



# Department of Justice

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**STATEMENT OF  
HARMEET K. DHILLON  
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL  
CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION**

**BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**AT A HEARING ENTITLED  
“ENDING ILLEGAL DEI DISCRIMINATION & PREFERENCES:  
ENFORCING OUR CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS”**

**PRESENTED  
JULY 23, 2025**

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Good afternoon, Chairman Schmitt, Ranking Member Welch, and other distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I am honored to appear before you today to present testimony on ending illegal racial discrimination and preferences through vigorous enforcement of our federal civil rights laws. As this Subcommittee has jurisdiction over civil rights related matters,<sup>1</sup> I look forward to working with you to ensure we successfully dismantle all forms of invidious racial discrimination from our society, including that found in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) programs.

On January 21, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order (“EO”) 14173, titled “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.”<sup>2</sup> EO 14173 stated that “race- and sex-based preferences under the guise of so-called” DEI “violate the text and spirit of our longstanding Federal civil-rights laws” and “undermine our national unity.” DEI initiatives reflect a set of illegal practices that unlawfully discriminate against, classify, exclude from participation, or deny benefits to individuals based on their race, sex, or other prohibited characteristics, all in violation of federal civil rights laws. Accordingly, EO 14173 announced that “[i]t is the policy of the United States to protect the civil rights of all Americans” against illegal DEI initiatives.

Enforcement of that policy has now been delegated to me. I had the honor of being confirmed by this body for my current role on April 3, 2025, and sworn in four days later on April 7. I reached the milestone of my first 100 days in office just last week. As the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, and under the leadership of Attorney General Pam Bondi, I have been busy implementing President Trump’s bold agenda for ending DEI in all forms alongside the dedicated attorneys in the Civil Rights Division. I would like to highlight some of that work for you today.

The Civil Rights Division has taken steps to end DEI in the education space in many ways. Here are some examples:

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittees (visited July 22, 2025), <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/about/subcommittees>.

<sup>2</sup> Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity, Exec. Order No. 14173, 90 Fed. Reg. 8633 (Jan. 31, 2025).

**First, Ending DEI-based Discrimination and Abuse in Universities:** As a result of multi-faceted investigations into illegal, DEI-based discrimination, harassment, and abuse at major, so-called elite universities and colleges, the Civil Rights Division is now engaged in collaborative resolution efforts with a number of prominent private and public institutions of higher learning to end all DEI programs and preferences throughout those schools, including law, medical, nursing, and other specialty disciplines.

**Second, Ending DEI-based Antisemitism in Universities:** The Civil Rights Division is actively engaged in numerous investigations into prominent, so-called elite colleges and universities regarding antisemitism and antisemitic abuse on campuses resulting in collaborative resolution efforts designed to end antisemitism on college campuses nationwide.

**Third, Ending DEI-based Racial Discrimination in Admissions at Colleges, Law Schools, Medical Schools, and Selective Public High Schools:** In April 2025, the Civil Rights Division began opening admissions investigations into the top schools as ranked by U.S. News and World Report undergraduate programs in the United States. By April 30, 2025, the Division opened DEI in admissions investigation matters into 50 major universities by sending letters requesting any changes to admissions processes post-*SFFA v. Harvard*. The Division also has opened admissions investigations into 16 top law schools and seven medical school programs. The Civil Rights Division also is actively engaged in several investigations involving allegations of racial discrimination in admissions at selective public high schools.

**Fourth, Ending DEI-based Sex Discrimination and Harassment at High Schools and Higher Education:** The Civil Rights Division is engaged in several lawsuits and several investigations into Title IX discrimination regarding the rights and safety of women and girls in the classroom, athletic fields of competition, and in dormitories and facilities. As a result of the Civil Rights Division's efforts, numerous institutions have reversed course regarding these issues.

**Fifth,** the Civil Rights Division has opened a formal investigation into the University of California regarding discriminatory hiring practices based on race and sex under UC's "2030 capacity plan."

Beyond the education context, the Civil Rights Division has also taken action in various employment-related matters:

**First,** on July 10, 2025, the Civil Rights Division sent a notice of investigation to the state of Minnesota regarding a Title VII investigation into the state's hiring and employment practices. State policies appear to require agencies to engage in race- and sex-based hiring, in violation of Title VII. That investigation is ongoing.

**Second,** on May 5, 2025, the Civil Rights Division sent a notice of investigation to Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) seeking information as to whether MPS is discriminating against majority-group teachers in favor of underrepresented groups when conducting layoffs. The Division sent a request for information on June 24, 2025. This investigation is ongoing. The Civil Rights Division also initiated an investigation of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office (HCAO) regarding its policy to require race-based decision-making in plea deals. The investigation pursuant to the Department's authority under 34 U.S.C. Sec. 12601 is ongoing, though HCAO has refused to cooperate.

**Third,** the Division has launched investigations into the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and Providence Public Schools into whether they are using illegal DEI in violation of Title VII.

Further, the Division has opened a formal investigation into the Rhode Island State government regarding its affirmative action plan that sets race-based hiring goals across Rhode Island State government. On July 7, Rhode Island notified my Division that it has declined to make officials available for interviews or to submit documents responsive to our requests for information. We are assessing our next steps to ensure compliance with Title VII.

**Fourth**, the Civil Rights Division has opened a formal investigation into the City of Chicago regarding racially discriminatory hiring practices across city-government. That investigation too is ongoing.

Again, these are just some examples of actions we have taken towards ending DEI in my first 100 days in office. They are just a small fraction of the Civil Rights Division's extensive portfolio. And so much more is coming. Every day my team assesses new, creative ways to combat all forms of invidious racial discrimination. From diligently pursuing investigations, to drafting and filing lawsuits, the Civil Rights Division strives to protect the civil rights of all Americans against illegal DEI initiatives.

In his famous dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), Justice John Marshall Harlan penned the noble line that the "law regards man as man, and takes no account of his surrounding or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved." Nearly one hundred and thirty years later, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson echoed this sentiment in *Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services* (2025) when she wrote that the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination against "any individual," because of "such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin."

There is still plenty of work we must do to fully end DEI. While the Division's jurisdiction is governed by statute, it has eagerly worked with the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and the heads of the other Executive Branch departments and agencies to combat illegal DEI initiatives and to uphold the civil rights of all Americans. With these efforts underway, the choice is clear: either DEI will die itself, or we will kill it.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present some of the Division's accomplishments under the leadership of Attorney General Pam Bondi, and to present the road ahead. I look forward to exploring ways to bolster the Division's enforcement authority so that we can carry out President Trump's agenda and completely root out DEI in all its forms. I look forward to answering your questions.