

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

MEDIA ADVISORY

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USCCR REPORT EXAMINES BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Commission report finds scant evidence of educational and social benefits of diversity

WASHINGTON, DC – Less than one week before the U.S. Supreme Court hears oral argument in two significant cases involving the use of racial benefits to reduce minority isolation in elementary and secondary education, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights today issued an important briefing report on *The Benefits of Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Elementary and Secondary Education*. The report finds that social science studies provide scant proof of the benefits for racial and ethnic groups attributed to diversity in elementary and secondary education.

Specifically, the Commission finds that “there is little evidence that racial and ethnic diversity in elementary and secondary schools results in significant improvements in academic performance; studies on the effect of school racial composition on academic achievement often suggest modest and inconsistent benefits.” Similarly, the Commission notes that “studies of whether racial and ethnic diversity result in significant social and non-educational benefits report varied results.”

Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds commented that “the academic literature really provides little or no support for the view that racial preferences in student assignment serve any compelling interest. In my view, the evidence, suggests that these preferences do not provide significant academic benefits to minority children that would compensate for the moral costs of government’s use of racial classifications.”

The Commission approved the report by a vote of 4 to 2. Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds and Commissioners Jennifer Braceras, Peter Kirsanow, and Ashley Taylor voted in favor. Commissioners Michael Yaki and Arlan Melendez voted against. Vice Chair Abigail Thernstrom did not participate in the vote.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring federal civil rights enforcement. Members include Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds, Vice Chairman Abigail Thernstrom, and Commissioners Jennifer C. Braceras, Peter N. Kirsanow, Arlan D. Melendez, Ashley L. Taylor, and Michael Yaki. Kenneth L. Marcus is Staff Director. Commission meetings are open to the media and general public.