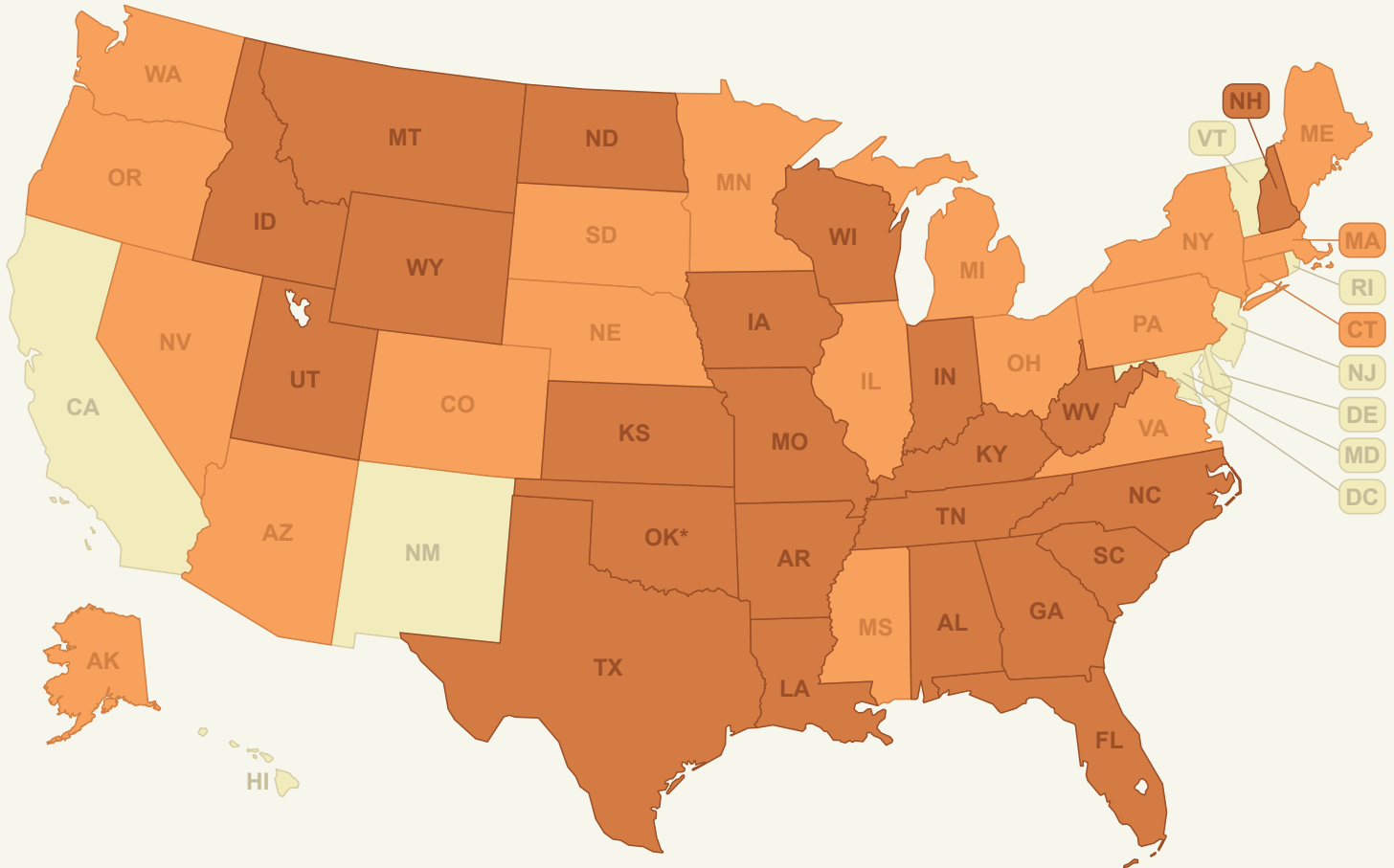


# DISMANTLING DEI: A COORDINATED ATTACK ON AMERICAN VALUES

July 2024



Legend:  
■ State has enacted at least one anti-DEI policy in 2023-2024 (23 states)  
■ State has introduced at least one anti-DEI bill in 2023-2024 (19 states)  
■ State has not introduced any anti-DEI bills in 2023-2024 (8 states + D.C.)

Note: Oklahoma's anti-DEI law is a 2023 executive order. All other states' anti-DEI policies are via legislation.

Sources: MAP original analysis and bill tracking, supported by 2024 data from APR Network and public tracking from multiple sources. See appendix for more information. Data as of June 15, 2024.



movement advancement project ▶

## This report was authored by:

### Movement Advancement Project

MAP's mission is to provide independent and rigorous research, insight, and communications that help speed equality and opportunity for all people. MAP works to ensure that all people have a fair chance to pursue health and happiness, earn a living, take care of the ones they love, be safe in their communities, and participate in civic life. For more information, visit [www.mapresearch.org](http://www.mapresearch.org).

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## FOREWORD

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the historic and groundbreaking Civil Rights Act of 1964. Yet, as we reflect on that incredible victory—and the hard work to advance civil rights in all spheres of public life that we at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights have been a part of since our founding in 1950—we must also defend the protections and progress we have made.

There are clear, coordinated, and powerful efforts to wage war on all of our civil rights and our democratic values. This report breaks down these efforts with hard numbers and sobering analyses to demonstrate the expanse of what we are up against. Opponents of progress seek to take us back to the 1950s, before the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Brown, Roe and Bostock. They are well-coordinated and well-resourced, and, despite their extremism and unpopularity, they are seeing some success at clawing back the progress of the last 75 years.

In education, their radical extremism wants to deny history and wage a war on learning, including teaching about this country's history of slavery and racism. They are fighting against educational opportunities that develop the critical thinking skills and values of diversity that support a vibrant and inclusive education and democracy itself. It is a war on books by and about people of color and LGBTQI people, and it is a war on our rights to determine our own identities and celebrate them.

In workplaces across the country, they are waging a war on private employers working to grow their businesses and the economy in proven ways, including DEI programs. Their efforts to ban DEI and related initiatives would lead to increased turnover, lower morale, public backlash, and more exposure to civil rights lawsuits, among other harms.

And they seek to gut government's ability to play its critical role in enforcing civil rights laws that have created progress for everyone, especially those most marginalized by historical and current day discrimination. The war on data collection and attending to disparities is tantamount to a war on science, inquiry, problem solving, and unity—and all these attacks together, if successful, would dramatically worsen existing inequities and undermine our nation's competitiveness and prosperity.

Those who look to rewind history to a time when discrimination ran rampant ask us to abandon our national principles, our national progress, and our shared future. We must remain steadfast in our support for DEI and the work it requires, so that we can face the challenges that still lie ahead.

Together, we will continue to work to ensure that no group of people is excluded from its promise of having a voice in our government, real economic, educational, and societal opportunities, and the ability to understand and solve our problems.

This sobering report identifies and charts the next steps for us to defend the progress we've made as a nation—and set a new course for advancing a more just and prosperous future for all.

Khalid Pitts  
Executive Vice President of Campaigns and Programs  
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights



## INTRODUCTION

Diversity, equity, and inclusion work, commonly referred to as DEI, is under attack in the United States. Today, DEI work generally refers to efforts to implement and support the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in places like government, schools, and the workplace. These initiatives and their underlying values are supported by the majority of Americans,<sup>1</sup> and they have existed in various forms for decades, if not centuries.<sup>2</sup>

And while these efforts have always faced opposition, recent years have brought renewed vigor and vehemence to this opposition. Today, far-right activists and conservative lawmakers across the country are working to politicize DEI initiatives meant to redress discrimination and inequity and instead falsely cast these initiatives as themselves discriminatory and inequitable. In 2023, for example, Florida governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill banning DEI initiatives in public colleges, claiming “DEI is better viewed as standing for discrimination, exclusion, and indoctrination.”<sup>3</sup> This is just one of many attempts to hijack the public’s understanding of and support for DEI, as part of a broader effort to severely limit how people and organizations across the country, including the government, can create a more inclusive and equitable environment for everyone.

These attacks are not limited to any one state, or any one tactic: as this report shows, over just the past two years alone, at least 42 states have introduced over 440 bills attacking DEI in many different ways, and over half (23) of those states have enacted at least one such law or policy in that time frame. Additionally, opponents of DEI are advancing numerous court cases designed to turn civil rights laws on their head, abuse civil rights enforcement mechanisms, and exploit established laws meant to protect vulnerable communities. They are also attempting to intimidate and spread misinformation through social media and public pressure or boycotts against organizations—both public and private—that engage in DEI work.

In other words, these attacks on DEI are widespread, coordinated, and ongoing, affecting millions of people across the country. And, importantly, these attacks on DEI are themselves part of an even larger, coordinated effort to restrict and control virtually every aspect of daily life.<sup>4</sup> From restrictions on healthcare and voting rights to censorship in classrooms and the halls of government, how we address the long-term, structural foundations of inequality and discrimination that continue to pervade

every aspect of life in the United States is under intense scrutiny and legislative pressure.

