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## **NMSDC Regional Presidents' Statement on Justice Thurgood Marshall's Birthday and the Impact of the Supreme Court's Affirmative Action Ruling on Minority Businesses**

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*"None of us got where we are solely by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We got here because somebody -a parent, a teacher, an Ivy League crony, or a few nuns - bent down and helped us pick up our boots." ..... Thurgood Marshall*

Today, the 23 Regional Presidents of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) acknowledge the 115th birthday of the first Black Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall. We are the beneficiaries of Justice Marshall's civil rights legacy of fighting discrimination.

As the leaders and advocates of over 15,000 certified minority businesses across the country, we express profound disappointment and strong opposition to the recent Supreme Court decision that undermines affirmative action in college admissions. This groundbreaking ruling overturns a well-established precedent that has been pivotal in securing equal opportunities for Black and Latino students in higher education.

As representatives of diverse communities, we firmly believe in the transformative power of affirmative action to address historical inequities and to create pathways for the success of underrepresented individuals. There continues to be a significant racial wealth gap in this country that negatively affects not only Black and Hispanic families but our local, regional, and national economy.

We stand united in our unwavering commitment to advocating for equal access to educational and economic opportunities, recognizing the value of diverse perspectives, and cultivating inclusive learning environments that prepare students for the realities of a diverse workforce and of the contributions of minority businesses.

We call upon lawmakers, educational institutions, community, and corporate leaders to join us in pursuing educational and economic equity and rejecting policies perpetuating systemic inequalities.

While we aspire to live in a colorblind nation, as Justice Sotomayor correctly observed, the sad reality is that "race has always mattered and continues to matter."

Together, we can strive towards a society that embraces the principles of diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity for all. The pursuit of these principles is not a "zero-sum" proposition but an opportunity to build a stronger society and economy for all Americans.

About NMSDC and the Affiliates

Founded in 1972, the National Minority Supplier Development Council Inc.® (NMSDC®) is the longest-operating business growth engine for the broadest group of systematically excluded communities of color

(Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, and Native American). NMSDC is supported by 23 Regional Affiliates nationwide which are the backbone of our gold standard certification program, working in the field locally to ensure our 15,000+ certified MBEs reach their full potential with our 1,700+ corporate members. Our impact goes far beyond supply chain. It's about upward mobility for the emerging majority of Americans, an equal shot at participating in the American experiment of free-market capitalism and entrepreneurship. Our work is about correcting the unequal access to wealth-building opportunities.

**23 Regional Affiliate Presidents of the National Minority Supplier Development Council**

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Capital Region MSDC      | Sharon R. Pinder         |
| Carolinas-Virginia MSDC  | Dominique Milton         |
| Chicago MSDC             | Debra Jennings-Johnson   |
| Dallas Fort Worth MSDC   | Margo Posey              |
| Eastern MSDC             | Brian Oglesby            |
| Florida State MSDC       | Beatrice Louissaint      |
| Georgia MSDC             | Stacey Key               |
| Greater New England MSDC | Peter F. Hurst, Jr.      |
| Houston MSDC             | Ingrid M. Robinson       |
| Michigan MSDC            | Michelle Sourie Robinson |
| Mid-States MSDC          | Daryle L. Johnson        |
| Mountain Plains MSDC     | Stan Sena                |
| New York & New Jersey    | Terrence Clark           |
| North Central MSDC       | Heather Olson            |
| Northwest Mountain MSDC  | Karla Malacon            |
| Ohio MSDC                | George R. Simms          |
| Pacific Southwest MSDC   | Patricia Crenshaw        |
| Puerto Rico MSDC         | Francisco S. Cabrera     |
| Southern California MSDC | Virginia Gomez           |
| Southern Region MSDC     | Alvin-O Williams         |
| Southwest MSDC           | Karen Box                |
| Tri-State MSDC           | Cheri K. Henderson       |
| Western Regional         | Cecil Plummer            |

