

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action

188 L. Ed. 2d 613 (2014) · No. 12–682 · Decided April 22, 2014

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court held that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment does not prohibit Michigan's voters from deciding whether to prohibit the consideration of racial preferences in governmental decisions, including university admissions.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of the United States
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Kennedy; Roberts; Scalia; Thomas; Breyer; Sotomayor; Kagan; Alito; Ginsburg
JURISDICTION	Federal
DECIDED	April 22, 2014
DOCKET	12–682
DISPOSITION	reversed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petition for a writ of certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit
STANDARD OF REVIEW	strict scrutiny
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Bill Schuette, Attorney General of Michigan v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration and Immigration Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN) et al.

TOPICS

- civil rights
- equal protection
- appellate procedure
- standard of review
- constitutional law

PRACTICE AREAS

- constitutional law
- civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Michigan constitutional amendment prohibiting race-based preferences in public university admissions violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

HOLDINGS

1. The amendment is constitutional; the judgment of the Sixth Circuit is reversed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“There is no authority in the Federal Constitution or in this Court’s precedents for the Judiciary to set aside Michigan laws that commit to the voters the determination whether racial preferences may be considered in governmental decisions, in particular with respect to school admissions.” (at 4–5)

“The principle that the consideration of race in admissions is permissible when certain conditions are met is not being challenged. Rather, the question concerns whether, and in what manner, voters in the States may choose to prohibit the consideration of such racial preferences.” (at 12–13)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Michigan voters adopted Proposal 2, amending the state constitution to prohibit race-based preferences in public university admissions. The amendment was challenged as a violation of the Equal Protection Clause. The case reached the Supreme Court after the Sixth Circuit reversed the district court’s summary-judgment ruling.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan granted summary judgment upholding Michigan’s Proposal 2 amendment. The Sixth Circuit reversed, holding the amendment violated the political-process doctrine. The Supreme Court granted certiorari.

DISPOSITION

reversed

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The judgment of the Court of Appeals is reversed and the case is so ordered.

CASES CITED

- Gratz v. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 244 (2003)
- Grutter v. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 306 (2003)
- Washington v. Seattle School Dist. No. 1, 458 U.S. 457 (1982)
- Hunter v. Erickson, 393 U.S. 385 (1969)
- Reitman v. Mulkey, 387 U.S. 369 (1967)
- Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School Dist. No. 1, 551 U.S. 701 (2007)
- Coral Constr., Inc. v. City and County of San Francisco, 50 Cal. 4th 315 (2010)

