

## STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4

March 26, 2024

Chancellor Michael R. Williams, Members of the Board of Regents The University of North Texas System 1901 Main St., Dallas, Texas 75201

Dear Chancellor Williams and Members of the Board of Regents of The University of North Texas System,

I am writing to address the enactment of Senate Bill 17, which became effective on January 1, 2024. Recognized as the most robust DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) prohibition in the nation, this bill mandates a fundamental shift in the operation of our higher education institutions. The Texas State Legislature, along with the people of Texas, anticipate that each institution will undertake sincere efforts to align with the bill's provisions, ensuring a merit-based environment where every student, faculty, and staff member can strive for and achieve personal excellence.

In accordance with Texas Education Code subsection 51.3525(f), the Senate Committee on Education plans to conduct a hearing this May. This hearing will provide an opportunity for the University of North Texas System to present its progress in overseeing and implementing SB 17. The committee plans to extend an invitation to each university system's chancellor and general counsel to provide testimony to the committee.

I will also request that you have representatives available to address any of the five questions below for your system and each institution within your system:

1.	DEI Office Prohibition	How has your institution ensured that there are no DEI offices or officers on campus, or no individual or organization performing the duties of a DEI office or officer?
2.	Training Requirement Prohibition	How has your institution worked to ensure that DEI training is not required for students, staff, and faculty?
3.	Merit-based Hiring	How has your institution acted to comply with the provision which prohibits providing preference on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin to an applicant for employment?

CAPITOL OFFICE:
P.O. Box 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711
(512) 463-0104 • FAX (512) 463-6373

How has your institution worked to ensure diversity statements cannot be

considered for hiring or promotion?

5. Audit Compliance SB 17 requires regular audits by the State Auditor's Office. How has your

institution been preparing for this oversight action?

Please provide this information to the committee in writing on or before Friday, May 3rd.

While I am encouraged with the progress I have seen from many institutions of higher education in implementing SB 17, I am deeply concerned with the possibility that many institutions may choose to merely rename their offices or employee titles. This letter should serve as notice that this practice is unacceptable -- and also a reminder that SB 17 encompasses stringent enforcement provisions, including the potential freezing of university funding and legal ramifications for non-compliance, as detailed in subsections (h) and (i).

As regents, enforcement of SB 17 falls as much upon your shoulders as it does this committee. I look forward to your cooperation and conscientious efforts in upholding the tenets of this significant legislation. Please allow my staff to be a helpful resource if you need assistance or have questions.

Sincerely,

Bunder Coutton

Chairman, Texas Senate Committee on Education



### STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4

March 26, 2024

Chancellor Carine M. Feyten, Members of the Board of Regents Texas Woman's University System 304 Administration Dr Denton, TX 76204

Dear Chancellor Feyten and Members of the Board of Regents of The Texas Woman's University System,

I am writing to address the enactment of Senate Bill 17, which became effective on January 1, 2024. Recognized as the most robust DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) prohibition in the nation, this bill mandates a fundamental shift in the operation of our higher education institutions. The Texas State Legislature, along with the people of Texas, anticipate that each institution will undertake sincere efforts to align with the bill's provisions, ensuring a merit-based environment where every student, faculty, and staff member can strive for and achieve personal excellence.

In accordance with Texas Education Code subsection 51.3525(f), the Senate Committee on Education plans to conduct a hearing this May. This hearing will provide an opportunity for the Texas Woman's University System to present its progress in overseeing and implementing SB 17. The committee plans to extend an invitation to each university system's chancellor and general counsel to provide testimony to the committee.

I will also request that you have representatives available to address any of the five questions below for your system and each institution within your system:

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Bunder Ceather

Chairman, Texas Senate Committee on Education



### STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4

March 26, 2024

Chancellor John Sharp, Members of the Board of Regents Texas A&M University System 301 Tarrow Street College Station, TX 77840

Dear Chancellor Sharp and Members of the Board of Regents of the Texas A&M University System,

I am writing to address the enactment of Senate Bill 17, which became effective on January 1, 2024. Recognized as the most robust DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) prohibition in the nation, this bill mandates a fundamental shift in the operation of our higher education institutions. The Texas State Legislature, along with the people of Texas, anticipate that each institution will undertake sincere efforts to align with the bill's provisions, ensuring a merit-based environment where every student, faculty, and staff member can strive for and achieve personal excellence.

