

Testimony SJ0003 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-T

Uploaded by: Abbie Ellicott

Position: FAV

SUPPORT SJ0003--Diversity, Equity and Inclusion-The American Dream

SJ0003 affirms Maryland's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as a foundation of the American Dream; and encourages certain individuals and groups to adopt and uphold DEI principles. Hearing in the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee on 3/13/25

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

I reside in Anne Arundel County and I am writing on behalf of the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students. **We strongly SUPPORT SJ0003** and we urge you to give it a favorable report.

The mission of the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students is to provide advocacy and support to youth in the LGBTQIA community in Anne Arundel County and beyond. Our Coalition understands the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion and we believe SJ0003 deserves your unqualified support. This is especially important today, given the harmful, wide-spread attacks on LGBTQIA youth and other marginalized groups in the United States and the efforts to eradicate DEI from all our institutions.

Communities that uphold principles of diversity, inclusion, and equity are stronger, richer and function more effectively. DEI principles empower us to share our experiences and opinions freely, without having to fear backlash and marginalization. This freedom of expression leads to enhanced problem-solving, creativity, collaboration and innovation. It means everyone in the room can experience a sense of belonging and a feeling that they matter. DEI means that all people have legitimate and valuable contributions to make which strengthens our communities. DEI leads to increased understanding of others which leads to greater empathy and compassion. DEI helps us to be better prepared for the global world we inhabit, by enhancing our knowledge of cultures that are different from our own. We all benefit when we incorporate DEI into our institutions.

Maryland lawmakers need to explicitly support the principles of DEI because they are under brutal attack. Lawmakers and political leaders at the highest level of government are doing their best to outlaw DEI. They claim that DEI is “divisive” and they engage in dangerous fear-mongering and manipulative lies to try to eradicate DEI. Obviously, DEI principles aren’t divisive, as they are based on the notion that all people should be included, respected and valued. DEI counters the dangerous notion that any one race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or culture is superior and should dominate others.

People in marginalized communities, including the LGBTQIA community, are terrified by the current attacks on DEI by our government. They know first-hand how dangerous these types of

attacks can be. They know that without DEI principles, those in marginalized communities quickly lose basic human rights, including the right to raise children, marry, obtain health care and serve in the military. These are dangerous times for many people. People are frightened and feel vulnerable. We need your help.

Our Coalition asks you to make a clear statement that Maryland is fully committed to supporting DEI in our communities, including in our workplaces, educational systems and government.

Please SUPPORT SJ0003

Sincerely,

Abbie M. Ellicott
Representing the Coalition for LGBTQ+ Students
Severna Park, Anne Arundel County, Maryland

Support Elementary and Secondary Education-Curricu

Uploaded by: Bethany Brand

Position: FAV

HJ0005 / SJ0005 Elementary and Secondary Education-Curriculum-Importance of Diversity

Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee 3/7 at 1 pm

March 4, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Senate [Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee](#):

My name is Bethany Brand and I reside in 43B in Baltimore County. I am a parent and a clinical psychologist. I strongly support SJ0005 because, as a mother and Professor at Towson University for 25 years, I understand the importance of teaching a culturally diverse curriculum in elementary and secondary schools in Maryland. Our schools much make all children and families feel comfortable, safe, and seen. I am also the mother of a trans son who is 24 years old. I recall how incredibly painful it was for my son to be seen and treated as a girl and to have some teachers refuse to call him by his chosen name once he came out as trans. As we, his parents, allowed him to begin to use his chosen name and to socially transition, we saw the depression and anxiety he had been struggling with for years improve. He had a few teachers who were supportive of him; the school worked to create a gender neutral bathroom for him and other trans students. Feeling seen, supported and safe at school is crucial for children's well-being and learning. I saw it first hand with my son, and being trans is only one type of diversity that is crucial to support.

Please support this bill so our schools can continue to make children from diverse backgrounds feel supported, and so that other children learn to value diversity. Our country urgently needs appreciation for diversity, not lies and fear mongering about people who are different.

