

TO MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO:

I am a lifelong academic. I have taught at Western New England College in Springfield, Massachusetts for 37 years. I am currently Chair of the Economics Department there. I have spent my entire professional life teaching, reading, writing and speaking about economic issues. These issues have often been controversial. I am a member of a dissident group within the Economics Profession -- the Union for Radical Political Economics. Some would call me a Marxist. I have spent my entire career teaching in a mainstream Economics Department, teaching mainstream courses and always making sure that my personal opinions did not interfere with my ability to teach students. After 37 years of serving the College and the department well, I have been gratified that upon my retirement the department will encourage someone who represents heterodox perspectives to apply for the position I am vacating. The students in my school have benefited, I believe, from the diversity of perspective within our department.

Though I am a member of a dissident minority within the Economics Profession, I have hesitated to voice my support for Professor Ward Churchill as his case was being adjudicated. I would have been very quick to condemn a politically motivated firing had it occurred because someone made a speech or delivered a controversial lecture. However, these charges were (I thought) substantive and went to the heart of our profession's integrity -- relating to intellectual honesty.

I have been moved, however, to finally raise my voice in protest after reading the detailed analysis by Professor Tom Mayer of the University's Sociology Department. To be frank and blunt, the charges against Professor Churchill are bogus and represent a fig-leaf of cover for a politically motivated firing. It is hard to believe that your students will be well-served by removing Professor Churchill from your faculty. I am confident that just as students in my department are exposed to many points of view other than my own in the classes of my colleagues (as well as in my class); the students at Colorado are exposed to many other points of view than Professor Churchill's.

What will happen as a result of Professor Churchill's dismissal will be an increasing uniformity among faculty -- with particularly young faculty afraid to truly practice their profession -- afraid to truly speak (and write) what is in their hearts and minds. The losers will be your students but in a very real sense, the narrowing of the acceptable scope of dialogue within your university (and others as well -- chilled by your behavior) will mean a loss for a nation as a whole.

Though I might have wished that a significant numbers of my more than 4000 students would become dissident economists, in fact virtually all of Western New England College's graduates have gone off to professional lives in mainstream America. What I hope they all gained from my classes was an ability to think critically and with an open mind about important issues. Unless something truly drastic changes in the United States, the republic has nothing to fear from the presence of teachers like me and Ward Churchill. The republic has much to lose should such voices be silenced. I urge you sincerely to vote NOT to terminate Professor Churchill. Please don't take my word for it. Read the detailed defenses by individuals like Thomas Mayer and others. The charges against him are totally concocted with a political agenda behind them -- an agenda unworthy of a great University and a great state. (And this is from someone who has only visited Colorado once in my life -- though I will be attending a conference in Denver this coming April.)

Sincerely,
Michael A. Meeropol, Ph D
Chair, Department of Economics
Western New England College
Springfield, Massachusetts

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Prof. Meeropol's publications include:

We Are Your Sons: The Legacy of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg (with Robert Meeropol, 1975, 1986)

Surrender: How the Clinton Administration Completed the Reagan Revolution (1998)