



Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, shown here in this March 2007 file photo, voted with the majority in the court's 5-4 decision to reject school diversity plans from Seattle and Louisville, Ky., last Thursday. (AP photo/Charles Dharapak)

March to diversity in U.S. schools spans generations

Darlene Superville

WASHINGTON — In the first three decades after the Supreme Court said it was unconstitutional for black and white children to attend separate public schools, children of different races and backgrounds were moved onto the same campuses and shared classrooms, learning side by side and from one another.

This era of racial inclusiveness began losing momentum in the 1990s, after a series of rulings from a Supreme Court distinctly more conservative than the one that issued the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954.

Movement slowed even more last Thursday, when the court rejected a pair of school diversity plans from Seattle and Louisville, Ky., in an eagerly awaited — but largely expected — decision announced as the court winds down this term.

By a 5-4 vote, the justices ruled that school districts in the two cities could not use students' race as a

factor in deciding which schools they attend. Doing so, the court's conservative justices said, violates the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection.

“What we have seen in the subsequent 50-plus years are fractured, conflicting and awfully contradictory opinions.”

— Charles J. Ogletree Jr.

Still, the decision was not a complete repudiation of using race in making school assignments; the court left the door open in limited circumstances. But the ruling threatens

similar plans in hundreds of districts nationwide and puts new limits on the methods they may use to diversify their campuses.

It is the latest ruling on race and education, dating to the court's landmark — and unanimous — decision in *Brown* outlawing racial segregation in public schools.

In the wake of that watershed decision and the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, public schools became more racially diverse.

In the South, where racial separation had been most common and enshrined in law, the percentage of black students studying at mostly white schools jumped from 2 percent to 33 percent by the late 1960s, according to a study by Harvard University's Civil Rights Project.

In the 1970s, the Supreme Court gave judges broad power to remedy racial segregation if districts failed to do so, including busing students to distant campuses and redrawing school district lines to achieve

Diversity, continued to page 6

Congress fails local activists on immigration reform

Kyle de Beausset

Local immigration activists, disappointed with last week's U.S. Senate vote ending talks on immigration reform, have been forced to cope with the federal government's failure to address contentious immigration issues.

Last Thursday, the Senate voted

53-46 against limiting debate on legislation that would have provided a path to citizenship for 12 million undocumented immigrants after certain security benchmarks were met. Despite President Bush's heavy lobbying, the bill's advocates in the Senate came up 14 votes short of the 60 needed to push the legislation through.

“We know the high price of continuing inaction,” said Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., one of the chief architects of the legislation, in a statement. “Raids and other enforcement actions will escalate, terrorizing our communities and businesses. The 12 million illegal immigrants will soon be millions more. Sweatshops will grow and undermine American

workers and wages. State and local governments will take matters into their own hands and pass a maze of conflicting laws that hurt our country.”

Frustrated over what they perceive as federal foot-dragging, state and local governments have already begun stepping up with remedies that range from punitive to protective, a trend that's almost certain to escalate in the void Congress left.

“If Congress is going to abdicate its responsibilities, then states and cities are going to jump in,” said John Gay, senior vice president of the National Restaurant Association and leader of a business coalition that backed the failed Senate bill.

“One of the arguments for opposing state and local proposals [was] that Congress is addressing it. We don't have that anymore.”

As of April, state legislators in all 50 states had introduced at least 1,169 bills and resolutions on immigration this year, more than twice the number introduced last year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Many fell by the wayside, but others made their way into law, underscoring the public's growing intolerance of federal inaction.

Activists vowed to continue to advocate for the federal government to take action. Still, they have accepted the reality most analysts predict

Immigration, continued to page 21

Hub delegates learn, teach at Atlanta forum

Toussaint Losier

ATLANTA — Nearly 100,000 youths and social activists from across the world, including about 100 Bostonians participating in the Northeast Freedom Rides, converged in Atlanta last week to participate in the 2007 United States Social Forum.

Stopping in Providence, R.I., and Washington, D.C., along the way, the Boston caravan brought three busloads of activists to the forum, many of them high school students.

Battling temperatures over 100 degrees, local youth made their presence felt with creative chants that highlighted issues of police brutality, gun violence and political oppression.

“There were thousands of different issues represented, but all of us [are] fighting,” said Carlos Moreno of the Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Program (REEP). “It was powerful to see how different we are but how we can still come together as one.”

As they marched through the streets of Atlanta, activists also drew attention to the proposed privatization of the city's only public hospital as well as service cuts to the MARTA public transportation system. By marching past these locations, local organizers sought to point out local examples of structural adjustment, an economic program that forces governments to cut funding for basic services and allow private companies

Forum, continued to page 18



Activists from all across America, including a contingent of about 100 from the Boston area, gathered last week in Atlanta at the first United States Social Forum. The event gave social justice

workers an opportunity to highlight important issues in their respective communities and discuss strategies for organizing effective campaigns. (Toussaint Losier photo)

What's INSIDE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT . . .	13-14
BILLBOARD	15

LISTINGS

BUSINESS DIRECTORY	20
CALENDAR	19
CHURCH GUIDE	21

PERSPECTIVE

EDITORIAL	4
OPINION	5
ROVING CAMERA	5

CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED	25-27
LEGALS	22-23
REAL ESTATE	23-25