



February 13, 2024

To: Chairperson Murman and Members of the Education Committee
From: Anahi Salazar, Policy Coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska
RE: Opposition for LB 1330, Prohibit public educational institutions from taking certain actions relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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Children across Nebraska deserve to feel seen for who they are. It is vital for teachers, counselors, healthcare professionals, and other professionals that interact with children to be trained in valuing their unique, beautiful diversity and promoting equity and inclusion to see them thrive. Voices for Children in Nebraska opposes LB 1330 because it would disallow public higher educational institutions from participating in activities and hiring individuals in roles relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). These are crucial topics for our teachers, case workers, probation officers, and other system professionals who interact with kids every day to understand.

DEI practices are essential in creating environments where everyone feels welcome and respected, regardless of background, race, ability, gender, sexual orientations, ethnicity, or religion. These practices not only benefit individuals but also contribute to fostering conversations that enhance mutual understanding among students and adults alike. This allows students, upon graduating and entering their profession, to embrace different perspectives and understanding of diverse needs and inclusive practices.

Eliminating these positive practices opens the door to exclusion, extending far beyond a student's college years. Exposure to meaningful dialogues during their college experience equips students critical thinking skills and a broader perception that in turn, enables them to appreciate and value individuals different from themselves.

One example: a recent report by UNMC, *The Status of the Healthcare Workforce in the State of Nebraska*, highlights a lack of diversity among our healthcare providers, with 87% of physicians being white, 1.6% Black/African American, and 2.6% were Hispanic/Latino.¹ Consider this data in light of health disparities between white, non-Hispanic children in Nebraska and their peers who are Black and brown. When college students are exposed to DEI programming, they can learn about cultural relevance and

¹Wilson, Fernando, et al. *The Status of the Healthcare Workforce in the State of Nebraska*. 2018. [The-Status-of-the-Healthcare-Workforce-in-the-State-of-Nebraska-February-2018.pdf \(unmc.edu\)](https://www.unmc.edu/files/publications/The-Status-of-the-Healthcare-Workforce-in-the-State-of-Nebraska-February-2018.pdf)

background preparing them to better serve the populations they work with, and that goes across all professions. We cannot address disparities in outcomes for kids if our professional workforce is not trained the need for equity and inclusion among the diverse youth and populations they will serve.

DEI work is not only supportive to individuals but also holds potential for positive transformation across society. The commitment to DEI is fundamental to ensuring the flourishing of every child. Thank you, members of the Education Committee, for listening and we respectfully urge you not to advance LB 1330. Thank you.