

WARD CONNERLY – A HISTORY OF FRAUD

Ward Connerly, the architect of Colorado's proposed amendment to ban affirmative action has been accused of fraud and deception in past campaigns involving the same issue. In both Michigan (2006) and Oklahoma (2008), Connerly and his groups the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (MCRI) and the Oklahoma Civil Rights Initiative (OCRI) have been accused of willfully initiating signature-gathering campaigns that employed fraudulent tactics that not only misrepresented the nature of the proposed amendment, but also violated voter protection laws. Here are some facts regarding Connerly's tactics.

(From Michigan Supreme Court Testimony)

- Ruthie Stevenson, President of the Macomb County (MI) Chapter of the NAACP testified that she was approached outside the Post Office by an MCRI circulator. She was asked to sign a petition about affirmative action (AA) and was told by the circulator that Ruthie Stevenson supported the petition. Ms. Stevenson stated that she told the circulator, "I'm Ruthie Stevenson and I'm not in support of this divisive initiative," and the circulator walked away.
- Rev. Willie Hill stated that he was told by a circulator that the petition was to keep affirmative action. It was reported that petitioners also told signers that the amendment would help their children go to college, or that it would help the petitioner go to college.
- One granddaughter called in and said her grandmother's name was on the petition but that she can't read or write, and seldom leaves home. Others called in and said their names were on petitions with old, invalid addresses.
- Several voters testified that they signed the petition after being told it was a petition to raise minimum wage.
- In addition to voters being given fraudulent information about the MCRI petition, Sammy Williams, an African-American circulator, testified that he was told the petition was for affirmative action. Williams testified that if he had known it was to ban affirmative action he would have never signed or circulated it.

The Michigan Supreme Court said this:

"The Court finds MCRI and its circulators engaged in a **pattern of voter fraud** by deceiving voters into believing that the petition supported affirmative action...The evidence **overwhelmingly favors a finding that the MCRI defendants engaged in voter fraud**...The Court finds that the conduct of the circulators went beyond mere 'puffery' and was in fact fraudulent because it objectively misrepresented the purpose of the petition."

Here in Colorado, we have already seen these tactics used by Connerly's group, as reported by *Coloradoconfidential.com*:

- Chloe Johnson, a student at the University of Colorado, Denver, was asked to sign a petition to "end all discrimination in Colorado." She asked the circulator if they were a federal law that banned all discrimination. She was told that that would expire in July. She signed the petition but upon finding out it's true nature, has filed a complaint with the Secretary of State's office, alleging deception.
- Small business owner Tracy Spear witnessed two incidents of deception by petition circulators. First, she was asked to sign a petition to end "preferential treatment in the workplace." When she asked if it would eliminate affirmative action, the circulator said it would reduce affirmative action. When pushed, the circulator finally admitted the amendment would eliminate it. The next day, she witnessed another circulator telling people the exact same thing. Both circulators pitched the amendment as a workplace equality bill, and a civil rights initiative. Spear voiced her displeasure at being "flat-out" lied to.