

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Affirming that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are fundamental values of the United States and emphasizing the ongoing need to address discrimination and inequality in the workplace, pre-K through 12th grade and higher education systems, government programs, the military, and our society.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. HIRONO submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Affirming that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are fundamental values of the United States and emphasizing the ongoing need to address discrimination and inequality in the workplace, pre-K through 12th grade and higher education systems, government programs, the military, and our society.

Whereas everyone should have the opportunity to achieve the American Dream, and it is too often out of reach for hardworking and talented individuals due to discriminatory barriers to opportunity;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives address discriminatory barriers to opportunity and ongoing discrimination;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives allow everyone to access equal opportunity and are not unlawful quotas;

Whereas, for 6 decades, Presidents of both major political parties have supported diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives to strengthen the workforce, expand opportunity, and ensure everyone has a fair shot at achieving the American Dream;

Whereas diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are broadly popular;

Whereas polling shows that over 70 percent of people in the United States, including majorities of White, Black, Latino, and Asian American populations, support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives;

Whereas data from the Department of Labor, the Bureau of the Census, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Survey of Consumer Finances, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Bipartisan Policy Center, the Urban Institute, the Brookings Institution, the Pew Research Center, Citi Group, the KFF Survey on Racism, Discrimination, and Health, the GLSEN National School Climate Survey, McKinsey & Company, and numerous other sources show that Black, Latino, Asian American, and Indigenous people, women, LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities experience persistent segregation, exclusion, and discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, access to capital and financial services, housing, and other sectors, which demonstrates the necessity for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility practices, policies, and programs;

Whereas disability-based discrimination constitutes more than half (53.26 percent) of all housing discrimination complaints filed with fair housing organizations and government agencies;

Whereas, for the past several years, disability has continued to be the top basis of discrimination reported under the Fair Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.), representing 5,128 complaints filed with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and its Fair Housing Assistance Program partners in fiscal year 2023;

Whereas less than 5 percent of housing nationwide is accessible to individuals with moderate mobility difficulties, and less than 1 percent of housing is accessible for those who use wheelchairs;

Whereas approximately 32 percent of adults with disabilities have reported unfair treatment in healthcare settings due to their disabilities or other personal characteristics;

Whereas, in 2023, only 22.5 percent of people with disabilities were employed, compared to 65.8 percent of those without disabilities;

Whereas students with disabilities frequently receive insufficient support, resulting in lower graduation rates and limited career opportunities;

Whereas Black and Latino homebuyers—

(1) have been steered toward or away from certain neighborhoods, which impacts their ability to buy homes in their preferred areas;

(2) face appraisal discrimination, which diminishes their wealth by undervaluing their property; and

(3) are more likely than White homebuyers to receive costly subprime mortgages, even when their financial situations are comparably qualified;

Whereas these disparities highlight systemic issues in the housing market that disproportionately disadvantage Black and Latino communities, emphasizing the need for ongoing efforts to address and rectify discriminatory lending and appraisal practices;

Whereas the racial wealth gap has widened in recent decades, with Black and Latino households experiencing significantly lower average net wealth than White households;

Whereas, while White households hold 86.8 percent of the overall wealth of the United States, they only account for 68.1 percent of the total households in the United States, and in comparison, Black and Hispanic households hold 2.9 percent and 2.8 percent of the overall wealth of the United States, respectively, while accounting for 15.6 percent and 10.9 percent of the United States population, respectively;

Whereas nearly 30 percent of LGBTQ+ people have encountered discrimination, including being denied or discouraged from buying or renting a home, being denied loans, being physically and verbally harassed, and having landlords refuse to provide maintenance;

Whereas people of color have faced significant discrimination in healthcare, impacting access to care, treatment quality, health outcomes, and trust in medical institutions;

Whereas this discrimination has led to disparities in treatment, access, health outcomes, and social determinants of health;

Whereas racial biases result in inadequate pain management, misdiagnoses, and higher maternal and infant mortality rates, particularly among Black and Indigenous women;

Whereas historical injustices contribute to deep mistrust in the medical system, affecting participation in clinical trials and preventive care;

Whereas environmental racism, lack of culturally competent mental health services, and unequal access to quality healthcare further worsen health disparities;

Whereas healthcare discrimination negatively impacts the lives of LGBTQ+ people;

Whereas 1 out of 5 transgender people have been turned away from healthcare, and more than 60 percent of LGBTQ+ adults have had a negative interaction with a healthcare provider, such as being blamed for their health challenges, being ignored, and being denied pain medications;

Whereas, for LGBTQ+ people, these experiences cut across racial lines;

Whereas Black, Indigenous, and Latino students continue to experience discrimination in the pre-k through 12th grade and higher education systems that create barriers to accessing and completing a quality education;

Whereas Black students and Indigenous students are disproportionately disciplined in schools and excluded from classrooms, feeding a pipeline to prison and disengagement from school, particularly for Black girls, who are 4 times more likely to be suspended, 4 times more likely to be expelled, and 3 times more likely to have the police called on them in school, compared to White girls;

