



**Thank you for joining us.  
The webinar will begin soon.**

# Before We Begin

- **All attendees are in listen-only mode.** If you run into any audio issues during the webinar, please try another method of listening in, such as computer audio or calling in by phone.
- All registrants and attendees will receive a link to the recorded version of this webinar in a follow up email.
- If you have questions during the presentation, **please let us know by typing your question into the Q&A panel.** We will address these at the end of the presentation.



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Kaleb L. Briscoe, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Mississippi State University. Dr. Briscoe's research problematizes oppressed and marginalized populations within higher education through critical theoretical frameworks and qualitative methodological approaches.

Dr. Briscoe's work has been published in the Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, Journal of College Student Development, Higher Education Research and Development, Journal of International Students, and Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice.

She received her Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies with a concentration in Educational Leadership and Higher Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She holds a Master of Science in Student Affairs and Higher Education from Indiana State University (ISU) and a Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science in Business Marketing from Albany State University (ASU).





# Strategies for Navigating the Current Political Climate and Resistance to DEI



# Our Time Together

Participants will be able to:

- Define and articulate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and how these concepts, initiatives, and programs are necessary for postsecondary education.
- Describe the challenges affecting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in higher education, including an overview of practices, policies, and rhetoric used by higher education leaders and policymakers that impede progress in inclusion.
- Identify key strategies to respond to resistance to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the current political climate and support faculty, staff, and students.
- Prepare faculty, staff, and students to push back on anti-DEI attacks while creating equitable and welcoming spaces.

- Across the country, state lawmakers are proposing bills to limit diversity, equity, and inclusion at state-funded institutions, which has been triggered by the current political climate resistance.
- The bills could impact a wide range of higher education initiatives, from defunding DEI offices and officers to removing diversity statements from hiring practices.
- More than 20 states in the U.S. have either proposed anti-DEI bills or could be in the process of drafting them.
- Organizations such as the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE, 2022) have shared that they have no position on state funding for administrative DEI efforts, as this does not technically undermine academic freedom.



# Introduction



# What Is Diversity?

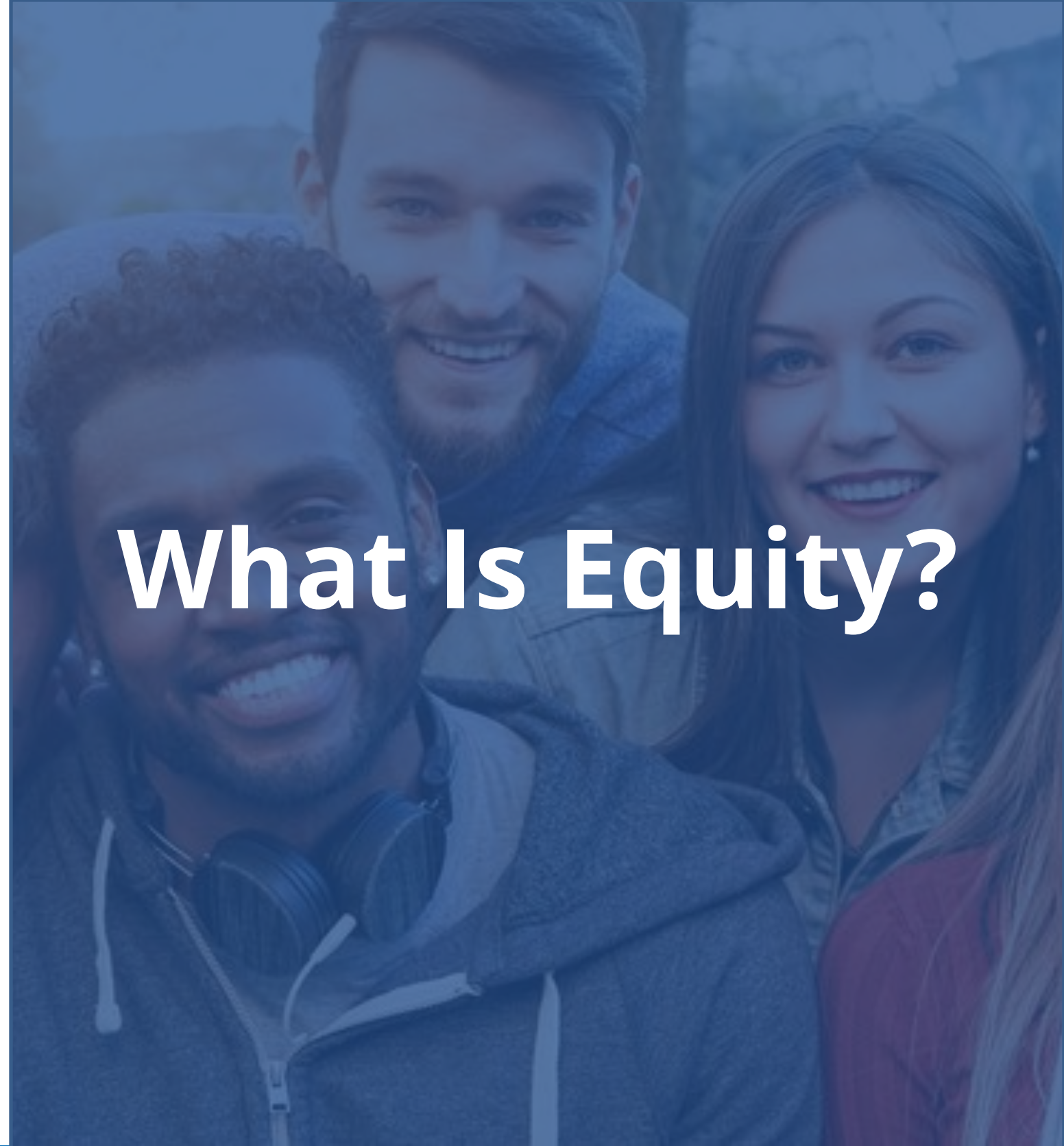
**Diversity is described as a desire to increase the compositional representation of underrepresented people** [race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, and (dis)ability status] in colleges and universities.

