



Office of the Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

July 20, 2009

Dear Title VI Conference Attendees:

Welcome to the *2009 Title VI Conference: Celebrating the 45th Anniversary of the Legislation and Exploring Current Issues in Enforcement*. The Department of Justice is grateful for your presence here today.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is one of our nation's most important civil rights laws. Its prohibition against discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance helped to pave our nation's path to equality by desegregating our nation's schools, and providing equal access to benefits and services. The tools that it provides for enforcement – voluntary compliance, assertive federal investigation and negotiations, administrative enforcement, and litigation – remain important and relevant today.

We have invited you to this conference because you are “difference makers,” and because we have a special opportunity and an obligation to root out discrimination. You are advocates who can share your experience on enforcement and implementation. You are academics who can help us understand historical contexts and can share legal theories and opportunities in the pursuit of equal opportunity. You are recipients of federal funds who can help us identify challenges and promising practices. You are students who are here to learn the history you inherit and to envision the history you will create. For federal officials charged with enforcing civil rights laws, this conference is an opportunity to learn, to be challenged, and to engage in ways that will improve our efforts, our reach, and our partnerships.

Although I cannot be with you today in person, please know that my commitment to, and support for, civil rights work and for the Civil Rights Division are unwavering. The enforcement of our nation's civil rights laws is a top priority at the Department of Justice. Reinvigorating Title VI is key to that effort. On behalf of the Department of Justice, I thank you for your time, energy, and commitment to this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric H. Holder, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General