Please help keep Maryland's educational systems complete and supportive for all its residents!

Thank you,

Bethany Brand

MLU Support Letter - SJ3.pdf

Uploaded by: Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Position: FAV

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman

Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for SJ 3 – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – The American Dream

Dear Chair Feldman,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is proud to express our strong support for Senate Joint Resolution 3, *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – The American Dream*. For years, MLU has worked alongside Maryland's Latino and immigrant communities, witnessing firsthand the transformative power of policies that promote access, representation, and opportunity. This resolution is more than a statement—it is a reaffirmation of our state's commitment to ensuring that every resident, regardless of background, has a fair and equitable chance to thrive.

Through our work in education, workforce development, and community advocacy, we have seen the profound impact that inclusion can have. When policies prioritize equity, Latino families gain greater access to quality education, stable employment, and critical resources that set the foundation for long-term success. Our community is resilient and eager to contribute, but systemic barriers continue to limit opportunities. By championing diversity, equity, and inclusion at the state level, Maryland can take meaningful steps toward dismantling these barriers and creating a future where every Marylander has the tools they need to succeed.

The American Dream has always been about the promise of opportunity, and SJ 3 reinforces that this promise must extend to all. The resolution serves as a critical acknowledgment that diversity strengthens our communities, that equity is essential for meaningful progress, and that inclusion ensures no voice is left unheard. For Latino and immigrant communities, this means a more welcoming environment, greater protections against discrimination, and the assurance that their contributions to Maryland's economy and culture are recognized and valued.

MLU stands ready to support the implementation of these principles beyond words. Through our partnerships, outreach initiatives, and advocacy efforts, we will continue working to ensure that the spirit of this resolution translates into real, lasting change for the communities we serve. We urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SJ 3 and solidify Maryland's role as a leader in advancing equity and opportunity for all.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist
Maryland Latinos Unidos
corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org

SJ3 Favorable 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Debi Jasen

Position: FAV

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate Joint Resolution 3
FAVORABLE

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee;

Please give Senate Joint Resolution 3, The American Dream, a Favorable report.

Those of us who have studied history understand the tremendous importance of DEI policies. America can never be great without diversity, equity, and inclusion. It was white supremacist propaganda that brought us to the point where diversity and inclusion are now considered things that we should oppose, and equity has been completely misrepresented.

I grew up as a white girl in Prince George's County in the 1980s and 90s. I will forever be thankful to my parents for that opportunity. I experienced actual racial and cultural diversity throughout my youth. I was able to evaluate the practices of inclusion in both the local and magnet schools I attended. I learned the most about equity when, as a part of my high school's child development class, I volunteered at a school for children with profound physical and cognitive disabilities. The lessons that I learned as a child have had a significant impact on my life. I have benefited from DEI, not just because I'm a woman, but also because I have learned about so many other people's experiences that have differed from my own. I am a better person for it, and I have raised my own children to oppose bigotry.

I hope that you can also see the benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our society, and that you will vote for SJ3. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Debi Jasen
Pasadena, MD

HJ0004_SJ0003 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - T

Uploaded by: Jeremy Browning

Position: FAV



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Bill Title: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream

Bill Number(s): [HJ0004](#)/[SJ0003](#)

Position: FAVORABLE

Date: March 3, 2025

Submitted by: Jeremy Browning, Director of the
Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

To:

House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

The Hon. Anne Healey, Chair
The Hon. Marvin E. Holmes, Jr., Vice Chair

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The Hon. Brian J. Feldman, Chair
The Hon. Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs:

The Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs, created by the Maryland General Assembly, works to serve LGBTQIA+ Marylanders by galvanizing community voices, researching and addressing challenges, and advocating for policies that advance equity and inclusion. The Commission envisions a Maryland where all LGBTQIA+ people can live full and authentic lives. As a vital resource, the Commission collaborates with public officials, agencies, and community partners to ensure the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders are protected and respected.

