

Joint Statement from 12 Attorneys General: President Trump is Misleading the American People on Purpose of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Initiatives

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NEW YORK – New York Attorney General Letitia James and 11 attorneys general today issued a joint statement addressing President Trump’s recent executive orders purporting to dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) policies and programs – collectively referred to below as “DEIA”:

“President Trump’s executive orders are unnecessary and disingenuous. These orders have nothing to do with combatting discrimination. The Trump administration has longstanding civil rights laws at its disposal to combat real discrimination, and we would be willing partners if it chose to pursue this path. Instead, the administration is targeting lawful policies and programs that are beneficial to all Americans. These policies and programs are not only consistent with state and federal anti-discrimination laws, they foster environments where everyone has an opportunity to succeed. That is the opposite of discrimination.

“President Trump’s attack on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives undermines a simple and unassailable goal: to create fairer workplaces and opportunities for all to succeed. His baseless and offensive claims that these initiatives somehow contributed to the tragic plane crash this week are an insult to those who are grieving and the individuals serving in the military and air traffic control.

“As state attorneys general representing tens of millions of American workers, we strongly oppose the President’s attempts to weaponize decades-old policies, which have been supported by Democratic and Republican administrations alike, to combat historical inequities faced by underrepresented communities and the ongoing, insidious discrimination that still exists in our country.

“DEIA initiatives do more than prevent discrimination—they promote respect, understanding, and the celebration of diverse perspectives. This means ensuring that people of diverse races, backgrounds, and beliefs are present and valued in workplace and educational settings, that everyone receives fair treatment and equal access to opportunities, and that individuals or groups feel welcomed and supported in those settings. Inclusive employment practices such as expanded parental leave and flexible work arrangements acknowledge employees’ diverse needs, family constructs, and abilities.

“Contrary to President Trump’s assertions, the policies he seeks to end do not diminish the importance of individual merit, nor do they mean that employers are lowering their standards, hiring unqualified candidates, or engaging in race-and-sex-based preferences. DEIA initiatives simply ensure that there are fair opportunities for everyone, helping to maximize contributions from all employees and enabling businesses and organizations to succeed in their missions.

“As the chief law enforcement officers for our respective states, we are committed to enforcing federal and state civil rights laws to protect the rights of all our people against discriminatory practices. We condemn discrimination in any form, and we stand in strong opposition to the President’s recent orders and the misleading narrative he has pushed to justify them.”

Joining Attorney General James in issuing today's statement are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington.

Letitia James

New York State Attorney General