



FACT SHEET | Higher Education Reform Initiative

PRESIDENT TRUMP DEFENDS AMERICANS' CIVIL RIGHTS

Christopher Schorr, Ph.D. | May 12, 2025

PRESIDENT TRUMP IS RESTORING AMERICA'S PROUD CIVIL RIGHTS TRADITION

CIVIL RIGHTS AT A CROSSROADS

- ★ America's identity is informed by a shared commitment to a set of ideals. The Declaration of Independence asserts "all men are created equal" and endowed by God with "certain unalienable rights" including "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." America's civil rights tradition emerges from these commitments.
- ★ Unfortunately, this great tradition has been tarnished by a revisionist movement rooted in racial and ethnic animus. Critical Race Theory (CRT), a radical "[neo-Marxist](#)" [perspective](#), rejects America's inheritance, including its classically liberal civil rights tradition. CRT and related "woke" values, implemented through discriminatory Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) hiring and training policies, undermine our nation's commitment to equality under law.
- ★ The tragic spread of these pernicious ideas has torn our nation's social fabric and deformed its public life. However, President Trump is returning civil-rights enforcement to its intended purpose of ensuring equal treatment for all Americans.

ENDING GOVERNMENT-ENFORCED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

- ★ On April 23, President Trump signed a new [executive order](#) targeting disparate-impact liability, a distortion of civil rights law that mandates illegal discrimination ("disparate treatment") in an attempt to level outcomes between groups ("disparate impact").
- ★ The President's order revokes prior executive actions rooted in disparate-impact liability and instructs executive departments and agencies to deprioritize enforcement of statutes based in it.
- ★ The President further directs the Attorney General and department and agency heads to mitigate the use of disparate-impact liability within their jurisdictions. The Attorney General and Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are directed to take additional appropriate actions to prevent discrimination.
- ★ On the same day, the President signed another [executive order](#) prohibiting discriminatory discipline policies in K-12 schools. The President's order revokes a [2014 guidance letter](#) by Departments of Education and Justice imposing threatening school districts with civil rights investigations for treating students equally if doing so results in disparate school discipline outcomes. This Orwellian abuse of civil rights law re-institutionalized racial discrimination in K-12 schools and made schools [less safe](#) for students.

RESTORING THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS TRADITION

- ★ These orders add to a growing list of executive actions taken to protect Americans' right to equal treatment under law and reversing rampant civil rights violations rooted in [discriminatory equity ideology](#) (e.g., CRT & DEI). For example, the President has:
 - Repealed President Biden's "[whole-of-government equity agenda](#)"—a massive effort to institutionalize DEI throughout American government and society.
 - Directed federal agencies to [end discriminatory and illegal DEI](#) practices and to enforce civil rights law to ensure that private-sector actors do the same.



- Directed federal agencies to terminate all [DEI programs, policies, and offices](#), and to evaluate current and [prospective](#) employees based on merit.
 - Clarified that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act protects all Americans against discrimination, including Jewish Americans under its “[national origin](#)” provisions.
 - Directed Department heads (including the Secretary of Education) to develop a strategy to end the [indoctrination of children](#) in discriminatory equity ideology.
 - Abolished DEI in the [Department of Defense](#) and in the [Foreign Service](#).
- ★ By abandoning the woke left’s un-American, discriminatory racial spoils system in favor of merit and equal treatment under law, President Trump is honoring the legacy of American civil rights heroes like [Rev. Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglas](#), and recommitting to our nation to its highest values.

EQUALITY UNDER THE LAW IS THE BIRTHRIGHT OF ALL AMERICANS