According to the American Council on Education (ACE):

- Diversity enriches the educational experience.
- It promotes personal growth-and a healthy society.
- It strengthens communities and the workplace.
- It enhances America's economic competitiveness.

- Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.
- To incorporate equity, one must rectify institutional barriers that have disenfranchised underrepresented people from having equitable and fair outcomes.

# What Is Equity?





# What Is Inclusion?

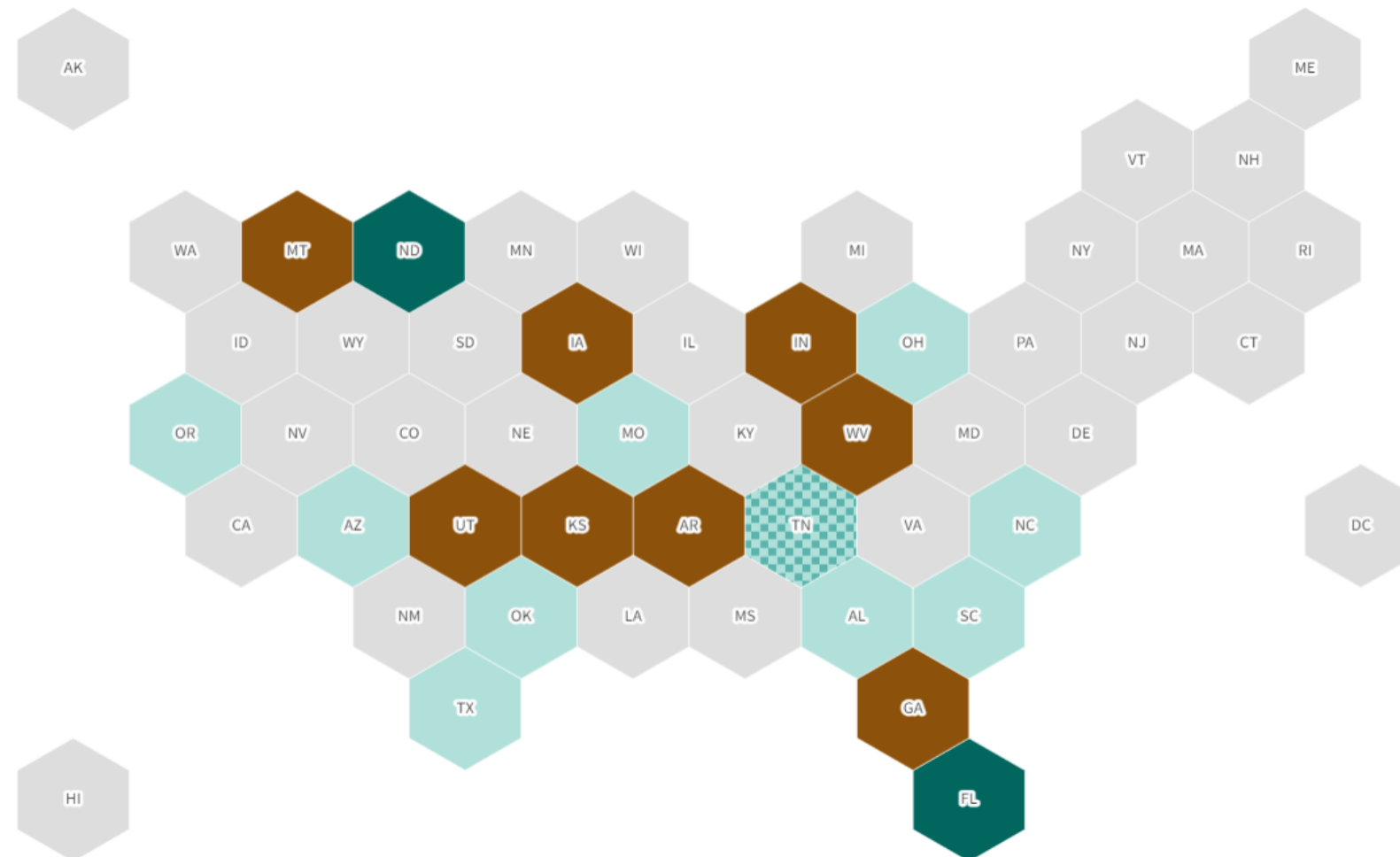
- Inclusion seeks to improve organizational cultures, structures, and resources that have historically disproportionately excluded underrepresented populations (Bensimon et al., 2016).
- Creating an inclusive education system involves not only creating the conditions for inclusivity (be it through curriculum, architecture, accessibility etc.) but also by actively challenging the reproduction of inequality [making things fairer and more equitable].

