FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 2, 2006

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Toward A Fair Michigan Launches "A New Conversation on Race and Ethnicity"

Michigan Civic Leaders Invited to a Leadership Assembly on December 8, 2006

East Lansing, MI – Today, Toward A Fair Michigan launched "A New Conversation on Race and Ethnicity" (ANCORE).

On December 8th, TAFM will sponsor a statewide Leadership Assembly – a day-long, invited workshop devoted to appraising the current status of programs of reconciliation and inclusion within Michigan, and to planning for progressive change within the state. The goal of the Assembly is to create the framework for such a plan and to identify participants and sponsors.

Whatever the outcome of the vote on Proposal Two, the statewide discussions about race, ethnicity and related aspects of equal opportunity, spawned by the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative during the past 18 months, make it very clear that Michigan has work to do with regard to questions of fairness and equality.

Invitations to the Leadership Assembly were issued today to a cross-section of Michigan's civic leaders in these arenas: business, education, government, religion, and workforce development. These leaders are invited to join the TAFM Board of Directors in identifying where we are as a state and deciding how to get where we want to be.

William B. Allen, Chairman of the TAFM Board, describes this new project in these terms:

"It will matter little how voters judge Proposal Two on November 7th if Michigan leaders do not now commit to take up the serious labor of revising the terms of the social contract with regard to questions of equality and fairness. It is not necessary to belabor the evident necessity for immediate and serious attention to this matter. Clearly, in the absence of determined resolve to improve the situation in Michigan (and in America), things will only become worse. For this reason, we are reaching out to civic leaders across Michigan because only civic leadership can solve the problems we are dealing with. Political advocates are not capable of effecting the needed change. Civic leadership can do so."

Discussions at the Leadership Assembly (to be held on December 8th) will center address these topics:

- Approaches to municipal and agency performance within the law
- Doing good without doing race and gender
- Non-race/gender based approaches to fairness
- Developing a leadership cadre for Michigan
- Re-working the public discourse on race/ethnicity
- Active planning for a progressive future
- Accepting the responsibility for change
- The rule of law or the law of rules: what works?
- Productivity and Diversity

Toward A Fair Michigan is a Michigan-based non-profit, non-partisan, 501(c)(3) educational organization. TAFM aims to further understanding of equal opportunity issues involved in guaranteeing civil rights for all citizens, to preserve Michigan's tradition of progressively affirming civil rights for all, and to provide a forum for the fair and open exchange of views on the question of affirmative action. For more information, visit www.towardafairmichigan.org.

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