Whereas 1 in 5 Black students and 1 in 4 Latino students experience discrimination on college and university campuses;

Whereas most students who are parents while attending higher education identify as Black, Indigenous, and Latino, and they face a variety of barriers to graduation while learning in schools that do not consider their parenting responsibilities;

Whereas LGBTQ+ students face hostility and discrimination in educational settings, which negatively impacts their success in schools;

Whereas more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of LGBTQ+ students feel unsafe at school due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of LGBTQ+ students have missed school as a result;

Whereas occupational segregation of Black workers into lower-paid jobs and less lucrative industries persists despite an increase in the number of Black people with college degrees over the previous 20 years;

Whereas Black, Latino, Asian American, and Indigenous workers are over represented in dangerous jobs with worse pay and fewer benefits due to ongoing occupational segregation;

Whereas, in 2023, the wage gap widened for the first time in 20 years, with women working full-time, year-round jobs receiving 83 cents for every dollar paid to men while that number was 84 cents in 2022, and Black women experienced a more severe backslide;

Whereas, in 2023, Black women working full-time, year-round jobs were paid 66 cents for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men, compared to 69 cents in 2022;

Whereas Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women were paid 97 cents, Latinas were paid 58 cents, and Native women were paid 58 cents for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men;

Whereas women at all education levels experience a wage gap compared to their male counterparts;

Whereas a Latina with a professional degree stands to lose over \$2,900,000 over her lifetime due to the wage gap;

Whereas Native women working a full-time, year-round job must get a bachelor's degree (typical pay of \$58,113) to be paid more than White, non-Hispanic men working a full-time, year-round job with a high school diploma (typical pay of \$50,976);

Whereas disabled women also face a pay gap;

Whereas a disabled woman working a full-time, year-round job is paid 68 cents for every dollar paid to a non-disabled man;

Whereas studies reveal wage disparities for LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly for transgender and bisexual people;

Whereas data shows LGBTQ+ workers earn about 90 cents, transgender men earn 70 cents, and transgender women earn 60 cents for every dollar that all full-time workers are paid;

Whereas approximately 40 percent of Black workers, 25 percent of Asian workers, and 20 percent of Latino workers report experiencing discrimination or being treated unfairly by an employer in hiring, pay, or promotions because of their race or ethnicity;

Whereas women continue to face discrimination in the workplace, and many women of color experience the dual burden of race and sex discrimination at work;

Whereas 1 recent study found that 40 percent of working women experience sexual harassment on the job;

Whereas some studies indicate that as many as 60 percent of women have experienced workplace sexual harassment, and in some industries, that number is as high as 90 percent;

Whereas women also continue to face occupational segregation, limiting their access to higher paying careers across the spectrum;

Whereas, in the skilled trades, women make up just 3.9 percent of the workforce;

Whereas, in private law firms, just 18 percent of associates are women of color, only 28 percent of partners are women, and just over 5 percent of partners are women of color;

Whereas, in corporate management generally, women still make up just 29 percent of C-suite positions;

Whereas, despite legal protections guaranteed by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) and the Supreme Court's ruling in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 590 U.S. 644 (2020), many LGBTQ+ individuals still encounter workplace discrimination, including being fired, denied promotions, or harassed due to their sexual orientation or gender identity;

Whereas 1/2 of LGBTQ+ adults and 70 percent of transgender workers reported experiencing some form of workplace discrimination or harassment;

Whereas LGBTQ+ workers of color and LGBTQ+ workers with disabilities report experiencing workplace discrimination at higher rates than LGBTQ+ workers who do not identify as people of color or people with disabilities;

Whereas discriminatory lending practices, barriers to funding, and limited access to capital make it difficult for Black, Latino, and Asian American entrepreneurs to start or expand businesses;

Whereas venture capital firms reject Black-owned businesses at 3 times the rate of their white counterparts;

Whereas Black women receive less than 0.35 percent of all venture capital funding despite Black people making up 14.2 percent of the United States population;

Whereas Latino small business owners experience similar barriers to access to funding;

Whereas racial disparities exist in government contract awards;

Whereas firms owned by people of color receive a smaller share of contracting dollars than their representation among available firms;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2023, Black-owned businesses secured approximately \$9,990,000,000 in Federal contracts, representing less than 1.3 percent of the total amount awarded by the Federal Government;

Whereas, in fiscal year 2023, Latino-owned small companies received roughly \$10,900,000,000 in Federal contracts, and Asian American-owned businesses were awarded \$9,000,000,000 in Federal contracts out of \$774,000,000,000 in Federal contracts;

Whereas the persistence of discrimination in the United States limits our innovation and productivity, weakens our economy, and undermines our democracy;

Whereas the failure to effectively address growing inequality has decreased economic mobility rates in the United States and made the American Dream more elusive regardless of talent or hard work;