# States Where Anti-DEI Legislation Has Been Proposed

## Where Anti-DEI Legislation Has Been Proposed

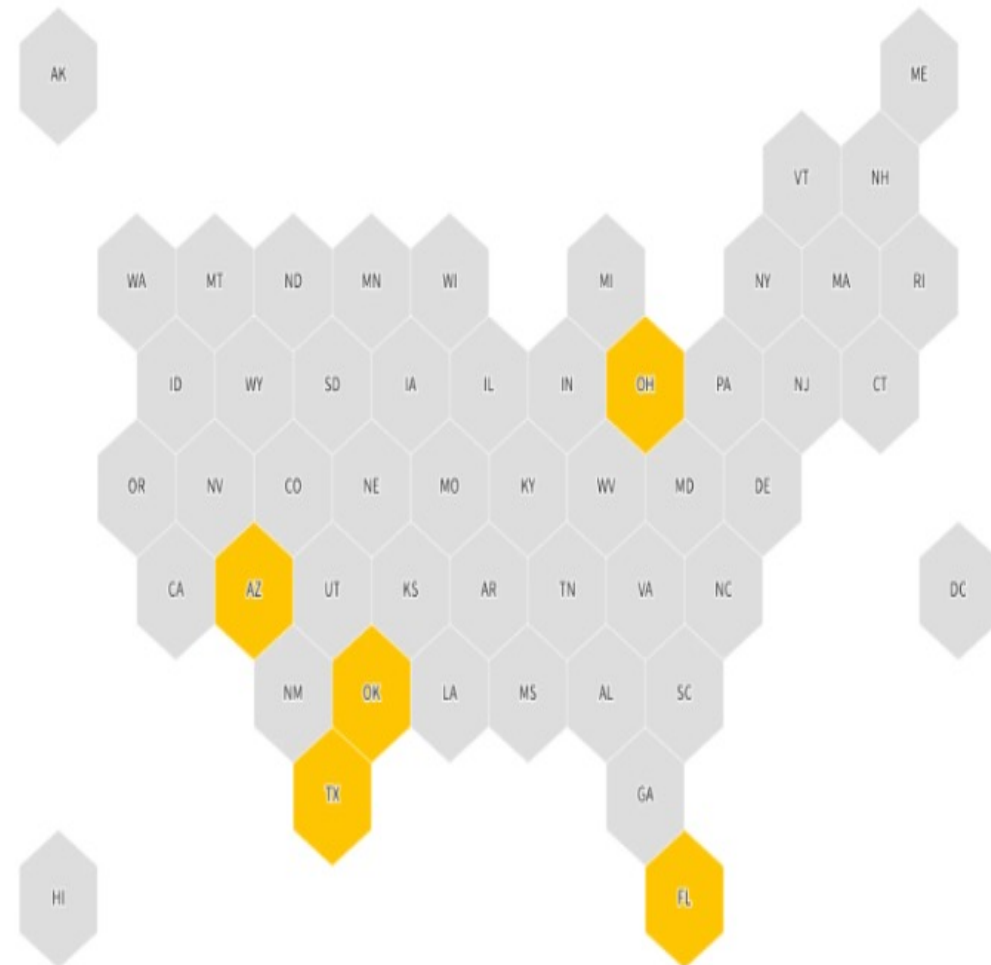
Patterned states indicate those with several bills at different stages.

■ No bill ■ Introduced ■ Final legislative approval ■ Signed into law ■ Tabled, failed to pass, or vetoed