In accordance with Texas Education Code subsection 51.3525(f), the Senate Committee on Education plans to conduct a hearing this May. This hearing will provide an opportunity for the Texas A&M University System to present its progress in overseeing and implementing SB 17. The committee plans to extend an invitation to each university system's chancellor and general counsel to provide testimony to the committee.

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Sincerely,

Bunder Ceughter
Brandon Creighton

Chairman, Texas Senate Committee on Education



# STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4

March 26, 2024

Chancellor James Milliken, Members of the Board of Regents The University of Texas System 210 West 7th Street Austin, TX 78701-2982

Dear Chancellor Milliken and Members of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System,

I am writing to address the enactment of Senate Bill 17, which became effective on January 1, 2024. Recognized as the most robust DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) prohibition in the nation, this bill mandates a fundamental shift in the operation of our higher education institutions. The Texas State Legislature, along with the people of Texas, anticipate that each institution will undertake sincere efforts to align with the bill's provisions, ensuring a merit-based environment where every student, faculty, and staff member can strive for and achieve personal excellence.

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Brandon Creighton

Chairman, Texas Senate Committee on Education

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# STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4

March 26, 2024

Chancellor Renu Khator, Members of the Board of Regents The University of Houston System 203 Ezekiel Cullen Building Houston, Texas 77204-2022

Dear Chancellor Khator and Members of the Board of Regents of The University of Houston System,

I am writing to address the enactment of Senate Bill 17, which became effective on January 1, 2024. Recognized as the most robust DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) prohibition in the nation, this bill mandates a fundamental shift in the operation of our higher education institutions. The Texas State Legislature, along with the people of Texas, anticipate that each institution will undertake sincere efforts to align with the bill's provisions, ensuring a merit-based environment where every student, faculty, and staff member can strive for and achieve personal excellence.

In accordance with Texas Education Code subsection 51.3525(f), the Senate Committee on Education plans to conduct a hearing this May. This hearing will provide an opportunity for the University of Houston System to present its progress in overseeing and implementing SB 17. The committee plans to extend an invitation to each university system's chancellor and general counsel to provide testimony to the committee.

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Chairman, Texas Senate Committee on Education



## STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4

March 26, 2024

Chancellor Tedd Mitchell, Members of the Board of Regents Texas Tech University System Building 1508 Knoxville Ave. Lubbock, Texas, 79409

Dear Chancellor Mitchell and Members of the Board of Regents of The Texas Tech University System,

I am writing to address the enactment of Senate Bill 17, which became effective on January 1, 2024. Recognized as the most robust DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) prohibition in the nation, this bill mandates a fundamental shift in the operation of our higher education institutions. The Texas State Legislature, along with the people of Texas, anticipate that each institution will undertake sincere efforts to align with the bill's provisions, ensuring a merit-based environment where every student, faculty, and staff member can strive for and achieve personal excellence.

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Chairman, Texas Senate Committee on Education



### STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 4

March 26, 2024

Chancellor Brian McCall, Members of the Board of Regents Texas State University System 601 Colorado St Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chancellor McCall and Members of the Board of Regents of The Texas State University System,

I am writing to address the enactment of Senate Bill 17, which became effective on January 1, 2024. Recognized as the most robust DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) prohibition in the nation, this bill mandates a fundamental shift in the operation of our higher education institutions. The Texas State Legislature, along with the people of Texas, anticipate that each institution will undertake sincere efforts to align with the bill's provisions, ensuring a merit-based environment where every student, faculty, and staff member can strive for and achieve personal excellence.

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DISTRICT OFFICE: 2829 TECHNOLOGY FOREST, STE. 240 THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS 77381 (281) 292-4128

E-MAIL: BRANDON.CREIGHTON@SENATE.TEXAS.GOV

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