

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025**

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**SENATE BILL 558  
PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE S558-PCS35259-BE-6**

Short Title: Eliminating "DEI" in Public Higher Ed.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 26, 2025

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO DEMONSTRATE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S INTENT THAT STUDENTS,  
3 PROFESSORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND OTHER EMPLOYEES OF PUBLIC  
4 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION RECOGNIZE THE EQUALITY AND  
5 RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS AND TO PROHIBIT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
6 EDUCATION FROM PROMOTING CERTAIN CONCEPTS THAT ARE CONTRARY  
7 TO THAT INTENT.

8 Whereas, President Trump issued an executive order on January 21, 2025, to ensure  
9 that higher education recipients of federal funds comply with all applicable laws prohibiting  
10 illegal discrimination and comply with the decision of the United States Supreme Court in  
11 *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023); and

12 Whereas, in the last fiscal year, North Carolina received \$2.4 billion in federal funding  
13 for public higher education, demonstrating the importance of ensuring that public institutions of  
14 higher education remain in compliance with federal regulations to protect education funding; and

15 Whereas, the General Assembly is committed to ensuring all North Carolina students  
16 enrolled in public institutions of higher education receive a meaningful education based on  
17 academic excellence, critical thinking, and the free exchange of ideas; and

18 Whereas, it is the State's role to protect the practice of higher education for students  
19 and professors; and

20 Whereas, so-called "DEI" programs promote a worldview that demands people,  
21 especially young students, judge others based on their race, sex, or other factors and attack true  
22 diversity of thought, stifle opportunity, and stoke division; Now, therefore,  
23 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

24 **SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 116-11 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

25 "(9c) The Board of Governors shall adopt a policy on diversity, equity, and  
26 inclusion at constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina that  
27 complies with Article 39 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes."

28 **SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 115D-5 is amended by adding the following new subsections  
29 to read:

30 "(aa) The State Board shall adopt a policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion at community  
31 colleges that complies with Article 39 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes.

32 (bb) The State Board shall adopt a policy prohibiting community colleges from  
33 establishing, maintaining, or otherwise implementing a process for reporting or investigating  
34 offensive or unwanted speech that is protected by the First Amendment, including satire or  
35 speech labeled as microaggression."



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1           SECTION 2. Chapter 116 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
2 Article to read:

3   "Article 39.

4   "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

5 **"§ 116-415. Intent.**

6       The General Assembly finds that Section 1 of Article I of the Constitution of this State  
7 recognizes the equality and rights of all persons. Therefore, it is the intent of the General  
8 Assembly that students, professors, administrators, and other employees of public institutions of  
9 higher education respect the dignity of others, acknowledge the right of others to express  
10 differing opinions, and foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and instruction,  
11 and freedom of speech and association and that the public institutions of higher education of this  
12 State employ teaching methods and procedures to further that intent.

13 **"§ 116-416. Definitions.**

14       For the purposes of this Article, the following definitions apply:

15       (1) Applicable governing board. – As follows:

16           a. For a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, the  
17 Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina.

18           b. For a community college, the State Board of Community Colleges.

19       (2) Chancellor. – The chancellor, president, or chief administrative officer of a  
20 public institution of higher education.

21       (3) Discriminatory practice. – Any of the following based on an individual's  
22 protected classification under federal law:

23           a. Treating an individual differently solely to advantage or disadvantage  
24 that individual as compared to other individuals or groups.

25           b. Excluding an individual from employment, except as allowed under  
26 federal law.

27           c. Excluding an individual from participation in an educational program  
28 or activity, except as allowed under federal law.

29       (4) Divisive concept. – Any of the following concepts:

30           a. One race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex.

31           b. An individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently  
32 racist, sexist, or oppressive.

33           c. An individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse  
34 treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex.

35           d. An individual's moral character is necessarily determined by his or her  
36 race or sex.

37           e. An individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears  
38 responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of  
39 the same race or sex.

40           f. Any individual, solely by virtue of his or her race or sex, should feel  
41 discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress.

42           g. A meritocracy is inherently racist or sexist.

43           h. The United States was created by members of a particular race or sex  
44 for the purpose of oppressing members of another race or sex.

45           i. Particular character traits, values, moral or ethical codes, privileges, or  
46 beliefs should be ascribed to a race or sex or to an individual because  
47 of the individual's race or sex.

48           j. The rule of law does not exist but instead is a series of power  
49 relationships and struggles among racial or other groups.

1           k. All Americans are not created equal and are not endowed by their  
2           Creator with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the  
3           pursuit of happiness.

4           l. Governments should deny to any person within the government's  
5           jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.

6           (5) Instruction. – Includes content taught or presented to students by employees,  
7           contractors, or individuals otherwise engaged by a public institution of higher  
8           education.

9           (6) Public institution of higher education. – A constituent institution of The  
10           University of North Carolina or a community college as defined in  
11           G.S. 115D-2(2).

12    **§ 116-417. Ensuring dignity and nondiscrimination in public institutions of higher**  
13    **education.**

14    (a) Public institutions of higher education shall not do any of the following:

15           (1) Engage in or advocate for discriminatory practices.

16           (2) Compel students, professors, administrators, or other employees to affirm or  
17           profess belief in divisive concepts.

18           (3) Endorse divisive concepts.

19           (4) Maintain an office, division, or other unit (i) promoting discriminatory  
20           practices or divisive concepts or (ii) referred to as or named diversity, equity,  
21           and inclusion.

22           (5) Employ or assign an employee whose duties for a public institution of higher  
23           education include promoting discriminatory practices or divisive concepts.

24           (6) Require completion of a course related to divisive concepts for purposes of  
25           awarding a degree or completion of a program, except as provided in  
26           subdivision (5) of subsection (b) of this section.

27    (b) This section shall not be construed to limit any of the following:

28           (1) Speech protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

29           (2) Materials accessed on an individual basis that advocate divisive concepts or  
30           discriminatory practices for the purpose of research or independent study.

31           (3) Policies or procedures required by State or federal law.

32           (4) Instruction or discussion on divisive concepts that makes it clear the public  
33           institution of higher education does not endorse divisive concepts.

34           (5) In the discretion of the chancellor, a course related to divisive concepts that is  
35           required for a specific degree program. The chancellor shall report to the  
36           applicable governing board on any course that is required under this  
37           subdivision.

38    (c) Each public institution of higher education shall certify annually in writing by  
39    September 1 to the applicable governing board that the public institution of higher education  
40    fully complies with the requirements of this section, including any actions taken to achieve  
41    compliance. The applicable governing board shall summarize the certifications in a consolidated  
42    report by January 15 annually to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations  
43    and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee."

44    **SECTION 3.** For the certification due September 1, 2025, as required by  
45    G.S. 116-417(c), as enacted by Section 2 of this act, each public institution of higher education  
46    shall also include information on the initial implementation of this act, including reductions in  
47    force and spending, changes to job titles and position descriptions, and how savings achieved  
48    from these actions have been directed.

49    **SECTION 4.** G.S. 116-300 is amended by adding the following new subdivision to  
50    read:

1           "(9) The constituent institution shall not establish, maintain, or otherwise  
2           implement a process for reporting or investigating offensive or unwanted  
3           speech that is protected by the First Amendment, including satire or speech  
4           labeled as microaggression."

5           **SECTION 5.** If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, the  
6           invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect  
7           without the invalid provisions or application and, to this end, the provisions of this act are  
8           severable.

9           **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law.