



March 5, 2025

The Honorable John F. Kennedy  
*President Pro Tempore*  
321 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Harold Jones, II  
*Minority Leader*  
121-B State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Honorable Steve Gooch  
*Majority Leader*  
421-F State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Senator Kennedy, Senator Gooch, and Senator Jones:

On behalf of the undersigned Georgia civil rights and educational equity organizations, we write to express our opposition for Senate Bill 120, which removes diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies, principles, practices, and programs from K-12 schools and institutions of higher learning. As organizations that promote civil rights and equal educational opportunities, we know firsthand the importance of proactive measures, like DEI policies, to address unfair barriers to educational opportunities. Public educational institutions must be able to engage in these efforts to ensure the promise of equality and opportunity for everyone. We urge you to continue supporting DEI principles in education, along with strong funding and oversight to ensure effective implementation.

K-12 and higher education institutions that prioritize DEI initiatives produce graduates better equipped to succeed in diverse workplaces and contribute to an increasingly more complex and global economy. Upholding these policies is crucial to remedy racial disparities in educational attainment and to ensure that all students, regardless of background, have the resources and opportunities to excel. If implemented well, these policies help ensure that students from underrepresented and underserved communities have equal access to academic opportunities; that educators and administrators have the tools to promote inclusive learning environments; and that all students feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to success for the benefit of all.

Because Georgia has a large population of students of color and low-income students, banning DEI practices could have devastating consequences. Students from historically marginalized

groups may face reduced access to programs designed to address the unfair disadvantages they face within the public educational system. Moreover, students who benefit from scholarships, internships, training programs, and mentorships supported by DEI initiatives could lose these opportunities, potentially widening existing racial gaps in attaining academic achievement. DEI programs in schools, colleges, and universities allow educators to provide targeted services to the students who need them the most. Thus, eliminating these programs may reduce retention and graduation rates that will only aggravate existing disparities.

Black, Latino, Asian American, and Indigenous people; women; LGBTQIA+ people; and people with disabilities continue to encounter discrimination in various aspects of their daily lives, including their education. These unfair barriers have had a cumulative effect over the years, ultimately limiting American innovation, stunting the growth of our economy, and weakening the foundations of our democracy. Fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility benefits all of us.

We urge you to reaffirm the core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These principles are essential for fostering a just and equitable society that reflects our nation's values and helps us sure that all individuals have equal opportunity to achieve the American Dream and reach their full potential. We urge you to vote against this harmful legislation.

As members of the Georgia legislature, you play a significant role in defending against these attacks and promoting policies and practices that ensure that all Georgians can lead successful lives, contribute to their communities, and fully participate in the American economy. Your leadership on this issue will demonstrate to the people of Georgia, the United States and the world that diversity, equity, and inclusion are values we aspire to and commitments we reaffirm through meaningful action. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information regarding this harmful legislation. We look forward to your leadership on this critical issue and stand ready to work with you to achieve our common goals to advance educational equity in Georgia's public educational institutions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please reach out to Hamida Labi (hlabi@naacpldf.org), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
Urban League of Greater Atlanta  
Georgia Educators for Equity and Justice  
Georgia Youth Justice Coalition  
Intercultural Development Research Association  
Georgia Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda  
Southern Poverty Law Center

cc: Georgia Senate