The Commission submits this testimony in support of HJ0004 and SJ0003, which reaffirms Maryland's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as a core foundation of the American Dream. At a time when DEI efforts face increasing opposition nationwide, this resolution sends a clear message that Maryland values opportunity, prosperity, and upward mobility for all. It encourages individuals, organizations, government agencies, and businesses to uphold DEI principles that foster inclusivity and fairness.

For many LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, people of color, women, and members of other marginalized communities, the American Dream has often felt out of reach due to systemic barriers in education, healthcare, employment, housing, and civic participation. DEI efforts are essential in removing these obstacles and ensuring opportunities are based on merit and potential rather than race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, or economic background.

DEI policies and practices are imperative for the full participation of LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diverse people with intersectional marginalized identities. LGBTQIA+ communities face unique and compounded forms of discrimination that often exclude them from essential services, economic mobility, and safe public spaces. Without intentional efforts to remove systemic barriers and promote inclusive policies, LGBTQIA+ individuals will continue to experience disparities in health outcomes, educational attainment, and employment opportunities. Affirming DEI ensures that all Marylanders, regardless of identity, can contribute to and benefit from a thriving and just society.

Attempts to roll back DEI initiatives threaten to undermine hard-fought progress, harm marginalized communities, and weaken Maryland's ability to remain a competitive and inclusive state. HJ0004 and SJ0003 affirms that Maryland will continue to lead in fostering an environment where all individuals can thrive.

For those reasons, the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs respectfully urges a favorable report on HJ0004 and SJ0003.

SJ0003 diveristy dei american dream.pdf

Uploaded by: Ken Phelps Jr

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of SJ0003
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream
**** Favorable ****

**To: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair,
and members of the Education, Energy and The Environment Committee**

**From: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, co-chair, and Rev. Margaret VanAuker, member,
Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland**

Date: March 13, 2025

The National Episcopal Church and the Maryland Episcopal Diocese strongly support this Resolution. The strength of our democracy derives from the best of all nationalities represented in our population. This is the source of America's success: the belief that all people are created equal and deserve equal dignity and respect. The Episcopal Diocese supports this Bill because it acknowledges and respects the dignity of all citizens as children of God.

We respectfully request a favorable vote on SJ0003.

SJ0003- DEI Testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: Kennedy Lighty

Position: FAV

March 13th, 2025

Testimony on SJ0003
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – The American Dream
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports SJ0003 which exhibits Maryland's dedication to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as a crucial pillar for realizing the American Dream. This resolution establishes a forward-looking agenda that acknowledges the changing nature of our society while also honoring the historical heritage of civil rights victories, from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 19th Amendment to historic anti-discrimination laws. By supporting DEI, Maryland demonstrates that our greatest achievements come from allowing all people, regardless of background, to fully engage in all facets of life.

Our goal at Common Cause Maryland is to establish transparent, responsible, and honest institutions that benefit the people at all governmental levels. We think that DEI is an essential concept that guarantees everyone equal rights, opportunity, and representation—it is not just a policy directive. This inclusive strategy ensures that a range of viewpoints are heard and that choices that impact our communities are made in a fair and transparent manner. DEI policies contribute to the fight against systematic inequities by eliminating obstacles to opportunity and guaranteeing fair access to the American Dream. Our dedication to these ideals is essential to creating a robust, inclusive democracy where all opinions are valued.

Senate Joint Resolution 3 is a critical step toward fostering a society that not only values diversity but actively works to create a level playing field for all its residents. The principles outlined in this legislation resonate deeply with the mission of Common Cause Maryland. By eliminating systemic barriers and promoting equitable access to education, employment, and civic participation, this legislation not only uplifts individual lives but also reinforces the very fabric of our democracy. The stakes have never been higher, and the need for decisive, inclusive reform is urgent. Now is the time for Maryland to lead by example—demonstrating that the promise of the American Dream is attainable when we stand together.

“Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – The American Dream” is a legislative reaffirmation that our state is dedicated to ensuring every individual can participate fully and fairly in our democratic process. Common Cause Maryland stands resolute in its support for this resolution, and we urge our legislators to adopt it with the urgency and conviction that this moment demands. Together, let us forge a future where every Marylander is empowered to pursue their dreams, and where the promise of democracy is realized in every community.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable position report.

Maureen Wambui - Support Testimony for SJ0003- Div

Uploaded by: Maureen Wambui

Position: FAV

Maureen Wambui

7827 Rolling View Ave, Nottingham, MD, 21236

Maureen.w.m.2030@gmail.com

03/11/2025

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD 21401

Support Testimony for SJ0003- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream

Hearing Date: March 13, 2025

Chairperson and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a proud Immigrant, Parent, Community advocate and resident of Legislative District 8 in Maryland. I appreciate the opportunity to testify to and support for SJ0003, a resolution affirming Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as core values of Maryland and fundamental principles of the American Dream. I have seen firsthand how embracing diversity and promoting equity fosters stronger communities, economic growth, and social harmony.

SJ0003 is more than just a resolution—it is a powerful statement that reaffirms Maryland's commitment to building an inclusive society where all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or background, have equitable access to opportunities and resources. In a time of national and global uncertainty, it is imperative that we continue to champion policies that bring people together, uplift marginalized communities, and ensure that Maryland remains a leader in fostering an inclusive and just society.

By supporting this resolution, the Maryland General Assembly acknowledges the value of diversity as a strength, equity as a necessity, and inclusion as a moral and economic imperative. Research consistently demonstrates that diverse and inclusive societies are more innovative, resilient, and economically prosperous. When individuals feel valued and empowered, they are more likely to contribute positively to their communities and workplaces.

Furthermore, SJ0003 encourages organizations, institutions, and community leaders to actively incorporate DEI principles in their practices. This resolution aligns with Maryland's long-standing tradition of progress and inclusivity, ensuring that future generations inherit a state that embraces and uplifts all its residents.

I urge this committee to support SJ0003 and affirm Maryland's commitment to the principles that make our state and nation stronger. Together, we can continue to build a Maryland that truly reflects the ideals of fairness, opportunity, and unity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen Wambui

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dr

Uploaded by: Nicole Hollywood

Position: FAV

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **SJ003/HJ004 Joint Resolution 3 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream**

Submitted by: Dr. Nicole Hollywood

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Greetings. My name is Dr. Nicole Hollywood. I am a professor at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, where I teach a signature general education course on Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. I am submitting this testimony today in my personal capacity in strong support of this Joint Resolution.

DEI is a framework that aims to create more inclusive and welcoming environments by removing systematic barriers to resources and opportunities. Overcoming legacies of colonization, racialization, and other forms of oppression and subjugation are core to achieving the American Dream and building a Maryland where all individuals, regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability status have the opportunity to contribute is foundational to ensuring that no one is left behind.

DEI isn't about putting unqualified people in jobs or providing opportunities to people because of gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, etc. It's about availing opportunities to individuals—because they are highly qualified regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexual preference, etc.

Conservative attacks on DEI often ignore the empirical evidence supporting the benefits of DEI initiatives, such as improved engagement, greater innovation, and increased overall performance.

DEI is about welcoming people in and removing the unconscious and sometimes conscious biases that impact historically marginalized people because when you leave the door open for everyone to have an opportunity, you get a deeper, more qualified pool of people and ideas.

DEI is often mischaracterized as "reverse discrimination" in situations where white people believe they are negatively stereotyped or discriminated against because of their whiteness. This erroneous claim ignores a core ingredient of racism and discrimination- power. DEI seeks to rebalance that power and ensure that those who have been historically disempowered or deprived of equal opportunities simply because of their identities are given a fair and equitable chance to participate and succeed in all aspects of society. This does not in any way equate to discriminating against historically dominant groups.

DEI policies and practices are critical to our LGBTQIA+ community and, more specifically, our QTBIPOC community, which is diverse in composition and often represented by many intersecting historically marginalized identities facing compounding disparities.

