should the government treat people equally and as individuals or should the government be allowed to discriminate and give preference based on skin color?

I respect the fact that as a naturalized American citizen, you have the right to voice your personal opinion. However, you do not have the right to distort the facts and to abuse the people’s right to disagree with you. Nor do you have the right to demean over 508,000 citizens who signed petitions by suggesting that their opinions don’t matter or that they have been duped by some outside group that is “fomenting” division. Over the past seven years, poll after poll has shown that a majority of Michigan residents, along with the American people in general, oppose discrimination and preferences based on race. It’s time that you listened to the people you represent and fight for the constitutional right of equal treatment under the law for all Americans, regardless of skin color, instead of defending race preferences.

I recognize the importance of “diversity,” which is why I respect the fact that even though I may not agree with my opponents, they, along with all Americans, have the right to voice their opinion. However, the people of Michigan have spoken and we want to vote on race preferences. I’m confident that in November 2006 Michigan will say “Yes” to equal treatment for all people regardless of skin color. It is my fervent hope that, as governor, you will come to recognize the error of your position and join us in moving Michigan toward true equality for all.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gratz
Executive Director