<u>Opening Remarks</u>: Good evening and thank you for coming. I'm Barbara Grutter, President of Toward A Fair Michigan, more easily known by its acronym - TAFM.

TAFM is an independent, non-profit, charitable education activity chaired by Dr. William B. Allen, Professor of Political Science at Michigan State University, former Dean of James Madison College, former Chair of the United States Commission on Civil Rights (and well-known to the members of Union Missionary Baptist Church, where he is also a member). As an organization, TAFM has dedicated itself to furthering understanding of the equal opportunity issues involved in guaranteeing civil rights for all citizens, and to promoting a civil, fair, and open exchange of views on the question of affirmative action preferences.

Just 18 days from today, Michiganians will have the opportunity to vote on Proposal 2 – the actual ballot language is in tonight's program handout.

By the time that vote comes, nothing is more important than that the citizens of Michigan have a fair opportunity to consider every side of the issue so they can decide for themselves what is right and wrong, just and unjust, and determine what is the right thing to do in this case.

By providing a series of public forums in which the citizens of Michigan may join experts to discuss the justifications for, the alternatives to, and the consequences of affirmative action preferences; Toward A Fair Michigan aims to facilitate an open deliberation that will produce the best public decisions.

This particular debate "**Affirmative Action: Pro & Con"** is cosponsored by Union Missionary Baptist Church. We want to give special thanks and acknowledgement to the Rev. Dr. Melvin T. Jones, Union's pastor and our host this evening.

In order to promote substance over rhetoric, TAFM engages speakers outside of the political arena. As is the case with all TAFM sponsored events, the debaters speak on their own behalf, and not on behalf of TAFM.

The moderator for tonight's debate is Mr. Bill Ballenger, editor and publisher of *Inside Michigan Politics.* Mr. Ballenger received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and a master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Public Administration. A former state representative and state senator, he currently also holds the Robert P. and Marjorie Griffin Endowed Professorship in American Government at Michigan Central University. Let's welcome Mr. Ballenger.