

Legislation Text

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Supporting the University of Michigan's affirmative action programs and urging the Mayor and Senators Specter and Santorum to support these policies by filing Friend of the Court briefs with the United States Supreme Court, and authorizing the City Council of Philadelphia to file its own brief or sign on to another in support of the University of Michigan.

WHEREAS, The University of Michigan and its law school affirmative action programs are facing challenges before the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, President Bush has ordered the Solicitor General of the United States to side with opponents of the University of Michigan's affirmative action programs; and

WHEREAS, President Bush and the United States brief mischaracterize the University of Michigan's admission policies as quotas; and

WHEREAS, The University of Michigan undergraduate admission program uses a point system to achieve student diversity whereby 110 out of 150 points are awarded for academic factors, with a student's grades accounting for 80 of those points. The remainder of the points are awarded for a variety of factors including race, geography, socioeconomic status, leadership, service and life experiences. At the Law School level every applicant is individually evaluated. There are no numerical targets or percentages; and

WHEREAS, Secretary of State Colin Powell has publicly gone on record as supporting affirmative action as a means for achieving racial diversity in university education; and

WHEREAS, Diversity of the student body has been shown to create the best learning environment for all students; and

WHEREAS, Funding and other resources devoted to public education are not equally available to students in minority neighborhoods, a fact well-known by Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, Until such time as adequate funding and other resources are directed to public education in a fair and equal fashion, compensatory policies such as that of the University of Michigan and its law school will be necessary to provide equal opportunity and educational diversity; and

WHEREAS, Since most urban areas have a large percentage of African Americans and Hispanics including the City of Philadelphia whose Hispanic and African-American population, according to US census data, is over 50%, admission policies like the University of Michigan's are essential to provide fair opportunities for urban students; and

WHEREAS, A better educated urban population is critical to improving our cities including our public school system; now therefore

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby supports the

University of Michigan's affirmative action programs and urges the Mayor and Senators Specter and Santorum to support these programs by filing Friend of the Court briefs with the United States Supreme Court, and further authorizes the City Council of Philadelphia to file its own brief or sign on to another in support of the University of Michigan, as determined by the Chair of Council's Committee on Law & Government in consultation with the President of City Council.