

NSBE Family,

Last week's long-anticipated decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to end the use of race as a factor in college and university admissions was a clear step backward in the long struggle toward racial equity and social justice in this country. The damage caused by this ruling will be deep and far-reaching, without question: boosting the growth of barriers to higher education that Black and other BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities have faced for centuries, perpetuating racial and ethnic ignorance among students on predominantly white college and university campuses and increasing the destructive polarization now consuming this nation. We have advanced only to once again be forced backward.

It is important to place this court ruling in the true historical and cultural context. Racism and white supremacy culture are congenital to this country and permeate every level of our society. For 40 years, race-conscious admissions — affirmative action — were used to counter the false narrative that so-called “meritocracy” is the only fair and just way for all. Affirmative action was a policy that aided the work of NSBE, by creating more equitable access to the college and university STEM degree programs that enable us to advance our mission, *“to increase the number of culturally responsible Black Engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community.”* For four decades, through affirmative action, a number of our members were given a fair chance to show their abilities and enter spaces that would have excluded them as a result of this court ruling. With last week's Supreme Court decision against affirmative action, folks in power are once again showing us that Black lives, more specifically, Black education, do not matter, while legacy admissions and the outright purchase of college admissions continue to go unchecked.

The Supreme Court and other so-called “conservatives” continue to have their say in the marginalization of Black folks in this country. But at what point is enough, enough? NSBE joins the many warriors for social justice who are now escalating the fight to empower our higher education institutions with effective tools to continue the march toward true diversity, equity and inclusion.

NSBE family, days like these are tests of our resilience and our commitment to our mission. But trust that we *will* remain committed, working with all NSBE stakeholders, particularly our university partners, to ensure that our members continue to get the support and resources needed to be admitted to, retained at and graduated from all institutions of higher learning in this country.