



State Representative Beth Lear

House District 61

State Representative Josh Williams

House District 44

House Education Committee

HB 155 Testimony

REP. LEAR: Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson, and esteemed members of the House Education committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 155, legislation aimed at prohibiting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives within our K–12 public education system.

Our public schools should be bastions of academic excellence, where students are taught to think critically, engage respectfully, and achieve based on merit and effort. However, the increasing incorporation of DEI programs has shifted the focus from educational fundamentals to ideological indoctrination. These initiatives prioritize identity over ability, promote racial preferences over fairness, and undermine the principle of equal opportunity for all students.

The legislation, like its companion bill in the Senate, Senate Bill 113, seeks to prohibit orientation or training courses regarding DEI, the use of DEI in job descriptions, and contracting with third parties to promote admissions or hiring based on race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual

orientation, gender identity, or expression. The bill also prohibits DEI offices or departments and requires each public school to establish a process through which individuals can report violations of these prohibitions.

Multiple states have legislation focused on prohibiting DEI in K-12, namely: Alabama, Missouri, and Mississippi.

Critics argue that DEI programs result in reducing students to nothing more than categories based upon primarily immutable characteristics which increases division rather than improving relationships across racial lines. The real world links success to a person's ability. DEI does the opposite, hampering students from the moment they leave high school. Moreover, these programs can divert valuable resources away from core academic subjects, such as reading, writing, and mathematics, which are essential for student success.

It's important to note that this legislation does not seek to erase history or ignore the challenges faced by various communities. Instead, it aims to ensure that our educational institutions focus on providing a high-quality, unbiased education that prepares all students to relate to one another and to succeed, regardless of their background.

By prohibiting DEI initiatives in our K-12 public schools, we reaffirm our commitment to an education system that fosters unity and prepares students to thrive in melting pot rather than divided into groups. We want E Pluribus Unum – out of many, one – rather than ex uno plures, from one, many.

I urge the committee to support House Bill 155 and help restore the focus of our public education system to its fundamental mission: educating our children.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will now turn it over to my joint sponsor,  
Representative Josh Williams.

REP WILLIAMS: