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Gail McCann Beatty
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District 26

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Ex-officio member of all
committees of the House

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P.O. Box 22333
Kansas City, MO 64113

Feb. 21, 2017

Michael A. Middleton
Interim President
University of Missouri System
321 University Hall
Columbia, MO 65211

Dear President Middleton,

I am deeply disturbed and disappointed that the University of Missouri System has publicly stated support for legislation that seeks to gut civil rights protections in our state and essentially lock the courthouse doors to victims of unlawful discrimination.

As you no doubt are aware, during a Feb. 20, 2017, hearing by the House Special Committee on Litigation Reform, UM System lobbyist Marty Oetting testified in favor of three bills that would make it extremely difficult for discrimination victims to successfully bring suit under the Missouri Human Rights Act. As I'm sure you also are aware, shortly after Mr. Oetting's testimony, the committee chairman reinforced the legislation's discriminatory intent by blocking Missouri NAACP President Nimrod Chapel from speaking in opposition.

The UM System has a well-known reputation for being reluctant to take public positions on specific legislation. Given the protests last year that focused national attention on the university's spotty history on racial issues, the choice to support measures to cripple legal protections against discrimination is both puzzling and disheartening.

As a result, Mr. Oetting's testimony didn't so much call in question the UM System's commitment to equal treatment for all as loudly declare that no such commitment exist. Therefore, I respectfully request the UM System not only retract its support for the bills in question but state its opposition to them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gail McCann Beatty".

Gail McCann Beatty
House Minority Leader
District 26

cc: Dr. Mun Y. Choi, University of Missouri System president-designee