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Coalition of Bar Associations of Color **Reassured by Supreme Court's Decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin***

WASHINGTON – The Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (CBAC)—the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA) and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA) – is reassured by the Supreme Court's decision today to reaffirm the principle that diversity in higher education is a compelling national interest. We remain cautiously optimistic about the Court's decision to send the case back to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Supreme Court partially vacated a lower court ruling that had upheld the right of the University of Texas at Austin to partially consider race in its admissions' policy. However, in deciding *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, it left intact the precedent it set in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, which allows schools to consider racial diversity as an admissions factor.

Last summer, CBAC filed an *amicus curiae* brief with the Supreme Court in the *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* case. The brief highlights the progress made in diversifying the legal profession since the Court's ruling in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, while discussing the continued need for race-conscious admissions programs to further the diversification of the legal profession.

“We are encouraged that the United States Supreme Court's ruling affirmed the *Grutter v. Hollinger* decision which allows racial and ethnic diversity to be considered as one of many factors in a carefully crafted admissions policy,” stated HNBA National President Peter M. Reyes, Jr. “These are important factors to consider when taking a holistic admissions approach, and the Court in a 7-1 strongly supports our position.”

“We are encouraged by the Court's decision today in *Fisher*,” said Wendy C. Shiba, president of NAPABA. “A strong majority of the Court has stood in support of diversity as a compelling interest, and members of the Asian Pacific American community are heartened by this outcome. We see evidence of the importance of a diverse workforce every day in the legal profession, and are thankful that our nation's commitment to the values of diversity and inclusion has been ratified today.”

“Today's decision underscores diversity as a compelling interest for all institutions of education and higher learning,” stated John E. Page, President of the National Bar Association. “Even with

strict scrutiny of the methods used to achieve such diversity, the US Supreme Court continues to agree that many factors, including race, can be a factor in an admissions program.”

"Diversity is important to educational opportunities for all and furthers classroom discussion and understanding," said Mary Smith, President of the National Native Bar Association. "We are heartened that the Supreme Court has recognized the importance of diversity."

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CBAC was established in 1992 and is comprised of the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA).

The Hispanic National Bar Association is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, national professional association that represents the interests of over 100,000 attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants, and law students of Hispanic descent in the United States, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands. The Hispanic National Bar Association has thirty eight affiliated bars in various states across the country. The Hispanic National Bar Association's continuing mission is to improve the study, practice, and administration of justice for all Americans by ensuring the meaningful participation of Hispanics in the legal profession.

The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students. NAPABA represents the interests of over 40,000 attorneys and 66 state and local Asian Pacific American bar associations. Its members include solo practitioners, large firm lawyers, corporate counsel, legal service and non-profit attorneys, and lawyers serving at all levels of government. NAPABA continues to be a leader in addressing civil rights issues confronting Asian Pacific American communities. Through its national network of committees and affiliates, NAPABA provides a strong voice for increased diversity of the federal and state judiciaries, advocates for equal opportunity in the workplace, works to eliminate hate crimes and anti-immigrant sentiment, and promotes the professional development of people of color in the legal profession.

Founded in 1925, the National Bar Association is the nation's oldest and largest national network of minority attorneys and judges. It represents approximately 44,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and law students and has over 80 affiliate chapters throughout the United States and around the world. The organization seeks to advance the science of jurisprudence, preserve the independence of the judiciary and to uphold the honor and integrity of the legal profession.

The National Native American Bar Association is the oldest and largest association of predominantly Native-American attorneys in the United States. The National Native American Bar Association was founded in 1973 when the first group of Native-American attorneys was entering the legal profession. The National Native American Bar Association's core mission since its inception has been to promote the development of Native-American attorneys. Native Americans comprise one of the smallest groups of attorneys of color in the nation, totaling approximately 2,500. The National Native American Bar Association is committed to increasing the number of Native-American students who attend college and continue their education to attend law school. The National Native American Bar Association and its chapters are involved in pipeline initiatives to promote the recruitment and retention of Native-American law students and law faculty. And an initiative of the National Native American Bar Association is to increase the appointment of Native Americans to the state and federal judiciaries; there are currently no Native-American Article III judges.