This report spotlights anti-DEI legislation and its targets, showing where these attacks have been focused and how lawmakers are crafting policies to ban or severely restrict DEI work and other efforts to address issues regarding identity and social justice. The report breaks down strategies opponents have used to target DEI within the government, education, and the private sector, and further demonstrates the harmful impacts these attacks have upon many communities. In addition, this report shows that Americans nationwide overwhelmingly support DEI values, despite these widespread counter efforts, and shows how people across the country are fighting back against these attacks.

## WHAT IS “DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION” WORK?

Today, and broadly speaking, diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”) is a term to describe common values, goals, policies, and/or practices that promote respect and understanding among different groups of people working together. In organizational settings—such as in government, schools, or businesses or workplaces—DEI is closely tied to an organization’s success and can impact an organization’s growth, ability to innovate, competitive advantage, and ability to attract and retain the best people from the widest possible talent pool.<sup>5</sup>

Although they are similar, diversity, equity, and inclusion are three distinct concepts. Diversity, equity, and inclusion ask, respectively, who is in the room, what they need to equally access opportunities, and how they can feel and be integrated in any given community.

- **Diversity** relates to the differences that are present throughout a space or an organization, such as within members, attendees, customers, staff, leadership, board of directors, and/or stakeholders. These differences can include personal characteristics—like race, gender, or disability—or can refer to unique experiences and backgrounds that inform the way an individual navigates and is received in society.
- **Equity** is about fairness and considers what additional support some people may need to be able to equally participate or thrive in a particular setting. Equity acknowledges that differences in identities and backgrounds require different resources to ensure that everyone has the same opportunity to succeed in an organization.

- **Inclusion** refers to a sense of belonging where all members of a community are welcomed without the expectation that they assimilate into the majority culture or mask their unique identity. An inclusive environment is one where diverse groups of people are respected, supported, and meaningfully integrated into an organization's mission.

Though distinct, these three overlapping values and considerations are guiding principles for a growing number of organizations and institutions across the country.

**While the history of working for a more equitable and inclusive United States is as long as the history of the country itself, the foundational initiatives of what we today call DEI date back to the Civil Rights Movement and several key legal advances.** The Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s sought to pass important protections against racial discrimination and to codify equal opportunity into law. One of these key legal advances won by the Civil Rights Movement and national organizing for racial justice was President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 10925, signed in 1961, which declared "it the plain and positive obligation of the United States government to promote and ensure equal opportunity for all qualified persons, without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin."<sup>6</sup> This order established a presidential committee on equal opportunity in employment and also required that government contractors "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin."

Affirmative action—which simply describes proactive efforts to ensure equal opportunity for all people—was not the only victory of the Civil Rights Movement. Later advances included the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which laid the groundwork for building a more equitable country by explicitly prohibiting segregation and discrimination—in other words, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion—in employment, education, housing, voting, and beyond. Similarly, many pieces of legislation that protect and promote civil rights, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, also work to enact DEI values in both the public and private sectors.

Core to many of these civil rights laws were provisions regarding data collection, reporting mechanisms for experiences of discrimination, and investigations into pervasive practices of discrimination. As a result, across the country, employers and educational institutions began to better understand the diversity of their

constituents and to implement programs to address discrimination, either conscious or unconscious, and to address discrimination through proactive trainings.<sup>7</sup>

Today, DEI practices can be found in the private sector, in education, and in government or public settings, and beyond. As discussed below, these practices can look different in each setting. Overall, however, DEI reflects a set of values or goals for building organizations and communities that are welcoming and supportive to all.

## In Government



The United States federal government is the largest single employer in the country, with a workforce that includes nearly 3 million positions.<sup>8</sup> State and local governments combined employ another nearly 20 million people,<sup>9</sup> collectively representing a significant share of the country's workforce. As a result, many of the government's DEI practices are in the context of employment, such as equitable and nondiscriminatory hiring practices, pay and promotion considerations, and professional trainings, ensuring that this vast workforce is properly equipped to perform their jobs well while interacting with and serving a diverse public.

Federal, state, and local governments also serve as a leading provider of public services, from operating public parks and transportation to providing vital veteran services, housing and healthcare services, and protecting our air, water, and civil rights. Governments also have vast procurement needs—meaning that they need support to successfully provide these services to the public—and as a result regularly do business with private companies, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and more. The government's DEI efforts can therefore also focus on ensuring that public places, programs, and services reflect the varying needs of a diverse population and partnerships with diverse vendors and organizations. Governmental DEI efforts often also focus on ensuring these programs and services are accessible to all, including individuals with disabilities, rural residents, and many more. This can include physical accessibility measures such as ramps, restrooms, and parking spaces, as well as other measures of access such as providing materials and programs in languages other than English. Similarly, the growing availability of online government services (such as driver's license services) is another representation of DEI values in action, working to make public services more easily available to those in rural areas or with unpredictable work schedules.

Beyond the employment and administrative practices of government, the actual policies and legislation that the government creates can also reflect DEI practices in action, such as legislation to prohibit discriminatory housing practices and ensure equal opportunity to all applicants, and other efforts to protect against identity-based discrimination in voting, employment, public places, and more. For example, the Americans with Disabilities Acts (ADA) protects the rights of people with disabilities, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces laws that prohibit discrimination. Recently, the EEOC updated its guidelines around gender identity, adding repeated misgendering to the definition of workplace harassment.<sup>10</sup>

As a result, federal, state, and local governments have long at least engaged with the underlying values of DEI, even if not named as such, as they are core to serving—and employing—a diverse public.

## In Education



Combating inequalities—another way to describe DEI work—in education has been a decades-long endeavor, marked by key victories like the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education*, a ruling that ended legal segregation in public school. Legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had sweeping impacts in education, establishing protections for students in both public primary and secondary schools and in higher education and contributing to the development of affirmative action programs.

As it related to college admissions, affirmative action upheld the idea that colleges and universities should consider race and ethnicity as a factor in the admissions process. Such race-conscious admission policies helped address barriers to education placed by structural racism like school segregation, both racial and gendered.

Over time, educational institutions have developed many different DEI-related practices. Today, DEI in education can relate to admissions or hiring practices to reflect the diversity of the population, the content of standardized curriculum, different teaching approaches for different learning styles, trainings for staff and faculty, recruitment efforts to attract diverse students, accommodations for people with disabilities, and support services offered to ensure student safety, well-being, and success across all backgrounds.

In higher education specifically, colleges and universities nationwide design policies and programs to build a campus culture where all students, faculty, and staff can thrive. Many colleges and universities have established offices and hired staff dedicated to Title IX compliance, addressing discrimination on campus, and responding to the unique needs and experiences of students of different backgrounds, such as first-generation or low-income students, veterans, racial minorities, women, and LGBTQ students. “Diversity statements” are another form of DEI work and are now a common part of applications for faculty positions and/or admission to college, asking candidates to describe how they might live, study, and work collaboratively in a diverse community. Statements offer insights into a prospective faculty candidate’s teaching philosophy as well as their experience incorporating diverse perspectives in their curriculum and research—important considerations for ensuring college campuses are safe and supportive environments for all students, staff, and faculty.

## In Business



In the business sector, DEI initiatives can take many forms, such as focusing on the work environment for employees; the customer experience; marketing materials that represent different communities; establishing policies aimed at reducing bias and discrimination; or a company’s role and engagement in the local community. These practices can include:

- **Employee trainings.** Educational trainings are often a part of the onboarding process for new employees. These trainings teach employees to promote an inclusive work environment by discussing topics relating to discrimination in the workplace. Such topics can include identity-based harassment, unconscious bias, and microaggressions against colleagues and customers.
- **Employee resource groups.** Commonly referred to as ERGs, employee resource groups are employee-led groups within an organization that serve as a network for employees with shared identities or interests. These groups offer resources regarding professional development, recruitment, advancement, and overall well-being of its members. They can also provide critical perspectives to their employer on everything from marketing and communications to product development, internal and external policies, brand reputation, community engagement, and crisis communications.

- **Diversifying suppliers and vendors.** As corporations have expanded into global markets, smaller suppliers are sometimes left out in sourcing markets. Since a rapidly growing share of small businesses are minority-owned,<sup>11</sup> diversifying the types of products that are stocked grants new opportunities for small businesses and improves the supply chain and economy overall.
- **Employee recruitment and retention.** In order to attract top talent, employers often gear their recruitment efforts toward diverse talent pools, adding variety to the types of applicants they hire. These recruitment efforts can include hosting information sessions at women's or historically Black colleges. Employers must also consider how to retain talent after hiring. Retention factors include access to growth within the organization as well as cultural competency in regards to onboarding to ensure all team members feel respected.

Whether in a small business or larger corporate setting, DEI values in the workplace intend to ensure that all employees can be themselves and do their best work without discrimination or barriers, and that customers and community members are similarly respected and supported.

## PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEI

The values driving DEI work are not only commonplace in our daily lives, but also are widely supported by a majority of the public. For example, a 2024 national Marist poll showed that 82% of American adults—including 69% of Republicans and 84% of Independents—think that the diversity of the U.S. population makes the country stronger.<sup>12</sup> And a 2024 national poll from The Washington Post found that 61% of U.S. adults say DEI programs are “a good thing”—a number that rose even further to 69% support when respondents were given a description of DEI.<sup>13,a</sup>

In the workplace specifically, DEI values have the support of business leaders, employees, and the general public. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2023, 56% of employed adults said that, in general, focusing on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion at work is mainly a good thing.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, that same 2024 Marist poll showed that fully 66% of U.S. adults supported required DEI training by their employers.<sup>15</sup> When asked about businesses taking active steps toward diverse representation, a 2023 Harris

## The Washington Post

**Most Americans approve of DEI,  
according to Post-Ipsos poll**

*(click to read more)*

poll showed that 78% of U.S. adults—including 75% of white adults—supported such efforts.<sup>16</sup>

Opponents of DEI argue that these practices suppress diverse viewpoints and will often use language like “woke” and “indoctrination” to cast these initiatives as covert political agendas that lack public support. However, these political buzzwords misrepresent these issues, mask public support, and often confuse those who actually support DEI-related efforts. For instance, a USA Today poll that surveyed Democrats, Republicans, and Independents found that only 41% of all respondents supported “teaching critical race theory in public schools.”<sup>17</sup> Yet, that figure rose to 72% support when the question was reframed to ask about “teaching the ongoing effects of slavery and racism in the United States in public schools.” Most notably, support among Republican respondents *more than tripled* when asked about teaching the ongoing effects of slavery and racism (46% of Republicans supported) rather than teaching “critical race theory” (15%).

DEI values relate to our shared humanity, and, as shown here, a majority of people support these values and practices.

**Research also shows that DEI initiatives work—and they benefit everyone.** The benefits of these initiatives have been widely documented by individuals, businesses, and communities nationwide.

In addition to promoting more supportive, tolerant, and innovative communities,<sup>18</sup> DEI initiatives are also beneficial to, for example, business success. A 2020 McKinsey study of over 1,000 large companies across 15 countries found that more diverse companies “are now more likely than ever to outperform non-diverse companies on profitability” and a wide variety of other performance metrics.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, a 2024 survey of 400

<sup>a</sup> Per *The Washington Post*: “Question lead-in without explanation is ‘...some companies have adopted diversity, equity and inclusion programs or “DEI programs.”’ Question lead-in with explanation is ‘...some companies have adopted programs to hire more employees from groups that are underrepresented in their workforce, such as racial and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities and to promote equity in the workplace.’ The latter version showed higher support.”



C-suite and hiring executives at large U.S. companies found that 94% of respondents said their DEI programs had a positive impact on recruiting, hiring, and retention.<sup>20</sup> Another 74% reported reputational improvements with both customers and the public.<sup>21</sup> These findings are further corroborated by the public: a 2023 Harris poll found that over 80% of U.S. adults agreed that diversity efforts lead to positive business impacts, including reaching a broader set of customers, innovation, and employee performance.<sup>22</sup>

At the employee level, DEI efforts like affinity groups or ERGs and DEI trainings are also beneficial. A 2023 Pew Research Center survey found that, among U.S. workers who have ERGs or DEI trainings in their workplaces, the majority said they both have had positive impacts on their workplaces.<sup>23</sup> The 2021 *Racial Bias in Retail Study*, commissioned by Sephora, corroborates these findings, showing that “three in five (61%) retail employees who

receive Diversity and Inclusion or Unconscious Bias Trainings believe such formal trainings are very, if not extremely, successful in reducing unfair treatment in their store.”<sup>24</sup>

Importantly, these efforts also have positive health benefits, especially for young people. In school settings, for example, LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum greatly improves the experiences and well-being of queer youth. GLSEN’s 2021 *National School Climate Survey* found that LGBTQ students in schools with LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum reported fewer experiences of bullying and harassment, higher school attendance, higher levels of self-esteem, and lower levels of depression and serious considerations of suicide.<sup>25</sup>

However, despite this broad public support and the numerous benefits of DEI, both DEI work and the very values it reflects are under widespread attack.



## The Importance of DEI in an Increasingly Diverse United States

DEI initiatives are important in representing the needs of a diverse country, and this is especially true as the United States’ population grows increasingly diverse, along many dimensions.

According to the 2020 Census, the American population is changing demographically. Nicholas Jones, Director and Senior Advisor of race and ethnic research in the Census Bureau, reported that “Our analysis of the 2020 Census results show that the US population is much more multiracial, and more racially and ethnically diverse than what we measured in the past.” The share of Asian, Hispanic, and multiracial populations all have grown since 2010.<sup>i</sup>

Similarly, as public acceptance of LGBTQ people has grown over time,<sup>ii</sup> the number of people publicly identifying as LGBTQ+ has more than doubled over the last decade: according to Gallup polling, this figure rose from 3.6% in 2013 to 7.6% of U.S. adults in 2023.<sup>iii</sup>

Moreover, up to 1 in 4 adults in the US have some type of disability,<sup>iv</sup> and disability rates are rising in no small part due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>v</sup> as well as increased understanding of and diagnosis of other conditions, including different forms of neurodivergence like ADHD and autism.<sup>vi</sup>

With the nation’s population changing so clearly and rapidly, efforts to promote inclusive environments across the board—in workplaces, schools, government, and more—are vital.

<sup>i</sup> Janie Boschma, et.al. August 2021. “Census release shows America is more diverse and more multiracial than ever.” *CNN*.

<sup>ii</sup> Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI). March 2024. “Views on LGBTQ Rights in All 50 States.”

<sup>iii</sup> Jeffrey M. Jones. March 13, 2024. “LGBTQ+ Identification in U.S. Now at 7.6%.” *Gallup*.

<sup>iv</sup> Center for Disease Control. 2023. “Disability Impacts All of Us.”

<sup>v</sup> Lily Roberts, et. al. Feb 9, 2022. “COVID-19 Likely Resulted in 1.2 Million More Disabled People by the End of 2021—Workplaces and Policy Will Need to Adapt.” Center for American Progress. See also The Federal Reserve Bank of New York’s “Long COVID Appears to Have Led to a Surge of the Disabled in the Workplace.”

<sup>vi</sup> Dougal Sutherland. April 2024. “More adults are being diagnosed as neurodivergent. Here’s how employers can help in the workplace.” *The Conversation*.

## THE ATTACKS ON DEI & THEIR HARMS

Though DEI work is widely supported, effective, and an important part of our nation's ongoing work toward a more equitable and inclusive country, conservative lawmakers and far-right extremists have attempted to redefine DEI as the antithesis of its goals. In 2023, Florida governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill banning DEI initiatives in public colleges, claiming "DEI is better viewed as standing for discrimination, exclusion, and indoctrination."<sup>26</sup> This is just one of many attempts to sabotage public support for DEI, as part of a broader effort to severely limit how people and organizations across the country, including the government, can create a more inclusive and equitable environment for everyone.

These attacks are not limited to any one state, or any one tactic. **As shown in *Figure 1*, in just the past two years alone, at least 448 bills across 42 states have been introduced attacking DEI in different ways, and more than half of those states (23) have enacted at least one of these laws.**<sup>b</sup> This illustrates the widespread and coordinated efforts to undermine not only DEI work across the country, but to attack the very values this work represents.

As discussed in detail in other research<sup>27</sup> and reporting,<sup>28</sup> these individual bills and other attacks on DEI are part of a larger, coordinated effort pushed and promoted by numerous far-right organizations to effectively eradicate DEI work entirely. What's more,

these attacks on DEI are themselves part of an even larger, similarly coordinated effort to restrict and control virtually every aspect of daily life, from restrictions on healthcare and voting rights to censorship in classrooms and the halls of government.<sup>29</sup> For more, see the spotlight on Project 2025 on page 9.

