

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE "MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS INITIATIVE" TO BAN
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION BASED ON RACE, SEX, COLOR, ETHNICITY, OR
NATIONAL ORIGIN

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 1, 2006

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County community has a long history of promoting racial, ethnic, and gender equality in education, employment, housing, contracts, and public services; and

WHEREAS, Washtenaw County implemented and currently administers an Affirmative Action Plan to promote these important community values; and

WHEREAS, other organizations in Washtenaw County - including the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College, and local units of government - also strive to ensure diversity in education, employment, housing, contracts, and access to public services; and

WHEREAS, affirmative action has proven its value as an effective tool in diminishing barriers for women and men of various ethnic and cultural groups who have been denied equality in, and access to, education, employment, housing, contracts, and public services; and

WHEREAS, affirmative action has proven to help businesses, educational institutions, and governments become more diverse and therefore more competitive in the global marketplace as well as providing better services to our citizens; and

WHEREAS, Michigan voters will be asked in November 2006 to approve or reject the "Michigan Civil Rights Initiative" (MCRI) which, if approved, would amend Article I of the Michigan Constitution to ban affirmative action and other programs designed to ensure equality in, and access to, education, employment, housing, contracts, and public services; and

WHEREAS, the MCRI could have a devastating effect on programs in the Washtenaw County area that have expanded economic and educational opportunities for women and men of all racial and ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the MCRI's carefully crafted name and goals represent an apparent attempt to mislead Michigan voters about the issue of discrimination by State entities; and

WHEREAS, the MCRI could conflict with federal legislation, programs, and Court

Orders that reflect our nation's commitment to equality in, and access to, education, employment, housing, contracts, and public services; and

WHEREAS, similar initiatives to end affirmative action adopted in other states have reduced access by women and men of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to education, employment, housing, contracts, and public services; and

WHEREAS, out-of-state special interest groups are funding MCRI's negative and misleading campaign against civil rights; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission - which was created by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 to enforce guarantees against discrimination outlined in the State Constitution - approved a resolution opposing the MCRI; and

WHEREAS, the MCRI's attempts to end affirmative action are inconsistent with the principle of equal treatment under the law as set forth in the United States and Michigan Constitutions; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners affirms its strong commitment to the principles of equal treatment and opportunity.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners strongly opposes the so-called Michigan Civil Rights Initiative because of its potentially devastating effect on equality in, and access to, education, employment, housing, contracts, and public services in Washtenaw County.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners urges the residents of Ann Arbor to vote against the MCRI in November 2006.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the County Clerk is directed to send a certified copy of this Resolution to Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, U.S. Senator Carl Levin, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Representative John Dingell, U.S. Representative Joe Schwarz, State Senator Elizabeth Brater, State Representatives Chris Kolb, Pam Byrnes, Alma Smith, and Kathy Angerer, the Chair of the Ann Arbor City Council, the President and Regents of the University of Michigan; the President and Regents of the Eastern Michigan University, and the President of Washtenaw Community College.