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APALA Applauds Supreme Court Decision to Uphold Affirmative Action Policies in College Admission Process

Washington, DC – On June 23, 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court voted 4-3 in *Fisher v. University of Texas* in favor of the use of affirmative action policies in university admissions. The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA) commends the Supreme Court's decision that considers and values racial diversity as a factor for a well-rounded student body on college campuses.

"Today's decision is so important to help level the disparities in our higher education institutions. Expanding the opportunities for education for all students and valuing what diverse people bring to the table undoubtedly benefit our country as a whole," stated APALA National President Johanna Hester. "We need to prioritize inclusivity and promoting cross-racial and cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly globalized society."

The case arose from claims by Abigail Fisher, a white student who alleged that she was denied admission to University of Texas based on her race. Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, with support from APALA and more than 160+ Asian American Pacific Islander organizations, filed three separate amicus briefs in support of affirmative actions in higher education.

Many institutions of education have a long history of structural racism and overt policies that continue to harm people of color within our society. In the K-12 public education system, people of color still face substandard, underfunded schools with alarmingly high drop-out rates. Standardized tests, which are largely used by higher education institutions for admissions decisions, have also been proven to have racially discriminatory impact.

"Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are not a monolithic group. Many groups within the AAPI community, such as Southeast Asian Americans, don't have the same access to higher education as other AAPIs. When we look beyond the model minority, we see that affirmative action does indeed benefit AAPIs students and all students," added Monica Thammarath, APALA National 1st Vice President and Co-Chair for the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) Education Committee. "The AAPI community should not be used as a model minority to further wedge and divide communities of colors."

APALA continues to advocate for racial justice and stands in solidarity with African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans in defending and expanding affirmative action.

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The **Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance** (APALA), AFL-CIO was founded in 1992 as the first and only national organization for Asian Pacific American union members to advance worker, immigrant and civil rights.

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