Whereas the Federal Government is responsible for addressing discriminatory barriers to opportunity in the United States by increasing and enhancing initiatives that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and enforcing anti-discrimination laws;

Whereas, according to an analysis by Citi Group, disparities for Black people across the economic system of the United States from 2004 to 2024 have cost the United States economy \$16,000,000,000,000;

Whereas studies show that companies with workforces that are diverse on multiple levels, including by race, are more innovative, productive, and profitable;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives can address disparities and reduce labor shortages in high-demand industries like technology, healthcare, and finance, ensuring that the United States can compete in the global marketplace;

Whereas the United States is best served when the Federal workforce reflects the talent and contributions of people from all backgrounds;

Whereas career pathway programs, investment in Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other minority-serving institutions, access to financial aid, expanding access to apprenticeship and

job skills training programs, offering mentorship opportunities, and other solutions help talented individuals overcome barriers to opportunity;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives are crucial in ensuring fair and comprehensive access to core services for all communities, whether in education, healthcare, employment, or government programs;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives ensure that core services are designed to meet the diverse needs of all populations, especially historically underserved or marginalized communities;

Whereas, without an equity lens, systemic barriers, such as cost, transportation, and a lack of culturally competent services, may prevent some groups from accessing essential resources;

Whereas government agencies and organizations that integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility principles develop policies that intentionally reduce disparities in service accessibility;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility-focused transportation policies could ensure rural communities and individuals with disabilities have equal access to public transit;

Whereas a diverse workforce in service-oriented fields, such as education, healthcare, and social services, leads to better understanding and responsiveness to community needs;

Whereas inclusion training can reduce biases that might otherwise result in service denial or discrimination;

Whereas qualified students and workers who benefit from scholarships, internships, training programs, and

mentorships supported by diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives could lose these opportunities, potentially widening existing disparities;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives in schools, colleges, and universities help foster inclusive environments and support underrepresented students;

Whereas eliminating these initiatives may reduce retention and graduation rates among underrepresented groups;

Whereas companies and organizations may struggle to recruit and retain skilled, diverse workforces, which could potentially affect innovation, productivity, and competitiveness;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives bring down costs in several ways through reduced turnover and hiring costs and better decision making;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives help mitigate the risk of discrimination lawsuits by helping to ensure equal opportunity and workplace cultures of respect;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives often support small minority- and women-owned businesses through procurement goals and funding, and their elimination could hinder such businesses' growth and success;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts and policies in healthcare ensure culturally competent and bias-free care and address social determinants of health, such as housing and food security;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts and policies in healthcare promote culturally competent

providers who understand and respond to diverse patient needs;

Whereas language access services, including qualified medical interpreters and translated materials, ensure that patients can receive quality care in their primary language;

Whereas expanding Medicaid, subsidies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 124 Stat. 119), and community-based healthcare programs assists uninsured and underinsured populations in obtaining necessary medical services;

Whereas implicit bias in healthcare results in racial and socioeconomic disparities in treatment, as evidenced by Black women facing higher maternal mortality rates than the general population;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility-informed training equips medical professionals to recognize and mitigate biases, ensuring equal treatment and fostering patient trust;

Whereas diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives in healthcare often address disparities in access and outcomes for marginalized communities and assist individuals benefitting from community programs focused on equity in housing, nutrition, and mental health;

Whereas these and other initiatives that advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility promote equal access to opportunities and resources, foster an environment of respect and belonging, ensure that every individual, regardless of background, can fully participate in all aspects of society, and are essential to creating a culture where all individuals are valued and included;

Whereas President Donald Trump’s Executive orders on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility represent a regressive step, undermining decades of progress toward equal opportunity in the United States, and misconstrue the fundamental purpose of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts;

Whereas the idea that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives do not consider merit is a false and harmful narrative that misunderstands both concepts;

Whereas, rather than lowering standards, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives ensure that merit is measured in ways that are more accurate, inclusive, and aligned with real-world potential, benefitting schools, workplaces, and society at large;

Whereas, contrary to the Trump administration’s claims, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives are not about preferential treatment or quotas but leveling the playing field;

Whereas dismantling these programs disregards the persistent inequalities that necessitate their existence and signals a troubling departure from the commitment of the United States to civil rights and equal opportunity for all; and

Whereas attacks on initiatives that advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility make the United States less prosperous, fair, and safe: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) affirms its commitment to—

1 (A) diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessi-
2 bility as essential foundations for achieving the
3 American Dream; and

4 (B) fostering environments where all indi-
5 viduals have the freedom to be healthy, pros-
6 perous, and safe, the opportunity to realize
7 their full potential, and the right to be equal
8 members of our multiracial democracy; and

9 (2) encourages local, State, and Federal policy-
10 makers, educational institutions, workplaces, and
11 other organizations to adopt, uphold, and promote
12 inclusivity, expand diversity and accessibility, remove
13 barriers, and provide equitable opportunities for all
14 individuals to pursue their dreams, which, in turn,
15 benefits all people.