



**Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus Opposes UW-Systems attack On DEI Threats Towards
Diversity Free Speech & DEI Efforts**

May 17, 2023

MADISON, WI- Members of the Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus oppose the continued divisive talk coming from the Conservative far right. In recent weeks we have once again seen increased evidence of students and individuals being subjected to racism through politically motivated discourse.

Instead of taking a stance to support the students and youth who are negatively impacted, the response was out of cowardice from the Conservative far right and from the UW System leadership to remove DEI efforts pertaining to how prospective job applicants would promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion to improve and enhance our communities, neighborhoods, and overall quality of life. In a state where we have the worst statistics on homeownership, health outcomes, educational outcomes, and mass incarceration for Black individuals, it is appalling that minimizing and silencing discourse on these issues is allowed.

Free speech must be respected and is a foundational right in our country. When there is a lack of accountability for one's harmful words, or when public forums are intentionally skewed to favor a divisive political agenda, we have to question, challenge, and oppose any notion that would promote institutional racism.

So let us set the record straight. Whether those efforts are made in our higher educational systems, state legislation, or local levels of government, any blatant acts of racism and prejudice must end altogether. We cannot defund diversity offices on college campuses, or mandate the removal of DEI efforts in any capacity. All Wisconsinites, regardless of race, gender, socio-economic backgrounds, or sexual orientation, deserve the same access to freedom of speech and resources necessary to obtain quality of life. Our identities will not be used as political currency to accomplish any political agenda, especially around free speech or DEI issues. We will fight until we are given what is rightfully ours.

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