By affirming Maryland's commitment to DEI, the Maryland General Assembly will be sending a powerful message that all individuals are valued and deserve the chance to achieve what they themselves define as success and fulfillment through hard work and determination

My students are facing an uncertain future with tremendous trepidation, and they are watching the actions of our leaders. By passing this resolution, you will be offering them some comfort during these harrowing times by enshrining the truism that "our highest accomplishments as a state and nation have been achieved when we harnessed the strengths of all people, regardless of their identities, to overcome our greatest challenges."

Resources

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Testimony in support of resolution SJ0003 - Divers

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SJ0003_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

03/13/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON SJ#0003 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of **SJ#0003, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream**

In January 2025, CNN reported on *What is DEI, and why is it dividing America?*¹

What is DEI?

Among seven DEI experts and industry leaders CNN has interviewed, most had a shared vision for what constitutes the concept:

- **Diversity** is embracing the differences everyone brings to the table, whether those are someone's race, age, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability or other aspects of social identity.
- **Equity** is treating everyone fairly and providing equal opportunities.
- **Inclusion** is respecting everyone's voice and creating a culture in which people from all backgrounds feel encouraged to express their ideas and perspectives.
-

DEI was created because marginalized communities have not always had equal opportunities for jobs or felt a sense of belonging in majority-White corporate settings, said Daniel Oppong, founder of The Courage Collective, a consultancy that advises companies on DEI.

"That is the genesis of why some of these programs exist," he said. "It was an attempt to try to create workplaces where more or all people can thrive."

The Federal administration and their supporters believe that anything that does not advantage white cis-gendered Christian males is automatically DEI and must be suppressed and outlawed. They do not believe that any minority whether BIPOC or LGBTQ+ or any woman could have equal opportunities in society based on their knowledge and character and ability which can, in any way, shape, or time, exceed the favored group even if that is demonstrably false.

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2025/01/22/us/dei-diversity-equity-inclusion-explained/index.html>

SJ0003_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

This resolution acknowledges that the anti-DEI narrative is false and is harmful to the residents of Maryland. The resolution is to declare that we are affirming Maryland's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as a foundation of the American Dream. It will accomplish that goal by encouraging local, State, and federal policymakers, educational institutions, workplaces, and other organizations to adopt and uphold DEI principles.

As the late Senator Paul Wellstone and Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman have stated “We all do better when we all do better”. The American Dream promotes DEI as the path to achieve that for everyone; this resolution says that Maryland understands this paradigm and will implement it as a policy throughout the institutions and businesses and educational bodies in our state.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SJ0003.

SJ3.DEI.25.pdf

Uploaded by: Virginia Crespo

Position: FAV



Maryland Retired School Personnel Association

8379 Piney Orchard Parkway, Suite A • Odenton, Maryland 21113
Phone: 410.551.1517 • Email: mrspa@mrspa.org
Website: www.mrspa.org

Joint Senate Resolution 0003
In Support Of
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Hearing: March 13, 2025 – 1:00 p.m.

Dear Honorable Senator Brian Feldman, Chair, and Honorable Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair, and distinguished Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee members,

The Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA) supports Joint Senate Resolution 0003 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion -The American Dream.

MRSPA stands behind the fourteen (14) points found in the Resolution that confirm Maryland's commitment to the American Dream for all citizens. We acknowledge the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our daily lives and in education. MRSPA agrees that DEI is an essential foundation for achieving the American Dream, and for fostering the environments where all individuals are free to be healthy, prosperous, and safe, while also having the opportunity to realize their full potential.

We support that this Resolution be adopted widely including in government and education sectors, in law enforcement, and in the public domain. We agree that promoting DEI principles to achieve equitable opportunities for all individuals is also important and necessary.

MRSPA also strongly supports this Resolution being shared in writing with local municipalities, and with the leaders in our state and federal governments.

