

# Rep. Stubbs: Celebrates Board of Regents decision, underscores Wisconsin's need for DEI

Posted on Tuesday, Dec 12, 2023

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After the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents voted 9-8 to reject a Republican-brokered proposal to trade cuts in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programming and faculty positions for Engineering Building funding and employee pay raises, Representative Shelia Stubbs (D - Madison) released the following statement:

“On Saturday, the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents rejected a deal that would take away DEI programming and positions from Wisconsin universities. Students, staff, faculty, and community members sent a clear message to the UW Board of Regents - we must fight for campuses where everyone is welcomed and feels they belong. Words cannot describe the relief I feel knowing that justice has prevailed and that our programming to foster the success and belonging of our students/ faculty/staff of color is safe, if only for the moment.

Bearing this in mind, I remain deeply distraught and perplexed that this trade was ever on the table to begin with. Diversity, equity, and inclusion will never be values I am willing to compromise, and I would hope that the rest of the state of Wisconsin, a state that consistently ranks highest in racial disparities in the nation across every aspect of a person's life, would agree with me. These past few days, however, have shown that this is not so. It has become brutally, distressingly obvious that even among those who are entrusted with stewarding the growth of our young people, there is a sizable contingent who consider the safety and prosperity of BIPOC students and faculty something that can be traded away once another need presents itself.

While we celebrate this narrowly won victory for our state, I will not be forgetting those who deemed DEI programming on our campuses an acceptable sacrifice. I will remember those who fought to the last hour for our shared values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, but I will also remember those whose support was conditional—those whose cooperation with the crusade against tolerance at our schools and institutions of higher education could be bought. Students, faculty and staff members of color in our University system will remember too.

As the Representative for the UW-Madison, our flagship university, I thank those on the Board of Regents whose votes ensured the rejection of the GOP's deal that would have further eroded the welfare of BIPOC students and university employees. For those who voted in favor of this dangerous proposal or neglected to participate, I would urge you to consider the statistics that underscore the dire need for DEI services in Wisconsin.

We know for a fact that we face some of the worst disparities in the nation. In fact, Wisconsin has the highest rate of Black infant mortality, the lowest level of racial parity in education, and the highest Black imprisonment rate in the nation. We are home to the metropolitan area with the highest degree of Black-white segregation and we have the highest rate of Black female homicide victimization. The only way we will close these horrifying gaps in equality is by addressing the structural barriers facing our residents of color. DEI is a critical component of the strategy to combat our grievous racial disparities.

I am grateful that the Board of Regents has rejected the deal proposed to them. Now, we must remain steadfast in our continued to work to ensure the well-being of students across all walks of life and to secure funding for essential improvements to our state universities.”