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"Affirmative Action: Pro & Con"

Toward A Fair Michigan to sponsor a debate at Oakland University on this topic

East Lansing, MI – Toward A Fair Michigan (a Michigan-based non-partisan, non-profit educational organization) will sponsor a debate entitled "Affirmative Action: Pro & Con." The two experts who will engage in debate are William B. Allen, Ph.D. (Michigan State University) and Robert A. Sedler, J.D. (Wayne State University Law School). **The debate will be held on Wednesday, February 1, from Noon to 1:30 pm at the Fireside Lounge, Oakland Center, Oakland University, 2200 N. Squirrel Rd., Rochester. It is free and open to the public.**

In November 2006, the citizens of Michigan expect to vote on a ballot initiative to modify the state constitution to prohibit the state from discriminating or granting preferential treatment based on race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin. By the time that vote comes, nothing is more important than that Michiganders have a fair opportunity to decide for themselves what is the right thing to do in this case. This debate will showcase experts in the legal and social history of affirmative action, debating the need, rationale, effects, and long-term implications of this still controversial public policy.

William B. Allen, Ph.D. is a Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University and former member and chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He has published recent scholarship on higher education, citizenship, Machiavelli, ideals of global community, religious liberty and other topics. **Robert A. Sedler, J. D.** is a Distinguished Professor of Law and past Gibbs Chair in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at the Wayne State University Law School. He has litigated a large number of important civil rights and civil liberties cases in Michigan and elsewhere and published extensively on this and other subjects.

The debate is cosponsored by the College Democrats of Oakland University, the College Republicans of Oakland University, and the North Oakland Republican Club. <u>The debate is part of the Oakland University "Stand Up for Change Week."</u>

The candidates for the Michigan Senate race (Michael J. Bouchard, Keith Butler, Jerry Zandstra [Republican] and Debbie Stabenow [Democrat]) have been invited to the debate, as well as the candidates for the Michigan Gubernatorial Race (Jennifer Granholm [Democrat] and Dick DeVos [Republican]).

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This is one of many debates on the topic of affirmative action preferences that Toward A Fair Michigan (TAFM) will sponsor at locations throughout Michigan. 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 on TAFM, visit www.towardafairmichigan.org.

To arrange an interview with the speakers, you may contact them as follows:

William B. Allen	*(517) 749-6937*	*or*	*allenwi@msu.edu*
Robert A. Sedler	*(313) 577-3968*	*or*	*rsedler@wayne.edu*

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