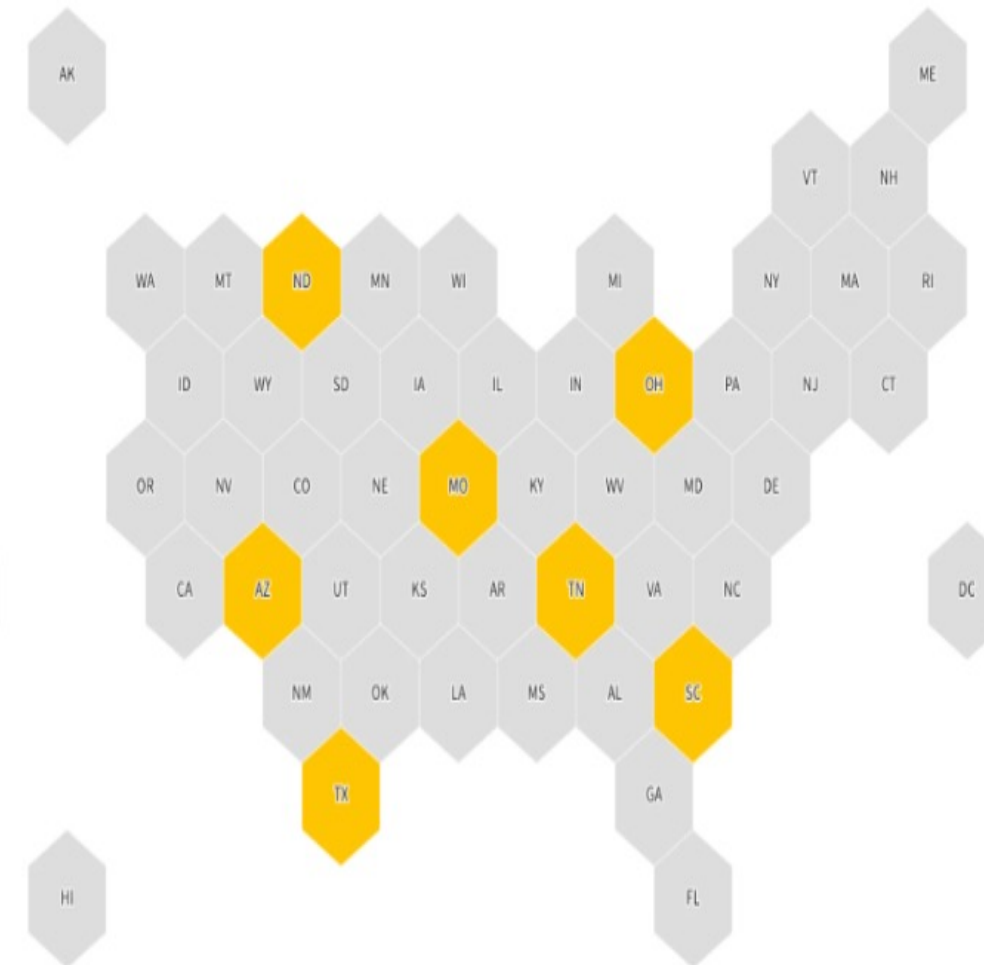


# Anti-DEI Legislation Potential Restrictions

DEI Offices and Staff

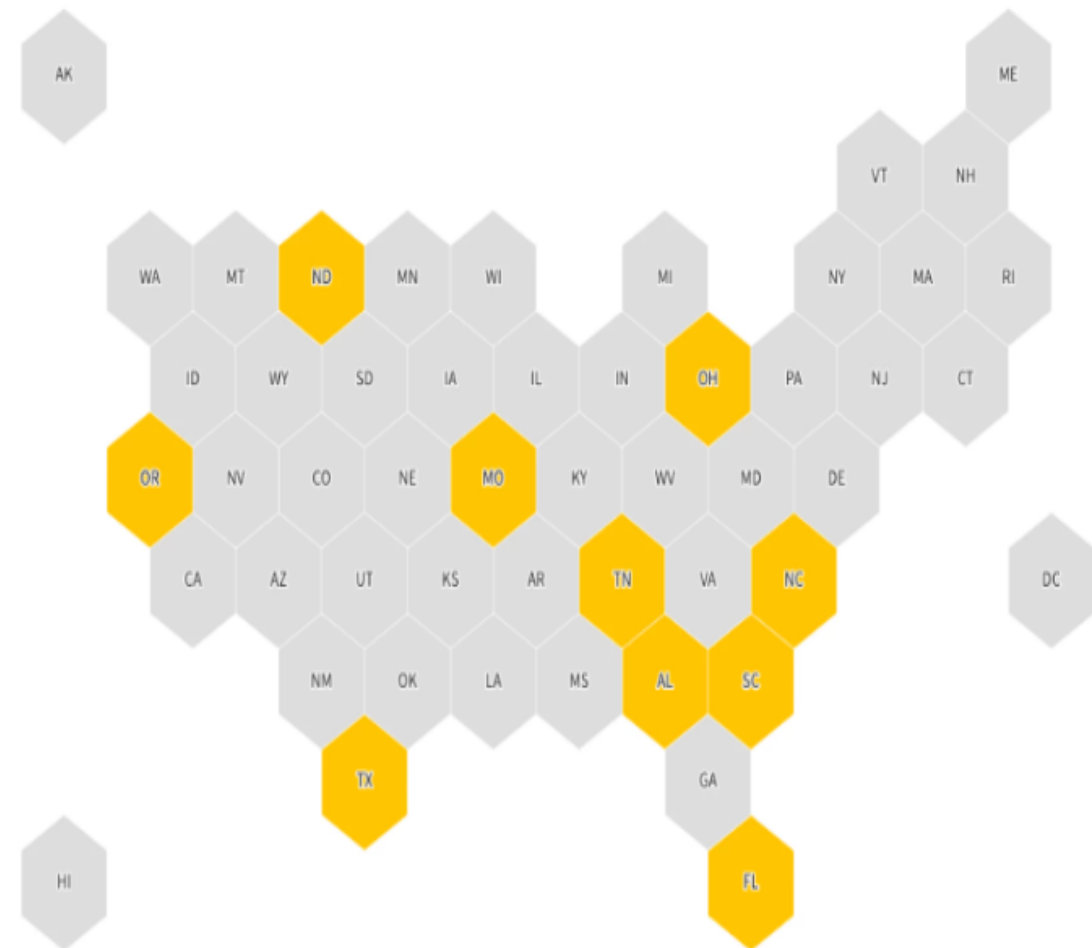


Mandatory DEI Training

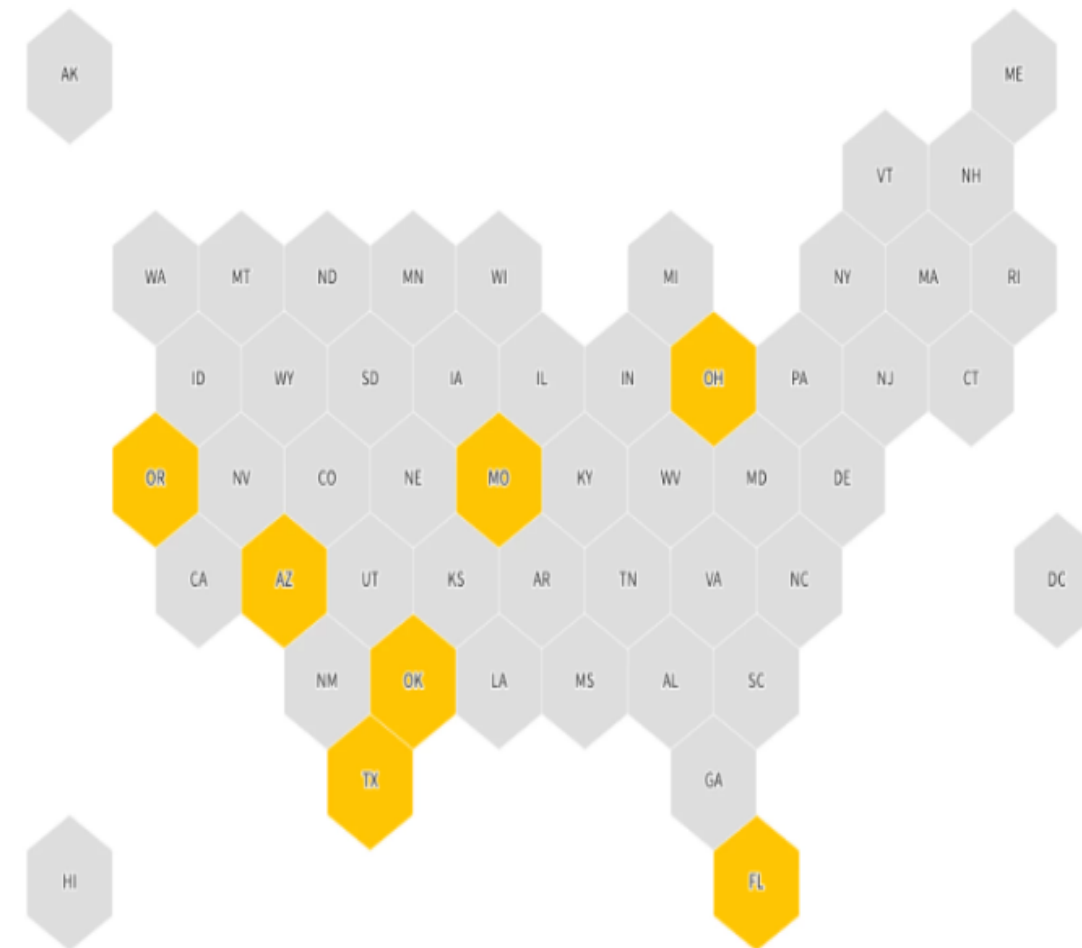


# Anti-DEI Legislation Potential Restrictions

## Diversity Statements



## Identity-Based Preferences for Hiring and Admissions



- Legislation in Texas (House Bills 1006 and 3164) that seek to “prohibit the funding, promotion, sponsorship, or support of any office of diversity, equity, and inclusion,” including banning “DEI offices, centers, departments, division, and employees at public universities.”
- Florida House Bill 999 aims to ban “DEI initiatives and forbid using money on pedagogy, programs, or activities that espouse diversity, equity, and inclusion at universities and colleges.” As a result of these bills, university presidents and board of regents in Texas and Florida have placed DEI efforts on pause.
- Iowa House Bill 218 “prohibits institutions of higher learning governed by state board of regents from expending moneys to fund diversity, equity, and inclusion divisions, offices, centers or to hire individuals to serve as DEI officers.”

