

Rep. Stubbs: Urges Board of Regents to uphold decision to preserve DEI

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The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents voted 9-8 on Saturday December 9, 2023 to reject a Republican-brokered deal that would provide UW employee pay raises and funding for the Engineering building in exchange for cuts to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs and positions. Upon learning that the Board of Regents has decided to reconvene this evening for another vote on the proposal, Representative Shelia Stubbs (D - Madison) released the following statement:

“While I applaud the UW Board of Regents’ original decision to preserve DEI initiatives on UW campuses, I urge them to remain steadfast in their vote. As they reconsider their decision, I implore them not to backtrack, for the sake of our children’s education and future. The Board of Regents made the correct decision to deny the proposal brought forth by Republican legislators the first time around. Their choice to fulfill their role as a safety net to protect our students, staff and faculty demonstrates their commitment to advocacy for our BIPOC students, staff and faculty. They must not fail in that commitment now.

We have seen clearly that DEI initiatives are needed now more than ever. It is undeniable that racialized inequity is a deeply rooted part of our institutions in Wisconsin. With some of the most extreme disparities in infant mortality, incarceration rates and racial parity in education, DEI is one of the few supports for BIPOC Wisconsinites. To demolish DEI is a shameful and places Wisconsin at the back of the line.

As the Representative for UW-Madison, our flagship university, I must insist that we protect and preserve DEI initiatives as well as keep our promises of pay raises and funding for the Engineering building. To say that we must have one or the other is a fallacy; all of these things are critical to the future success of our University system.

I urge the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents to make the decision that represents the students and values of Wisconsin. To uphold the Wisconsin Idea, we must ensure that all of our students have an equitable chance to change the world for the better. Wisconsin's motto *Forward* means making progress with integrity for ALL Wisconsinites. *Forward* is diversity, equity, and inclusion. Voting in alignment with Wisconsin values means voting to protect DEI.

As I have stated before, diversity, equity, and inclusion will never be values I am willing to compromise. The lives of our students, staff, and faculty of color are not up for negotiation, and the rights of Wisconsinites are not something to be debated. Each Board member has a second chance to act with integrity by rejecting this proposal. It is imperative that the Board of Regents remains on the right side of history by reaffirming their previous decision.”