On behalf of the almost 12,000 members of the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association, we urge a favorable report on SJ 0003.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth H. Weller
President

Virginia G. Crespo
Legislative Aide

2025 SJ0003 Testimony Against 2025-03-13.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against SJ0003

Honorable Senators

I do not support

- Affirming Maryland's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as a foundation of the American Dream; and
- encouraging local, State, and federal policymakers, educational institutions, workplaces, and other organizations to adopt and uphold DEI principles.

I believe that despite the actual definition of the words adopted as DEI, as used by various government bureaucracies, these DEI programs are destroying the American dream. These programs are just a fancy way to use quotas instead of merit for hiring and promotion.

Some qualified people are not being hired because a protected class does not have enough people hired.

What is worse, some qualified people who are hired but happen to be part of a protected class are sometimes considered just to be quota hires even though they had the bonafides to be hired if these programs did not exist.

I find it interesting that diversity is based more on physical characteristics instead of diversity of thought and beliefs. If one does not believe what the bureaucracy believes or expects, one is not included. The Black Caucus in Congress is an example of this as they will not accept a black person as a member who is a Republican.

We will never achieve Dr. Martin Luther King's dream of being judged by one's character instead of being judged by the color of one's skin if Maryland proclaims that DEI is a foundation of the American Dream.

Please enter an unfavorable report against SJ0003.

Alan Lang
45 Marys Mount Road
Harwood, Maryland 20776
Legislative District 30B
410-336-9745
Alanlang1@verizon.net
March 13, 2025

SJ0003_UNF_mgoldstein 2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Mathew Goldstein

Position: UNF

March 13, 2025

SJ 3 - UNF

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream

Dear Chair Brian J. Feldman, Vice-Chair Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs tend to exhibit a multiplicity of substantial problems. Instead of perpetuating what are too often fundamentally and deeply flawed implementations of DEI it would probably be better if they are dismantled. The problems are numerous and pervasive, include training that oversells implicit bias, overemphasizing the dangers of microaggressions, treating individuals as group representatives, expecting individuals to make amends for the crimes of others who look like them, demeaning white people etc. If it were feasible to avoid the many implementation problems then DEI could arguably merit being retained, but that appears to be unlikely. Hiring people based on use of DEI terminology and endorsement of DEI tenets, tenets which too often fall somewhere between counter-factual and factually disputable, turns DEI into an ideologically infused partisan basis for employment discrimination.

- Lack of Clarity and Measurement

The definitions of “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” are vague, making it difficult to implement and measure progress. Evidence for a lack of DEI achievement tends to be cited in an incomplete and biased way to avoid contradicting the preferred conclusions and this bias is overtly rationalized and excused.

- Divisive approach

The focus on identity categories (e.g., race, gender) foster divisions rather than unity by emphasizing differences over shared goals. DEI initiatives alienate individuals, particularly those from majority groups, who are negatively stereotyped based on group membership. The content of some DEI programs reflects a resentment fueled antagonism against some relatively successfully minority groups, such as Jews.

- Meritocracy Rejected

Prioritizing DEI frequently conflicts with meritocratic principles, promotes tokenism,

hiring/promoting less-qualified individuals, and devalues learning, knowledge, skills, effort, and competency. DEI detracts from performance and innovation by disputing the relevance of merit.

- Ideological Bias

DEI programs are utilized to advance particular political or ideological agendas, often those associated with progressive or left-leaning values. “Woke” manifestations of DEI rely on doxastically closed, circular logic. Expressions of dissent are deemed to be unacceptable wrong-think by virtue of their being in conflict with the DEI program content. Ad-hominem attacks are deployed against dissenters to shutdown expressions of dissent. Evidence that allegedly favors dubious DEI accusations of “systemic racism” is selectively cited while evidence that conflicts with DEI conclusions are ignored or denied.

- Economic and Operational Burdens

Implementing DEI programs can be expensive and resource-intensive, leading to concerns about whether the outcomes justify the investment. A strong focus on DEI detracts from other organizational priorities, such as productivity and profitability.