A photograph of a young person with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a dark backpack, standing in a library aisle. They are looking to the right, holding a book. The background shows bookshelves filled with books. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# Integrating the Language in the Anti-DEI Legislation

# Public Responses to Texas HB1

*By supporting this bill, you are limiting my freedom as a student to decide my own degree plan. By banning DEI in higher education, you are robbing me of the opportunity to make impactful relationships with other students, faculty, and staff.*

- UT Austin Student

*By cutting DEI initiatives at my university, you would cripple that which makes it great, and drive future students away. TX is supposed to be the 'land of the free.' But all I have seen recently is the TX government cutting and banning things that make it great.*

- UNT Student

*I believe deeply that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are critical to maintaining academic freedom and safety for all students. It creates a community where individuals can learn, express themselves, and engage with a wide range of perspectives.*

- UH Graduate Student

# Calls to Support DEI

## National Association for Campus Activities (NACA)

### Statement on Proposed Legislation Restricting Campus Activities and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiatives

As the Association with a vision *to create college communities where everyone belongs*, we know there is much work to be done for college communities to truly become environments where everyone belongs. As such, diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values of the Association. NACA recognizes the diversity of all its members and supports the development and implementation of programs and services that achieve this goal.

The Association is closely monitoring proposed legislation across the country that seeks to limit or prohibit diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, activities, and initiatives on college campuses. NACA has significant concerns about the impact these bills may have on actualizing our vision.

#### **We Are Campus Activities**

As the National Association for Campus Activities, legislation potentially restricting *Campus Activities* gives us great pause. This broad term can apply, as NACA defines, to many “beyond-the-classroom experiences that intentionally connect, engage, and develop a college community where everyone belongs.”

*Creating college communities where everyone belongs* does not mean advancing policies where everyone thinks alike, looks alike, or votes alike. Developing a sense of belonging, as NACA defines, means individuals feel their authentic self is personally accepted, respected, included, supported, and safe in the university environment. Creating college communities where everyone belongs means amplifying opportunities for inclusive learning and meaningful connections; moreover, it means advancing brave spaces for the free exchange of ideas, differing perspectives, challenging dialogue, empathy for others' lived experiences, and acceptance.

Restrictions placed on student-led organizations, campus programming and activities, and the ability for campus-based professional staff to adequately advise and safely advocate for students and student organizations' Constitutional rights to free speech and assembly, especially those students from historically marginalized communities, run counter to our mission, vision, and values.

## National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADHOE)

### Dear Colleagues,

Like many of you, I am watching in disgust at the legislation cropping up in states such as Oklahoma, Florida, and Texas, which seeks to limit academic freedom and subjects that can be taught, and dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion work. I have been following the commentary surrounding senior diversity officers' and divisions' salaries. And, I have been outraged by the so-called model state legislation that has been put forward by the Manhattan and Goldwater Institutes, giving states a blueprint to take aim at the efforts to which many of us have dedicated our professional lives. As I have said to the press, while these efforts are currently at the state level, they are coordinated and the intent is clear — attack the work, attempt to dismantle the infrastructure, and silence the voices and efforts across the country.

While I personally experience a range of emotions when seeing so many try to diminish our work, it is the passion and commitment we all possess that drives us forward — in spite of an orchestrated campaign designed to tear us down. Some of you have reached out to me directly to inquire what NADHOE is doing to stand against this coordinated effort. Others have reached out to ask how to navigate this harsh environment. Let's be clear, NADHOE understands this concern, and we will not sit idle while these attacks continue.

As an organization, we are beginning to connect with national partners in an attempt to build support that will work to defeat these measures. We are reaching out to journalists across the country to let them know how valuable our efforts are within the campus communities we work. We're also considering a grassroots campaign that allows our allies and friends to show their support for diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education and beyond.