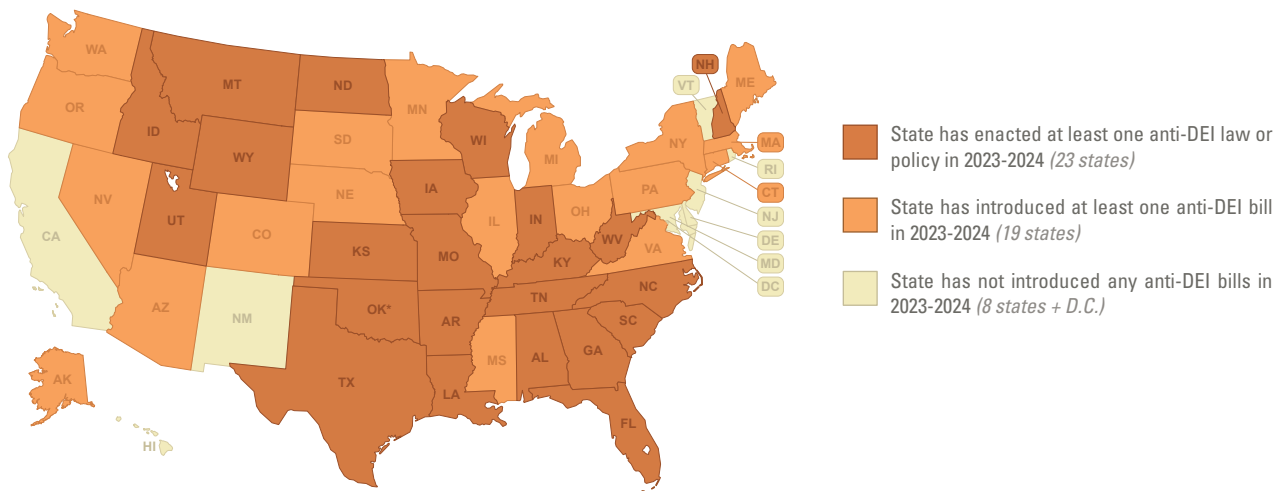
Legislative attacks on DEI take many forms, but share a common goal of banning or severely limiting any use of DEI or related considerations in as many areas of life as possible.



In **government settings**, DEI opponents are attempting to ban any taxpayer funds from being used for government-sponsored DEI programs or trainings, whether for the public or for government employees. These attacks also attempt to ban anti-discrimination and affirmative action practices in hiring and other employment decisions. Many of these attacks especially focus on the financial practices of state government, attempting to ban DEI—or the related term, "environmental, social, and governance" (ESG) standards—from even being considered, let alone used, in government contracting decisions or in how the state invests money (such as through state pension or retirement funds).

<sup>b</sup> One state, Oklahoma, enacted a ban on DEI through a 2023 executive order. The remaining 22 states' policies were all via legislation.

**Figure 1:** Since 2023, 23 States and Counting Have Enacted Anti-DEI Laws of Different Kinds, and Nearly All States Have Introduced Such Attacks



Note: Oklahoma's anti-DEI law is a 2023 executive order. All other states' anti-DEI policies are via legislation.

Sources: MAP original analysis and bill tracking, supported by 2024 data from APR Network and public tracking from multiple sources. See appendix for more information. Data as of June 15, 2024.



In **education**, DEI opponents have long attacked efforts like affirmative action (and, unfortunately, with increasing success), and these recent legislative attacks are no exception. Many of these bills would ban the consideration of race and many other characteristics in hiring, but also in program offerings, student or employee support services, and much more. Recent bills also attempt to restrict both K-12 schools and higher education from any trainings or discussions of issues such as racism, homophobia, or gender discrimination and to undermine efforts to ensure students reflect the broader diversity of the country.



And in **private business settings**, legislative attacks would, at least in certain circumstances or for certain businesses, limit the ability of private companies to offer services or products that integrate DEI or ESG values, or to otherwise use DEI or ESG considerations in their own internal business practices. Many, though not all, of these bills tie these restrictions to whether the business receives public funds or contracts with the government—creating further financial disincentives to engage in important DEI work.

As shown in *Figures 2a and 2b*, these anti-DEI bills vary widely in their scope, and commonly apply across multiple sectors, such as both government and private

businesses in the same bill. For example, while 26% of these 2023-2024 bills targeted DEI in education only (Figure 2a), that number rises to at least 35% when including bills that also targeted DEI in both education and at least one other setting (Figure 2b).<sup>c</sup>

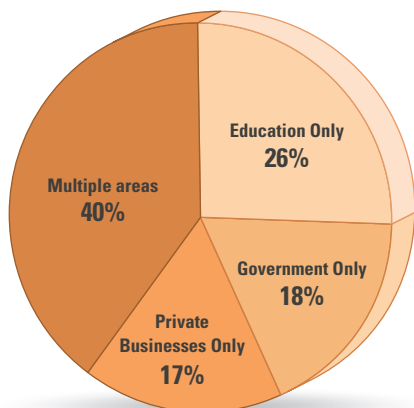
**Additionally, opponents of DEI are advancing numerous court cases designed to further dismantle existing DEI or anti-discrimination tools, as well as leveraging public pressure or attempted boycotts against organizations—both public and private—that engage in DEI work.** Particularly following the 2022 Supreme Court decision striking down affirmative action in college admissions, lawsuits against other DEI practices are increasing in number,<sup>30</sup> and many are targeting private businesses. While many of these lawsuits have been unsuccessful,<sup>31</sup> many others remain in progress, and the rise in such cases illustrates the ongoing and coordinated effort to attack DEI across many sectors and using many legal or political tools.

Although opponents are attempting to rebrand DEI practices as discriminatory—rather than the actual purpose of DEI practices, which is to build equitable, thriving environments where people from a variety of backgrounds can thrive—these coordinated legislative and legal attacks intend to downplay the challenges

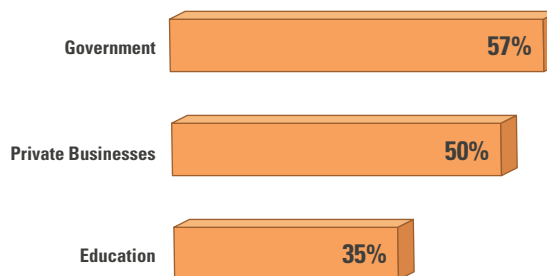
<sup>c</sup> Importantly, this report only coded bills as affecting education if the bill explicitly referred to education, but because the public education system is part of the government, the true impact on DEI in education is likely higher than represented here.

**Figure 2: Anti-DEI Bills Vary in Scope But Would Have Far-Reaching Impacts**  
% of anti-DEI bills in 2023-2024, by what sector they attempt to restrict

**Figure 2a: Anti-DEI Bills Vary in Scope, but the Plurality Apply Across Multiple Sectors**



**Figure 2b: The Majority of Anti-DEI Bills Would Explicitly Restrict Government and At Least Some Private Businesses**



Note: Numbers in Figure 2a may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Numbers in Figure 2b do not sum to 100 because bills could apply to multiple sectors. “Government only” bills may also affect DEI efforts in public education. However, for this report, bills were only coded as affecting public education if they explicitly referred to education. Therefore, this is a minimum estimate of the number of anti-DEI bills that would impact public education.

Sources: MAP original analysis and bill tracking, supported by 2024 data from APR Network and public tracking from multiple sources. See appendix for more information. Data as of June 15, 2024.

many Americans face in the halls of government, schools, places of business, and the workplace. In doing so, opponents promote an exceedingly narrow viewpoint of both history and today's world, creating environments less suited to address the needs of a diverse public. And, as discussed next, these attacks have already had concrete harm on many people across the country.

## In Government



Even though the government serves an increasingly diverse public, efforts toward providing more equitable and inclusive government services and programs are under direct attack. In recent years, a growing number of both state and federal bills that would ban government from spending any money on DEI-related trainings for staff and even in programs for the broader public have been introduced. Other related bills would also ban the government from considering ESG standards in its own investing and/or contracting practices, and still other bills attack DEI in government settings in other ways.

**Since 2023, at least 256 bills have been introduced attacking DEI in different government settings, and as shown in *Figure 3* on the following page, 20 states now have at least one law that restricts or bans DEI practices in different government settings.**

These attacks vary widely in scope, but generally attack at least one of the following expressions of DEI work in government settings.

- **Banning public funds for DEI programs or trainings.** These efforts attempt to ban any taxpayer funds from being used for government-sponsored DEI programs or trainings, including for public employees. Depending on the bill's language, these might apply only to specific government agencies, or broadly throughout an entire state government, local governments, and any other agency or department of the state. But with millions of employees across local, state, and federal governments—many of whom interact directly with the public, across every type of background and identity—trainings are critically important tools for ensuring that government services are equitable and inclusive for everyone.
- **Banning affirmative action and non-discrimination policies.** These attacks also attempt to ban not only affirmative action practices in hiring and other employment settings, but also non-discrimination policy itself. By banning even the consideration of characteristics such as race, gender, disability, and more, these bills would severely limit the ability of the government to ensure its workforce and



### Project 2025's Agenda to Dismantle Progress, End DEI, and Radically Restructure Society Itself

The growing attacks on DEI are part of a much larger, longer-term, and coordinated effort attacking progress across virtually every aspect of life. Nowhere is that coordinated effort and motivating vision laid out more plainly than in "Project 2025," a radical social and political agenda designed by far-right extremist organizations—but unfortunately being supported and pursued by many elected officials across the country and many levels of government.