- Lack of Efficacy

DEI efforts result in “checkbox” compliance without addressing the deeper structural or cultural issues. They substitute for, and replace, the more difficult tasks of actually improving the education, skills, cultures, and behaviors that positively correlated with financial and social success and that require ongoing development of relevant competencies. Some studies suggest that traditional DEI programs, such as mandatory bias training, have limited or even counterproductive effects on organizational culture and hiring practices, see INSTRUCTING ANIMOSITY: HOW DEI PEDAGOGY PRODUCES THE HOSTILE ATTRIBUTION BIAS by Ankita Jagdeep, Simon Lazarus, Mendel Zecher, Ohad Fedida, Gidi Fihrer, Joel Finkelstein, Danit Sarah Finkelstein, Sonia Yanovsky, Lee Jussim, Pamela Paresky from Rutgers University’s Social Perception Lab and the Network Contagion Research Institute at https://networkcontagion.us/wp-content/uploads/Instructing-Animosity_11.13.24.pdf.

- Overemphasis on Equity

Equity, defined by equal outcome rather than equal opportunity, is a misdirected goal. Group level outcomes often vary in societies that provide the most equality of opportunity, sometimes even more so than in societies that systematically deny equality of opportunity. This reflects a tendency of different groups to have different interests, preferences, experiences, and skills. Such disparate outcomes are not automatically an injustice that evidences bigoted discrimination in need of social engineering to remedy as claimed by DEI programs.

- Legal and Ethical Weaknesses

Companies and institutions face lawsuits when DEI policies are perceived to result in discriminatory practices, such as quota systems and unequal treatment. Required participation in DEI training or hiring that promotes specific viewpoints, with penalties for non-compliance, compels speech. Prioritizing some individuals over others based on over simplistic and unreliable group level generalizations, such as disputable rankings of oppressor versus oppressed rankings built on group categories of disputable relevance, is a too common characteristic of DEI programs that conflicts with broader ethical principles of individual centered responsibility, fairness, and impartiality.

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Respectfully,
Mathew Goldstein
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Bowie, MD

Written Testimony for SJ 003_HJ004_ Diversity, Equ

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **SJ 003/HJ004**: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - The American Dream - Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Rules & Executive Nominations Committee:

This bill's synopsis reads "...Affirming Maryland's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) as a foundation of the American Dream; and encouraging local, State, and federal policymakers, educational institutions, workplaces, and other organizations to adopt and uphold DEI principles..."

I agree with all of the stipulations that state that the American Dream is a "beacon of hope" and "embodies the ideals of opportunity, prosperity, and upward mobility, promising that every person should have the chance to achieve what they themselves define as success and fulfillment through hard work and determination". I agree that the American Dream "belongs to all of us, not just billionaires and multimillionaires". And I agree that "Our highest accomplishments as a state and nation have been achieved when we harnessed the strengths of all people, regardless of their identities, to overcome our greatest challenges".

However, there is **no data-driven evidence** for the following declarations in this bill:

"WHEREAS, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)..is...deeply rooted in America's founding principles and its subsequent legacy of civil rights and social justice efforts aimed at delivering the laws, policies, and initiatives that enable America to live up to our Constitution's promises...", and

"WHEREAS, DEI policies...reflect the corrective legislative and legal actions taken across our nation's history to expand and guarantee access to the educational, economic, and civic obligations and capacities of our nation", and

"WHEREAS, DEI principles and policies promote equal access to opportunities, foster an environment of respect and belonging, and ensure that every individual – regardless of background – can fully participate in all aspects of society", and

"WHEREAS, DEI is essential to creating a society where all individuals are valued, heard, and included", and

"WHEREAS, DEI is based on removing barriers to opportunity so that our merits can speak for themselves", and

“WHEREAS, DEI is committed to widening pathways to the American Dream for every community so that all people can reap the benefits of shared prosperity in our nation”, and

“WHEREAS, Freedom of speech and expression are fundamental constitutional rights, protecting the ability of individuals to voice their ideas and opinions without interference, punishment, or retaliation by the government”, and

“WHEREAS, Anti-DEI activists, politicians, and corporate decision-makers who attempt to prohibit DEI infringe upon the right of individuals to freely express themselves, diminish the diversity of perspectives that strengthen our society, and conflict with antidiscrimination laws”, and

“WHEREAS, Efforts to attack DEI are harmful to the bottom line and health of our economy”.

