



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2023

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AWBI Co-Founder and CEO Janelle Williams’ statement on the U.S. Supreme Court’s Decision on Race-Based Admissions:

“Today’s Supreme Court ruling to outlaw affirmative action and race-based admissions in higher education creates yet another barrier to wealth building, while reinforcing the charitable myth of American meritocracy. Though imperfect, affirmative action forged a path to economic prosperity for Black students pursuing the dream of higher education. Racist and discriminatory policies have blocked and eroded wealth-building opportunities for generations of Black people in this country, making race-based admissions a necessary tool to expand the freedom of educational pursuits. As Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson observed in her dissent, today’s racial wealth divide exists because ‘that freedom was denied far longer than it was ever afforded.’

The United States has made progress over the last century to address its sordid history of racism. However, the legacy of discrimination racist laws remind us that most of the disparities that exist among people of color across nearly every economic indicator exist not because of individual actions but because of intricately-designed social systems created to exclude Black people from the mainstream economy – higher education being one of those systems.

While we should remain hopeful that race will not be seen as a predictor of achievement in this country, this is not our current reality. For this reason, the Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative (AWBI) boldly and unapologetically works to actively reimagine economic realities to produce an opportunity-rich future for all. We do this by centering policy discussions on the needs of Black people, which in turn brings forth economic parity, benefiting *society at large*. Moreover, the economic return on race-explicit strategies is evidenced and irrefutable. Despite today's ruling, we remain committed to race-explicit, asset-based, and holistic approaches that build Black wealth and affirm that equitable access to quality higher education is an avenue to doing so.

Race-neutral policy does not exist, and neutrality always sides with the oppressor. We urge partners, investors, institutions, and policymakers to meet this moment with a strong resolve toward dismantling policies that assume we live in a color-blind society. AWBI will work alongside our allies in Atlanta, across the state of Georgia, across the South, and across the nation to ensure that today's SCOTUS ruling does not hinder the movement to organize and build Black wealth."