The 2025 Presidential Transition Project, or Project 2025 for short, is a collection of policy recommendations that aims to build "a conservative victory through policy, personnel, and training."<sup>vii</sup> This collection of policies lays the groundwork for a radical overhaul of American society and government, including dramatic attacks on DEI efforts and more—all in preparation for a potential second Trump presidency. This nearly 900-page policy playbook proposes a number of extraordinarily troubling positions, including granting nearly unchecked power to the executive branch in an effort to enact wide sweeping control over virtually every aspect of life.

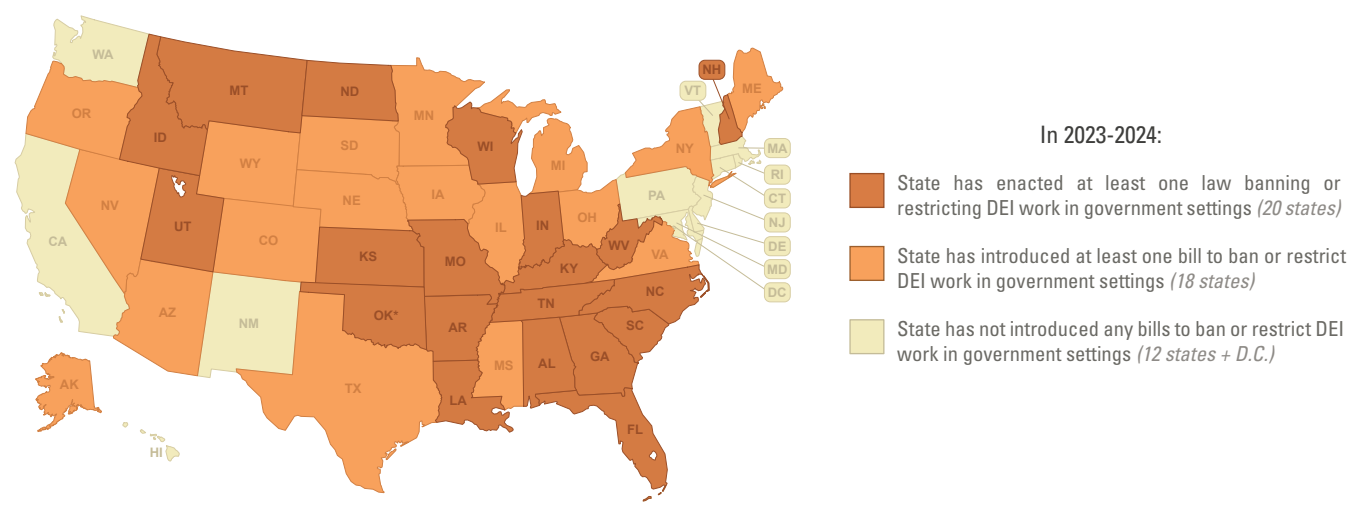
Regarding DEI, the Project's mandate is clear: "deleting the terms sexual orientation and gender identity ('SOGI'), diversity, equity, and inclusion ('DEI'), gender, gender equality, gender equity, gender awareness, gender-sensitive, abortion, reproductive health, reproductive rights...out of every federal rule, agency regulation, contract, grant, regulation, and piece of legislation that exists."<sup>viii</sup> As Russ Vought, a former Trump official, explained, "Getting rid of critical race theory from federal agencies, diversity, equity and inclusion policies, unconscious bias—we are certainly going to have ideas and proposals ready for a possible new administration."<sup>ix</sup>

<sup>vii</sup> The Heritage Foundation. 2023. *Project 2025 Presidential Transition Project*.

<sup>viii</sup> Kevin D Roberts. 2023. *Forward: A Promise to America*. Project 2025.

<sup>ix</sup> Jessica Guynn. March 3, 2024. "Trump tried to crush the 'DEI revolution.' Here's how he might finish the job." *USA Today*.

**Figure 3:** Since 2023, 20 States and Counting Have Banned or Restricted DEI in Government Settings, and Three-Quarters of All States Have Introduced Such Attacks



Note: Oklahoma’s anti-DEI law is a 2023 executive order. All other states’ anti-DEI policies are via legislation.  
 Sources: MAP original analysis and bill tracking, supported by 2024 data from APR Network and public tracking from multiple sources. See appendix for more information. Data as of June 15, 2024.

service providers reflect the needs, experiences, and expertise of the public the government is supposed to serve and serve equally.

- **Banning DEI or ESG considerations in government contracts and/or investments.** Perhaps the most common tactic (at least for now) is targeting the financial practices of state government by attempting to ban DEI—or the related term, “environmental, social, and governance” (ESG) standards—from even being considered, let alone used, in government contracting decisions or in how the state invests its money (such as state pension or retirement funds). One bill in New Hampshire would even make it a felony crime to violate such a proposed ban, with up to 20 years in prison.<sup>32</sup>

Although DEI initiatives are primarily associated with people, they can also include socially and environmentally conscious financial practices. For decades, individuals, organizations, and the government have considered social and environmental impacts from financial practices like investing. These considerations are referred to as “environmental, social, and governance” (ESG) standards, and can include prioritizing investments in U.S.-based, veteran-owned, or minority-owned companies, not investing in environmentally harmful practices like mining or oil production, and other strategies. The government oversees considerable amounts of money, including investing and managing pension and retirement funds for government employees, as well as in awarding contracts to private

New Hampshire’s HB1267 (2024) would make it a felony crime, with up to 20 years in prison, to violate a proposed ban on the use of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in state investments.

companies to carry out public projects (like highways and infrastructure improvements) and sometimes to provide public services (like child welfare services, disaster relief, certain food pantries, and more). As a result, in some cases, the government may also consider ESG standards in its investing and contracting decisions, to minimize harm and maximize public good.

Bills targeting DEI or ESG in government financial practices would prohibit such considerations in government contracts, investing, and/or other financial decisions—and in many cases, also impose similar bans on any private company as a condition of receiving a government contract or other public funds.

**These state legislative attacks mirror broader attacks at the federal level** that take particular aim at dismantling DEI trainings and ESG-informed financial practices, attempting to push a narrative that stigmatizes such work as “divisive, anti-American propaganda.”<sup>33</sup>

In 2020, the Trump administration issued an executive order that suspended diversity and inclusion programs throughout the federal government and among government contractors.<sup>34</sup> This order specified particular language in diversity trainings, censoring any and all mentions of words like intersectionality, white privilege, positionality, and unconscious bias.

**These attacks have had widespread harm.** Under Trump's 2020 rule, agencies and contractors needed to suspend or drop their diversity programs altogether in order to remain compliant.<sup>35</sup> The Trump administration also directed the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)—effectively the government's human resources agency—to punish supervisors who approved diversity trainings, effectively restricting and targeting DEI efforts in the workplace.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which enforces laws prohibiting discrimination, was limited in its ability to investigate discrimination cases.<sup>37</sup>

This strategy to reframe DEI as a divisive and discriminatory concept is a trend that continues to permeate anti-DEI legislation today. While Trump's executive order was overturned by the Biden administration in 2021, and replaced with an order promoting DEI initiatives for the federal workforce,<sup>38</sup> anti-DEI efforts remain widespread at every level of government—and now presidential candidate Donald Trump continues to threaten to “terminate every diversity, equity, and inclusion program across the entire federal government” if reelected.<sup>39</sup>

## In Education



Combating inequalities in education has been a decades-long endeavor, marked by key victories like the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education* and The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which had sweeping impacts in education. Yet, over time, opponents of what we today call DEI corroded these protections and pursued litigation in efforts to dismantle affirmative action and other inclusive policies.

This long-term goal to eliminate affirmative action saw many legal battles, at both the state and federal levels, over the last 50 years. In 1996, California voters approved Proposition 209, an affirmative action ban that amended the state's constitution to prohibit considerations of race, sex, or ethnicity in admissions. In 2006, a ballot initiative called Proposal 2 in Michigan banned race-conscious

admissions. As courts have become more hostile to civil rights, opponents have been able to bring legal challenges against affirmative action. In 2008, *Fisher v. the University of Texas at Austin*, a case that argued affirmative action discriminated against white applicants, moved its way through the court system before being remanded back to the lower courts, where a 4-3 decision narrowly upheld race-conscious admissions. However, after decades of efforts to change the composition of the Supreme Court, affirmative action in higher education was finally limited in June 2023 when the Supreme Court rejected the admission policies at Harvard and the University of North Carolina.

