



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Respect...Integrity...Effective Communication

PRESS RELEASE

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March 29, 2024

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Responds to Anti DEI Comments Following Key Bridge Collapse

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights extends its heartfelt condolences to all those affected by the tragic collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. In the wake of this devastating event, however, we are disheartened to witness the exploitation of this tragedy as a platform for misguided attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Senator Charles Sydnor of Baltimore County recently addressed the distressing trend of racism and politicization surrounding the bridge's collapse. Amid a deluge of social media posts, including those by Utah Republican State Representative Phil Lyman and misleading remarks by Fox Business Anchor Maria Bartiromo, the scapegoating of DEI principles has become disturbingly prevalent.

This assault on DEI represents a troubling escalation in a broader campaign against progress. It began with attempts to undermine government efforts to address racism and sexism through training programs, followed by censorship efforts targeting literature reflecting the experiences of BIPOC and LGBTQ communities. Shockingly, as reported by the ACLU, 65 bills were introduced in 2023 alone across 25 states and the U.S. Congress aimed at restricting DEI in higher education, with eight such bills becoming law.

Now, the tragic events surrounding the Key Bridge collapse are being cynically weaponized to further assail DEI. However, it is essential to recognize that DEI initiatives are not about divisive labels but rather about dismantling entrenched systems of oppression and fostering inclusive communities. As Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott poignantly noted, the immigrant workers who perished in the collapse epitomized the American dream, diligently maintaining infrastructure for the benefit of all.

In times of tragedy, it is imperative to reject the derogatory misuse of DEI terminology, which only serves to perpetuate discrimination and hinder progress toward a more just society. DEI efforts are crucial for promoting fairness, respect, and equal opportunities for all members of society. Any attempt to disparage DEI undermines these fundamental principles and obstructs our collective journey toward genuine equity and inclusion.

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

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Once again, we extend our deepest sympathies to the families and victims impacted by this disaster. Let us honor their memory by reaffirming our commitment to DEI and the pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

#MarylandTough #BaltimoreStrong #MCCRUnited