

LOS ANGELES – Upon learning of President Bush’s announcement today claiming that the University of Michigan’s admission policy is unconstitutional, Representative Xavier Becerra (CA – 31) issued the following statement:

“It was disappointing to learn of the President’s decision to oppose the admissions policy aimed at increasing student diversity, specifically the landmark case now before the Supreme Court.

“Affirmative action is an indispensable tool that America and time have prudently employed to combat discrimination. The goals of affirmative action, expanded opportunities and greater inclusion for all people into the mainstream, are essential elements for the next generation of young leaders and their families struggling to improve their lives and whose hard work strengthens our nation.

“We live in a great and good country, but discrimination still continues to find ways to suffocate opportunity for women and minorities: the federal government received over 80,000 complaints of employment discrimination in 2001; women still earn only 72 cents for every man’s dollar; Latina women with college degrees still earn less on average than Caucasian men with high school diplomas. Accordingly, disadvantaged people would have hoped for more from the President.

“Equal opportunity means providing a meaningful opportunity for all students given their different backgrounds and life experiences. We still have a long way to go before achieving that goal. I hope that the Supreme Court will see beyond the brief submitted by President Bush and rule in favor of the University of Michigan.”