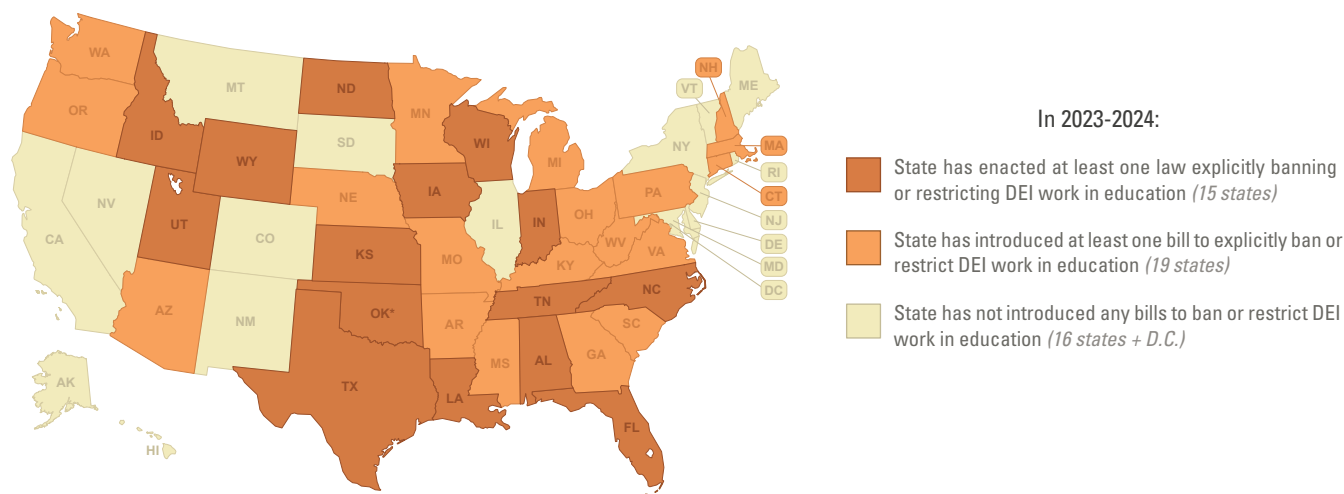
This sustained, and eventually successful, legal onslaught against affirmative action in education paved the way for a new wave of challenges and legislative attacks, both on affirmative action in the workplace (as discussed in the next section) and on broader inclusive practices and diversity, equity, and inclusion in education and beyond.

**Since 2023, at least 157 bills explicitly attacking DEI in education have been introduced across 34 states, and as shown in *Figure 4* on the following page, at least 15 states have enacted such laws.**

These bills vary from state to state, but generally take aim at DEI offices and staff roles, trainings, diversity statements, and more—particularly in higher education.

- **Banning public funds for school DEI offices, staff, programs, or trainings.** These efforts attempt to ban any public funds from being used by schools or institutions of higher education for any DEI offices, programs, or trainings, whether for staff, teachers or faculty, or students. Such wide sweeping bills have led in some states to closures of entire university centers or departments and the loss of hundreds of jobs, as discussed below. As with similar bans in government settings, the fact that public schools and colleges are directly responsible for educating and interacting with millions of people across the country, from every background and identity, such offices, trainings, and programs are critically important tools for ensuring an inclusive and successful educational environment for all students.
- **Banning non-discrimination policies.** Now that court battles have effectively banned race-conscious admissions, current legislative attacks are attempting to further ban even the consideration of characteristics such as race, gender, and more, in both admissions and hiring. These bills would severely limit the ability of schools and colleges

**Figure 4:** Since 2023, 15 States and Counting Have Banned or Restricted DEI in Education, and Two-Thirds of All States Have Introduced Such Attacks



Notes: Oklahoma's anti-DEI law is a 2023 executive order. All other states' anti-DEI policies are via legislation. Other bills attacking DEI across government broadly may also affect DEI in public education. However, for this report, bills were only coded as affecting public education if they explicitly referred to education. Additionally, this map does not include bills that attack only curriculum, such as efforts to ban or restrict the teaching of critical race theory or "divisive concepts." As a result, the true scope of attacks on DEI in education is even broader than shown here. Sources: MAP original analysis and bill tracking, supported by 2024 data from APR Network and public tracking from multiple sources. See appendix for more information. Data as of June 15, 2024.

to ensure their workforce reflects the needs and experiences of both their student bodies and the broader community these institutions serve.

- Banning diversity statements.** Diversity statements are a standard part of applications for admission to colleges and universities, as well as for faculty positions. These statements ask candidates to describe how they approach the values of DEI, including how they may live, study, and work collaboratively in a diverse community. Statements offer insights into a prospective faculty candidate's teaching philosophy as well as their experience incorporating diverse perspectives in their curriculum and research. However, many bills attacking DEI in education explicitly target such statements. At least nine states, including Indiana, Iowa, and North Dakota have passed explicit bans on diversity statements.<sup>40</sup> These bill radically redefine the meaning and purpose of these statements; a bill that passed in Kansas defines them as "pledging allegiance" to "any political ideology or movement, including a pledge or statement regarding diversity, equity, or inclusion."<sup>41</sup> A bill that passed in Florida derides these statements as a "political loyalty test," banning "a statement of personal belief in support of any ideology that promotes the differential treatment of a person or group of persons based on race or ethnicity, including an initiative or a

formulation of diversity, equity, and inclusion."<sup>42</sup> The overt politicization of diversity statements in these bills wrongly categorizes DEI as an indoctrinating ideology rather than a set of practices that support community members.

**These legislative bans have caused widespread disruptions across university programs and student life on college campuses.** Public universities in states that have passed these bans have closed down DEI offices that offer critical resources for students.<sup>43</sup> Other resource centers and offices have needed to rename their offices and audit their existing services in order to remain compliant, excluding words like diversity, sexuality, or gender from their titles.<sup>44</sup> In Texas alone, more than 100 jobs have been cut from state universities following the state's recent ban on DEI, including notable closures of decades-old offices supporting students of color, LGBTQ students, and more.<sup>45</sup>

Student activities and organizations also suffer under these laws. Funding that would otherwise support cultural events, professional development opportunities, mentor services, and graduation celebrations have been gutted by these bans.<sup>46</sup> Students at the University of Alabama report losing out on funding and financial aid opportunities geared toward students of color.<sup>47</sup> Described as "the only scholarship offered specifically for Latino and Indigenous students," the National Recognition Scholars program was discontinued by the

university.<sup>48</sup> College athletics must also reconsider their approach to recruiting diverse talent, as these laws place new pressures on recruitment efforts and the scholarships that support student athletes.<sup>49</sup> And while anti-DEI laws might suggest they make room for intellectual diversity, they actively censor campus curriculum and speakers.<sup>50</sup> LGBTQ author Paige Schilt had her speaking engagement canceled at the University of Texas at Austin after being informed by the university's legal team that the lecture was considered DEI training under the state's new law.<sup>51</sup> These legislative attacks hurt students, who like Gen Z as a whole, are more diverse than past generations, and encroach on the free speech of faculty, staff, and speakers to engage in meaningful dialogue.

**Alongside attacks on DEI in higher education are ongoing and related attacks on diverse and inclusive curriculum itself**, including in K-12 settings. In 2023, PEN America tracked 110 bills that were introduced that would censor or restrict curriculum about race, LGBTQ people, and much more. For example, many bans take aim at "critical race theory" or, even broader, "divisive concepts," which can include any discussion of race, sex, bias, privilege, and more.<sup>52</sup> Banning these concepts from classrooms makes it difficult for educators to navigate honest conversations and truthful instruction about American history, such as slavery, segregation, or efforts to prevent or deter people of color from voting. Positive discussions, such as the vital contributions of people of color and LGBTQ people to American history, would also be censored by these attacks on curriculum, books, and schools more broadly. And faculty are feeling the

pressure. According to the 2023 State of American Teacher Survey, about two-thirds of public school teachers from kindergarten through grade 12 have limited their instruction on political and social issues in the classroom.<sup>53</sup> In higher education, 7% of LGBTQ+ faculty surveyed by the Williams Institute reported omitting topics previously covered and have decreased the amount of classroom discussion in response to anti-DEI laws.<sup>54</sup>