Please provide the actual data for these declarations and don't simply stipulate these declarations as fact. Where are the studies that prove these declarations?

Most DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) programs are failures. Recent research also shows that DEI training simply does not work. DEI has been in play since the 1960's as a direct response to the civic and social justice movement. While the intent has been good, its entry into the professional corporate domain has been burdened with a lack of clarity, a lack of budget, and a lack of talent. The domain today is full of buzz words like 'authenticity' and 'collaboration', and 'safe space', etc. No one really understands what is being said, and no one really trusts what is being communicated. It's being increasingly perceived as 'reverse discrimination' or 'reverse racism'. What is almost never talked about is the data side of DEI. How do we know if something is *not* diverse? You can't expect to change what you don't understand. Terms like '*diversity*', '*equity*', and '*inclusion*' are what we call latent variables in data analytics. Latent variables are either hypothetical constructs or they are unobservable, and we need to identify or create proxies to be able to measure them. A classic latent variable is 'satisfaction' and we proxy-measure it in part through the number of compliments received. So, DEI needs to be better defined in data-specific terms to enable us to properly measure its progress objectively. Without structured data-oriented thinking, DEI simply devolves into experimental policies and programs without any clear understanding of the causes and effects.

Promoting people solely based on their diversity carries potential risks that organizations need to consider: 1. The Hiring of Unqualified Candidates: When the

focus is solely on diversity, there is a risk of promoting individuals who may not be the most qualified or experienced for the role. This can lead to inefficiencies, lower productivity and decreased employee morale. 2. Tokenism: Promoting people from diverse backgrounds solely to fulfill diversity quotas can lead to the perception of tokenism. This can undermine and devalue the achievements of those who have genuinely earned their positions. 3. Lack of Meritocracy: When promotions are not based on merit and qualifications, it can create a sense of unfairness and resentment among employees who have consistently demonstrated their capabilities. This can erode motivation, hinder employee engagement and contribute to a toxic work environment. 4. Lack of Long-Term Commitment: If promotions are driven primarily by diversity goals without considering the long-term implications, it can result in a lack of commitment from the promoted individuals. They may not genuinely identify with the organization's values and goals, leading to higher turnover rates and a lack of sustained engagement. 5. Limited Opportunities for Growth: Promoting people based solely on diversity may limit their opportunities for growth and development. When individuals are promoted without the necessary skills and experience, they may struggle to perform effectively in their new roles, hindering their career progression in the long run.

Also, there are no studies or evidence-based data that prove the following resolution:

“RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND...Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” is “an essential foundation for achieving the American Dream and fostering environments where all individuals have the freedom to be healthy, prosperous, and safe, and the opportunity to realize their full potential”.

In fact the information provided above clearly demonstrates that DEI does **not** provide the benefits that many claim it provides and actually causes discrimination, distrust and dissent by using diversity, rather than meritocracy, as the basis for fostering environments that encourage all people to pursue their dreams.

Maryland should **not** be “RESOLVED” to be a place that “...encourages local, State, and federal policymakers, educational institutions, workplaces, and other organizations to adopt and uphold DEI principles that promote inclusivity, protect freedom of expression, remove barriers, and provide equitable opportunities for all individuals to pursue their dreams...”

The whole DEI movement has been poorly conceived. It claims to be evidence-based, but it is anything but. There is a lack of data-anchored definitions. Instead, DEI efforts result in distrust and dissent and promote discrimination.

And finally, President Trump has cancelled DEI instruction in our schools in an Executive Order. This is just another attempt to continue DEI in our schools in direct opposition to President Trump's Executive Order, and it is **SOLELY** politically motivated and does **not** promote nor help all people achieve their American Dream.

Therefore, please **VOTE NO** on this Joint Resolution.

Thank you.

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother Of 3 and Maryland Resident