While we may not be able to stop the attacks or defeat each piece of legislation filed, we will continue to do our part to amplify the benefits of our collective endeavors and the moral imperative that institutions have to dismantle oppressive systems. We will continue to be a resource and supportive community for you.

On behalf of the NADHOE Board of Directors, we stand in community with all of you, and we will defend the work that has not been completed — to create a more just and equitable higher education and nation. Our work is too important.

In solidarity,

Paulette Granberry Russell, J.D.

# Resistance and Strategies





# Strategies for Students

- Power of Students Voice [Student Leaders, Sorority and Fraternity Life, Student Athletics]
- Call / Email Local Officials and Express Concerns [democratic rights]
- Use Social Media as a Tool

- Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Partnerships
- Get National Associations Involved – Role of NASPA, ACPA, AERA, NAACP
- Grant Funding Agencies / Commitment to Fund DEI Work



# Strategies for Faculty / Staff



# Strategies for Administrators

- University Presidents / Administrators release statements that reaffirm their commitment to DEI.
- University Presidents / Administrators reallocate funding.
- Systems such as Big Ten, SEC, Big 12 – Athletic role in pushing back on restrictions to DEI.

# Key Resources

- <https://www.chronicle.com/article/here-are-the-states-where-lawmakers-are-seeking-to-ban-colleges-dei-efforts>
- <https://www.bestcolleges.com/news/anti-dei-legislation-tracker/>
- <https://hbr.org/2023/03/to-overcome-resistance-to-dei-understand-whats-driving-it>



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# How Vector Solutions Can Help

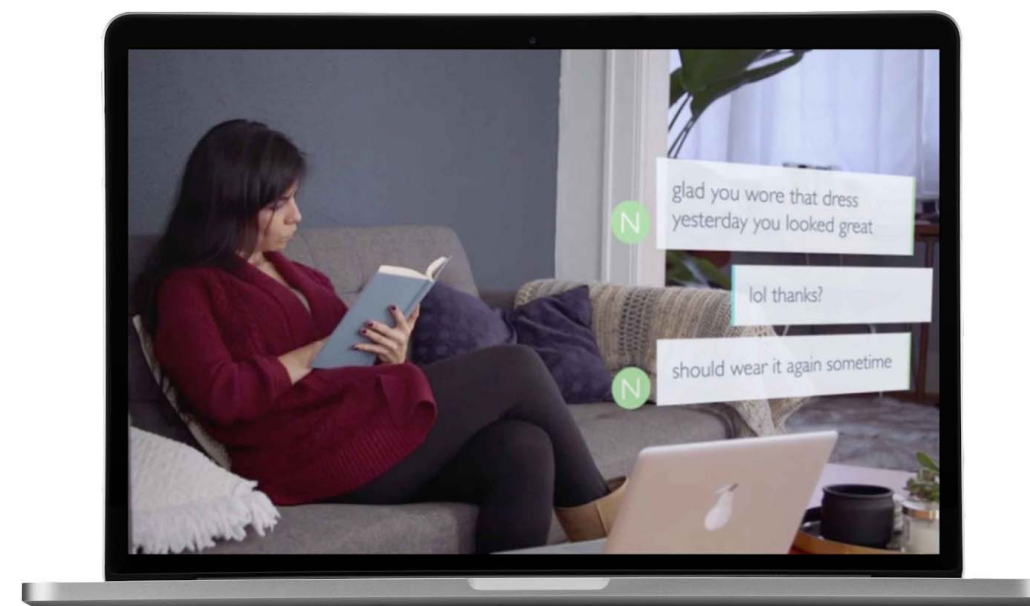
## Effective, Impactful Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Training for All Campus Members

Strengthen your diversity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives with Vector Solutions' integrated offerings for all campus members:

- Student (Undergraduate and Graduate)
- Faculty/Staff and Leaders
- Expanded Library and Refresher Training
- Facilitator Guides
- Pre/Post/Follow-Up Surveys

Course topics include:

- Defining Diversity
- Engaging with Difference
- Becoming an Ally
- Anticipating Impact
- Understanding Microaggressions
- Unconscious Bias



# Q&A

*Note: If your question doesn't get answered during the allotted time, we will follow up by email.*



**Thank You!**