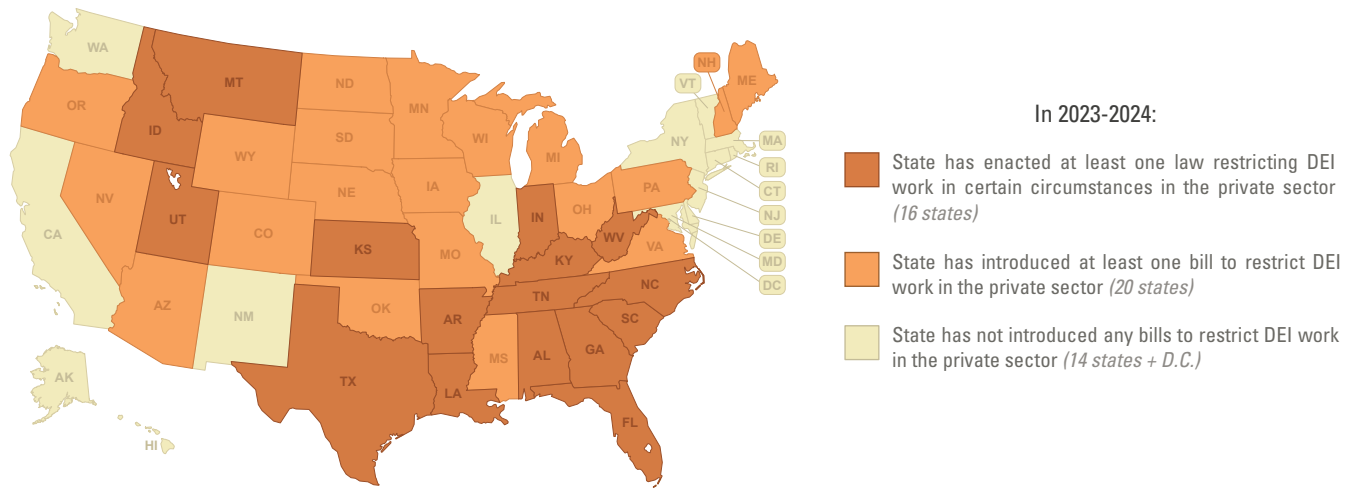
## In Business



Despite the fact that workers and the public alike support DEI efforts in business and the workplace, as discussed earlier, these same efforts are also being attacked. Proposed bills in dozens of states would, at least in certain circumstances or for certain businesses, limit the ability of private companies to offer services or products that integrate DEI or ESG values, or to otherwise use DEI or ESG considerations in their own internal business practices. Beyond these legislative attacks, opponents' social media pressure, attempted boycotts, and more often hyper-fixate on private businesses' inclusive merchandising (such as Pride or Black History Month campaigns) and other efforts to promote inclusive stores and customer experiences or socially responsible business practices.

**Since 2023, at least 226 bills explicitly attacking DEI or ESG in private businesses have been introduced across 36 states, and, as shown in *Figure 5*, at least 16 states have enacted such laws.**

**Figure 5:** Since 2023, 16 States and Counting Have Restricted DEI in Certain Circumstances in Private Businesses, and Nearly Three-Quarters of All States Have Introduced Such Attacks



Sources: MAP original analysis and bill tracking, supported by 2024 data from APR Network and public tracking from multiple sources. See appendix for more information. Data as of June 15, 2024.



These attacks again vary from bill to bill, but these bills generally take at least one of the following approaches.

- **Ban or restrict private banks and financial institutions from using DEI or ESG considerations.** These efforts specifically target financial institutions like banks, credit unions, and insurers, and either ban them from using DEI or ESG-related considerations in their products (such as investment offerings, mutual funds, etc.), or require that they get consumer consent before providing such a service. Unlike the bill types that follow, these bills apply across these private companies, irrespective of whether they have government contracts or manage public funds.
- **Ban or restrict private companies that receive government contracts or manage government investments from using DEI or ESG.** These bills are related to earlier bills that restrict the government's own use of DEI or ESG, such as banning the use of public funds for DEI initiatives or banning the use of ESG considerations in state investments. Some of those bills also impact private businesses because they extend those same bans on to any private company that receives a government contract or other types of public funding. Some of those bills also require that any private company that manages or advises on public investments—such as state pension or retirement funds—must also follow the government's ban on ESG considerations, even in what *advice* the private company may offer to the government on its investments.

- **Ban or restrict private companies that receive government contracts from engaging in “economic boycotts.”** Through broad and unclear definitions of “boycotts,” these bills attempt to economically censor private companies by punishing their own internal business decisions relating to DEI or ESG considerations. For example, these bills would ban a state government from awarding contracts to a private construction company if that private company prioritizes working with vendors or subcontractors that use environmentally friendly materials. The rationale used by lawmakers is that this prioritization of an environmentally friendly contractor amounts to a “boycott” of other, less-environmentally-friendly companies. The same logic applies to private businesses’ decisions about DEI-related values or practices. Importantly, private companies would only be allowed to receive a contract if they pledge in writing that they do not engage in such “boycotts” and further that they commit to not doing so during the length of the government contract. While a circular and confusing approach, these bills clearly attempt to censor private companies’ decisions about DEI and ESG standards in their own business practices—and are likely using the government contract angle as a strategy to lessen the chance of these laws being struck down as unconstitutional (see the Spotlight on the “Stop WOKE Act”).

**These state level attacks again mirror federal level efforts.** For example, a Trump-era rule made it harder for private companies to offer or use ESG-based



## The “Stop WOKE Act”

In 2022, Florida enacted HB 7, also known as the “Stop WOKE Act.” The law effectively banned DEI-related trainings, programs, and curricula in both schools and private workplaces, and attempted to censor discussions of race and history more broadly.

Later that same year, a court ruled that the law was unconstitutional and that it violated the First Amendment. In early 2024, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals—an historically conservative federal circuit court—upheld this ruling, agreeing that its restrictions on private businesses were unconstitutional.

Perhaps as a result of this law’s business restrictions being so quickly ruled unconstitutional, most of the bills in 2023-2024 (as covered in this report) focused more narrowly on financial institutions and/or private businesses that receive government contracts or manage public funds—in other words, private businesses or circumstances where the state has more clear legal authority to interfere. However, this “Stop WOKE Act” still illustrates the broader and ultimate goal of opponents of DEI: to eradicate these initiatives everywhere possible.

investment funds for retirement plans.<sup>55</sup> Similar bills are under consideration in the U.S. Senate, and while the Biden administration rescinded that Trump-era rule, now candidate Trump has again announced plans to reinstate the rules in an even stricter form if he is reelected in 2024.<sup>56</sup>

**Beyond legislative attacks, opponents of DEI are also deploying a number of strategies that impact workplaces and private businesses across the nation,** including with respect to hiring practices. This strategy gained traction in the summer of 2023 after the Supreme Court overturned affirmative action in higher education, a decision that effectively ended race-conscious admission programs for all colleges and universities.<sup>57</sup> This decision emboldened DEI opponents to pursue similar restrictions on businesses and corporations.

One month after the Supreme Court ruling, a group of Republican attorneys general penned a letter addressed to the CEOs of Fortune 100 companies, some of the biggest companies in the country.<sup>58</sup> Representing 13 states, this attempt at intimidation threatened legal action against companies suspected of considering race in their hiring practices and ongoing goals for diversifying their own workforces with qualified candidates from different backgrounds and experiences. These and other similar threats are attempting to make DEI efforts effectively illegal under the ironic guise of fighting racial discrimination.

Another increasingly noticeable strategy is through social backlash and attempted boycotts, such as the recent example of online backlash to Bud Light. After Bud Light sponsored a single Instagram post with transgender activist Dylan Mulvaney in April 2023, the company—and Dylan herself—experienced a vocal, often explicitly transphobic backlash and attempted boycott of the brand.<sup>d</sup> The company's efforts to save face drew even more criticism as it attempted to distance itself from transgender inclusion in marketing materials, stating, "We never intended to be part of a discussion that divides people."<sup>59</sup> This fumble and the double-sided political pressure demonstrate how attacks on DEI can disincentivize businesses and corporations from DEI work and from civic engagement more broadly.

**What's more, private companies are also facing other forms of political retaliation, including from state governments,** as illustrated by the ongoing targeting of Disney by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. In March 2022, Disney voiced opposition to the state's bill commonly known as the "Don't Say Gay" bill that prohibits any

mention of sexual orientation or gender identity in classrooms. As a result, the state government retaliated by revoking Disney's self-governing privileges, among many other forms of retaliation and attempted silencing.<sup>60</sup> The ensuing and ongoing legal battle demonstrates how opponents to DEI will mobilize lawsuits in order to encroach on free speech, attempting to muzzle dissent from businesses and corporations and silence their engagement. Support for DEI often meets consumer demands, meaning brands, like Disney, are being punished not only for engaging in social conversations, but also for trying to make their business successful.

**These many attacks on businesses and corporations have had clear and harmful impacts in the private sector.** Opponents of DEI have, at least for now, effectively increased the perceived legal risks for businesses engaging in conversations around basic values like inclusion, let alone broader social and political issues. Businesses must navigate a fine line between legal retaliation and overcompliance, scaling back DEI efforts more than is required and placing them out of compliance with existing anti-discrimination laws. Moreover, these attacks attempt to regulate how businesses operate, including how they spend their funds and design a company culture that fosters inclusion and innovation. As a result, many companies across the board have eliminated some or even all roles dedicated to overseeing DEI practices, a sharp decline in comparison to the nearly 169% growth in hires between 2019 to 2022 as reported by LinkedIn.<sup>61</sup> A 2023 Morning Consult survey of business leaders showed that 24% of respondents had discontinued or modified a training program and 12% reporting they reduced the headcount for DEI staff functions (i.e. layoffs and role eliminations).<sup>62</sup> However, and as discussed next, many businesses are in fact doubling down on their DEI efforts and values.

<sup>d</sup> While there was widespread reporting of Bud Light's apparent loss of revenue from that specific beer, often attributed to this boycott effort, Bud Light's parent company nonetheless posted a nearly \$32 billion gross profit that year—an increase from the previous year.

