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**NATIONAL DENTAL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON U.S. SUPREME COURT  
RULING ON COLLEGE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES**

The recent United States Supreme Court decision to make it unlawful for colleges to consider race as a factor in college admissions is abhorrent and regrettable. The ruling is anathema to the mission of the legendary National Dental Association (NDA). Since 1913, the National Dental Association (NDA) has promoted oral health equity among people of color by harnessing the collective power of its members, advocating for the needs of and mentoring dental students of color, educating and raising the profile of the profession in our communities. Believing strongly that oral health care is a right and not a privilege, the National Dental Association maintains its position as the pre-eminent voice of the underserved, the underrepresented, and the marginalized in the United States of America. As a result, the NDA has worked tirelessly to create, to maintain, and to improve a pathway to ensure equitable representation of African-Americans in dental schools and the oral healthcare workforce across the nation.

The unfortunate obsession with race in America, which has persisted since 1619, continues to manifest itself with harmful, divisive, and marginal ramifications. Since the 1960's, even with challenges and some setbacks, affirmative action in higher education has been an effective mechanism to address the historical inequities and expand access for disadvantaged and underrepresented segments of society, including racial minority groups, consistent with the lofty goal of accomplishing national racial justice. Affirmative action policies are crucial for the dismantling of institutional and "Jim Crow" practices that limit educational and professional opportunities for highly qualified African Americans and other marginalized racial minorities.

With African Americans representing 13.6% of the U.S. population but only 3.8% of dentists in the United States, the ruling will threaten the sustainability of progress that is being made towards the goal of ethnic/racial parity in the dental profession.

**NDA Family Organizations**

True to its mission to promote oral health equity, the NDA will continue to advocate for ALL students of color, to strive for representation in dentistry that mirrors that of society, to build a pipeline of diverse healthcare professionals, and to focus on substantive policies/opportunities that inspire hope for current and future minority generations that follow.

The U.S. Constitution holds that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Regardless of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision, we call on the humanity, morality, and decency of leaders in higher education and other leaders in organized dentistry as the NDA continues to fight and to “build bridges” for the benefit of our students, for the advancement of our people, and for the betterment of our nation.

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**About the NDA:** The National Dental Association promotes oral health equity among people of color by harnessing the collective power of its members, advocating for the needs of and mentoring dental students of color, and raising the profile of the profession in our communities.