## HOW DEI SUPPORTERS ARE FIGHTING BACK

As discussed earlier, a majority of U.S. adults support the values of DEI generally, and have found these initiatives to have positive impacts in a variety of ways. And while attacks on DEI might be on the rise, these efforts are not supported by the public. Fully two-thirds (66%) of Americans—including 52% of Republicans—oppose banning corporations from requiring DEI training, according to a 2023 USA Today poll.<sup>63</sup>

Similarly, whether in government, schools, or businesses, supporters of DEI initiatives outnumber the opponents that push these attacks, and these attacks have been met with resistance.

For instance, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights recently joined forces with over 140 other civil rights, education, economic justice, and labor organizations across the country to urge the Biden administration to support and protect DEI efforts in the government and nationwide.<sup>64</sup>

Educators in states that have passed anti-DEI laws remain steadfast in their commitment to teaching about topics deemed divisive. From professors who highlight DEI on their syllabi to campus leaders reaffirming their commitment to DEI in open letters in Florida, Texas, and elsewhere, institutions of higher education continue to fight for their DEI efforts.<sup>65,66</sup> Student athletes have decided to take their skills elsewhere, with the NAACP urging Black athletes to “reconsider any potential decision to attend, and compete at a predominantly white institution in the state of Florida,” a direct response to anti-DEI efforts in the state.<sup>67</sup>

Despite facing intimidation tactics, business leaders have also pushed back against anti-DEI attacks. For example:

- A 2023 Morning Consult poll surveyed 325 business leaders and found that many were undeterred by legislative efforts to stifle inclusivity.<sup>68</sup> When asked about the actions they took in response to the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action and letter from the 13 state attorneys general threatening similar practices in the workplace, 63% of respondents said they increased their overall commitment to diversity as a corporate objective.

- In addition, a 2024 survey found that 72% of the 400 C-suite and HR leaders polled were *enhancing* their DEI programs over the next 24 months.<sup>69</sup>
- In the retail sector, over 78 signatories have signed the Mitigate Racial Bias in Retail Charter, an initiative of the nondiscrimination program Open to All and global cosmetics retailer Sephora, which aims to bring retailers together to create a welcoming retail experience for all.<sup>70</sup>

Additionally, businesses, corporations, nonprofits, and more are mobilizing to strengthen their support for inclusive practices and banding together as they find their voice in social and political conversations affecting employees and customers alike. Resources are also emerging to help dispel misinformation regarding DEI practices and offer support for organizations navigating this difficult political climate. For example, Open to All—a nonprofit coalition of over 200 nonprofits and 750,000 businesses across the country—recently published a playbook on DEI for businesses, as pictured below, outlining the business and customer case for embracing inclusive practices and addressing skewed narratives about DEI and its impacts on customers, employees, businesses, and society.<sup>71</sup>



## CONCLUSION

Despite widespread support, the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion—and how they are brought into government, educational institutions, and workplaces—have become incredibly debated topics. However, as opponents attempt to redefine these words and morph their intent into politicized narratives, the basic definition of these words should be remembered. Recognizing differences, ensuring fairness, and creating a sense of belonging are practices that build strong relationships and communities. These concepts bring people closer together, regardless of narratives that insist that they divide us. The coordinated attacks on these practices are designed to confuse, scare, and polarize people in order to erase the social progress of the last 50 years. Thankfully, community leaders in education, businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies are coming together to protect a vision of this country where everyone belongs. It is a future worth protecting, and one that includes all of us.

## APPENDIX

This table shows only enacted anti-DEI/ESG legislation from 2023 to 2024 only, as covered in this report. This list does not include passed but vetoed bills (or line-item vetoed provisions) in Arizona, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Anti-DEI/ESG Policies Enacted in 2023-2024					
State	Legislation	Year	Government	Education	Private Sector
Alabama	<a href="#">SB 261</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">SB 129</a>	2024		✓	
Arkansas	<a href="#">HB 1253</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">HB 1307</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">HB 1845</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">SB 62</a>	2023	✓		✓
Florida	<a href="#">H 3</a>	2023	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">H 931</a>	2023		✓	
	<a href="#">H 1645</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">S 266</a>	2023		✓	
	<a href="#">S 1382</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">H 989</a>	2023			✓
	<a href="#">H 1291</a>	2024			✓
	<a href="#">H 1301</a>	2024			✓
Georgia	<a href="#">HB 481</a>	2024	✓		✓
Iowa	<a href="#">SF 2435</a>	2024		✓	
Idaho	<a href="#">H 190</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">H 191</a>	2023	✓	✓	
	<a href="#">H 734</a>	2024		✓	
	<a href="#">S 1274</a>	2024		✓	
Indiana	<a href="#">HB 1008</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">SB 202</a>	2024		✓	
Kansas	<a href="#">HB 2100</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">HB 2105</a>	2024		✓	
	<a href="#">HB 2436</a>	2024	✓		✓
	<a href="#">SB 291</a>	2024	✓		✓
	<a href="#">SB 455</a>	2024	✓		

(Table continued on next page)

## Anti-DEI/ESG Policies Enacted in 2023-2024

(continued)

State	Legislation	Year	Government	Education	Private Sector
Kentucky	<a href="#">HB 236</a>	2023	✓		✓
Louisiana	<a href="#">HCR 59</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">HCR 70</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">HCR 110</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">HCR 78</a>	2024	✓	✓	
	<a href="#">HR 267</a>	2024	✓		✓
	<a href="#">HB 904</a>	2024		✓	
	<a href="#">SB 234</a>	2024	✓		✓
	<a href="#">SB 439</a>	2024	✓		
Missouri	<a href="#">HR 12</a>	2023	✓		
Montana	<a href="#">HB 228</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">HB 356</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">HJ 11</a>	2023	✓		
North Carolina	<a href="#">H 750</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">S 364</a>	2023	✓	✓	
North Dakota	<a href="#">HB 1429</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">SB 2247</a>	2023		✓	
New Hampshire	<a href="#">HB 457</a>	2023	✓		
Oklahoma	<a href="#">Executive Order 2023-31</a>	2023	✓	✓	
South Carolina	<a href="#">H 3690</a>	2024	✓		✓
Tennessee	<a href="#">HB 158/SB 102</a>	2023		✓	
	<a href="#">HB 1286/SB 955</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">HB 1376/SB 817</a>	2023		✓	
	<a href="#">HB 2100/SB 2148</a>	2024			✓
	<a href="#">HB 2784/SB 2501</a>	2024		✓	
Texas	<a href="#">HB 1</a>	2023		✓	
	<a href="#">SB 17</a>	2023		✓	
	<a href="#">SB 833</a>	2023			✓

(Table continued on next page)

Anti-DEI/ESG Policies Enacted in 2023-2024 <span style="float: right;">(continued)</span>					
State	Legislation	Year	Government	Education	Private Sector
Utah	<a href="#">HB 281</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">HB 449</a>	2023			✓
	<a href="#">SB 96</a>	2023	✓	✓	
	<a href="#">SB 97</a>	2023	✓		✓
	<a href="#">SCR 9</a>	2023	✓		
	<a href="#">HB 261</a>	2024	✓		✓
Wisconsin	<a href="#">AJR 109</a>	2024	✓	✓	
West Virginia	<a href="#">HB 2862</a>	2023	✓		✓
Wyoming	<a href="#">HB 1</a>	2024		✓	

## Notes on Methodology

Bills were identified through MAP original tracking, with support on 2024 bills provided by the [APR Network](#). MAP also reviewed and integrated relevant bills from:

- Chronicle of Higher Education's [DEI legislation tracker](#)
- Ed Trust's "[Anti-DEI Efforts Across the U.S.](#)" dashboard
- Pleiades Strategy's [Anti-ESG State Action Tracker](#)
- Plural Policy's "[DEI Policy Developments in 2023](#)" brief
- Plural Policy's "[ESG Legislation in the First Six Months of 2023](#)" brief
- And other relevant news coverage.

Bills were coded as having anti-DEI/ESG provisions if at any point in the bill history it had such a provision, even if it was later amended out or removed. Similarly, bills were coded as affecting a particular setting (government, education, private businesses) if at any point in the bill history such a provision existed, even if it was later amended out. Bills are included if anti-DEI/ESG provisions are included in the bill, even if not the sole focus of the bill.

Importantly, the true count of bills attacking DEI in education is likely much higher than reported here for at least two reasons. First, bills attacking DEI across government broadly may also affect DEI in public education. However, for this report, bills were only coded as affecting public education if they explicitly referred to education. Second, this report does not include bills that attack only curriculum, such as efforts to ban or restrict the teaching of critical race theory or "divisive concepts," "Don't Say LGBTQ" laws, and other forms of curriculum censorship. Curriculum censorship is another widespread and important, but distinct, form of attacks on the values of DEI. Such bills are only included in this report if they would also ban or restrict DEI in the forms of trainings, programs, hiring practices, and so on. As a result, the true scope of attacks on DEI in education is even broader than shown here.

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