



Center for Military Readiness

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Biden Executive Order Empowers Permanent Diversity Industrial Complex

On February 16, President Joe Biden signed an **Executive Order (EO)** that will institutionalize a powerful **Diversity Industrial Complex** in the **Department of Defense** and all agencies of government.

The purpose of Biden's gratuitous Executive Order, titled ["Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government,"](#) is to expand a government-wide infrastructure of well-paid **Diversity, Inclusion & Equity (DEI)** officials, consultants, and experts in woke ideology, and to make their power bases permanent.

The order bestows special status and benefits for favored minorities while excluding others who do not belong to designated **"underserved communities."** It will affect all Americans, but its consequences will be most severe in our military, on which national security depends.

Pentagon officials keep insisting without evidence that **"Diversity is a strategic imperative,"** but as combat veterans **Rep. Mike Waltz** and **Maj. Gen. Patrick Brady, USA (Ret.)** recently [wrote](#), discriminatory, outcome-based directives focusing on skin color or other superficial characteristics are threatening essential elements of military culture: color-blindness, non-discrimination, and what House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee Chairman **James Banks** described as [respect for meritocratic values](#).

Uniform treatment of all personnel, without bias or favoritism, is essential in inspiring selfless commitments and unit cohesion to achieve mission success. That ethic, unfortunately, is under attack.

President Biden's Executive Order Takes Woke-Ism to Extremes

Defense Department officials [keep denying](#) that "woke-ism" exists in the military, but these denials ignore persistent reports of [DEI hiring and promotion practices](#), [demoralizing "anti-extremism" sessions](#), and divisive **critical race theory (CRT)** programs at the [Naval Academy](#), [West Point](#), and the [Air Force Academy](#). The Administration also is forcing [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender \(LGBT\) movement demands](#) on military personnel and their children.

The Executive Order signed on February 16, summarized [here](#), is the most radical document of its kind. Egalitarian power bases run by woke activists have proliferated during the **Obama** and Biden Administrations, but this order takes their power to a whole new level.

Outcome-based **"equity"** mandates, which treat some people as **"more equal"** than others, squarely fit the definition of woke-ism: **Progressive policies taken to extremes with coerced compliance, even if it hurts the institution.**

Section 10 of the EO defines the term "equity" as *"the consistent and systematic treatment of all individuals in a fair, just, and impartial manner, including individuals who belong to communities that often have been denied such treatment..."*

What follows is a long list of *"underserved communities"* that deserve special treatment, such as Black,

Latino, Indigenous and Native Americans, LGBTQI+ persons, rural and U.S. territory residents, persons with disabilities, those affected by persistent poverty, and many others.

Conspicuously *excluded* from the favored list of “underserved communities” are healthy white males who are young or middle age, financially secure, English proficient, and Christian.

The EO suggests that everyone will be treated in “*fair, just, and impartial*” ways, but the phrase “***all individuals***” may have been inserted to inoculate the EO against charges that its mandates violate principles of equal protection and are therefore unconstitutional.

The wiggle words cannot neutralize the tenor and context of the entire program, which aims to achieve “*racial equity*” for “*underserved communities*.” The EO authorizes favoritism throughout the government, clearly belying expectations that “*all individuals*” will be treated in non-discriminatory ways that respect meritocracy and the operational needs of the military.

“Equitable outcomes” cannot be achieved if recognition of individual merit produces “inequitable” outcomes. The document repeatedly claims that all mandates will “***comply with applicable law,***” but when individuals file lawsuits challenging discriminatory practices, the government will claim that the *absence* of any law forbidding such practices authorizes them to keep discriminating.

The Diversity Industrial Complex

The scope of Biden’s lengthy Executive Order is limitless. Section 1 calls for a “*multi-generational commitment*” and an “*ambitious, whole-of-government approach to racial equity [for] underserved communities and to continuously embed equity into all aspects of Federal decision-making.*”

In addition to Defense, the **Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Education, Transportation, Health & Human Services, Commerce, Energy, Veterans**, plus agencies like the **Social Security, Small Business, and International Development Administrations** will be required to implement the full range of woke mandates.

The EO mentions, for example, **climate change** projects resting on questionable theories, “deployment of financial and technical assistance” for “**equitable community development,**” “equity” in artificial **intelligence (AI) algorithms**, “**community wealth building,**” and mandatory enforcement of policies demanded by **sexual minorities** and advocates of **transgender treatments** for vulnerable adults, children, and veterans.

The document also reinforces the power of a small army of **Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs)**. In the military, CDOs already are empowered to review all promotions to ensure that all candidates will support and enforce woke mandates. (Sec. 2).

All government department heads are directed to establish “**Agency Equity Teams**” within 30 days, and these Equity Teams will provide an annual report to a **Steering Committee** headed by Biden’s Director of Domestic Policy, former Obama National Security Advisor [Susan Rice](#). (Sec. 2)

Each agency head “*shall support ongoing implementation of a comprehensive equity strategy that uses the agency’s policy, **budgetary, programmatic, service-delivery, procurement, data-collection processes, grantmaking, public engagement, research and evaluation, and regulatory functions** to . . . yield **equitable outcomes** for all Americans, including underserved communities.*” (Sec. 3 Emphasis added)

“*Equitable outcomes*,” of course, are not the same as equal treatment or non-discrimination that rewards individual merit. Open-ended references to budgetary processes and grantmaking will become a jobs program for woke DEI consultants and a pot of gold for outside organizations.

According to a **Claremont Institute** [investigation](#), since 2020 **Black Lives Matter**-affiliated organizations received more than **\$83 billion** in funds from corporations. Manhattan Institute fellow **Christopher Rufo** [predicts](#) that Biden’s Executive Order will “*embed the principles of left-wing racialism throughout the federal government*,” transferring government funds to outside third party activist groups which cannot be held accountable for huge equity-related subsidies.

Section 10 defines the term “**algorithmic discrimination**” as “*instances when automated systems contribute to unjustified different treatment or impacts disfavoring people based on their actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, etc.*” In effect, this authorizes DEI officials to use technology and algorithms to discriminate against non-minority persons who don’t fit the favored profiles.

America First Legal (AFL), which has [described](#) the EO as a “*radical, racist, and fundamentally anti-American overhaul of every federal function under the guise of ‘equity,’*” also noted that benefits for “underserved” groups likely will include **illegal immigrants**.

This vast power grab by the Executive Branch is being implemented without congressional approval and with no credible evidence that racial discrimination is “systemic” in the United States. *Why now?*

Will the Supreme Court End Racial Preferences in Higher Education?

The Administration could be trying to get ahead of a pending **Supreme Court** decision, expected in June, which could end racial preferences in higher education.

On October 31, 2022, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in two cases challenging racial preferences at **Harvard University** and the **University of North Carolina (Harvard/UNC)**. The plaintiffs, **Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA)**, are representing higher-scoring Asian and white students who sued the private and public schools for discriminatory admission policies.

Defense Department and military educational institutions are not parties to the case, but Justice Department **Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar** represented the Department of Defense in presenting arguments *for* discriminatory admission policies at Harvard and UNC.

As CMR reported in [this article](#), Solicitor General Prelogar admitted that the military relies on discriminatory policies that maintain racial “diversity” in **ROTC** (contract) programs and the military service academies. She also claimed without evidence that these policies are essential for national security.

There is no way to know whether the Court will be persuaded by that argument, but a group called **Veterans for Fairness and Merit (VFM)** filed an [amicus brief](#) arguing that racial preferences are not necessary or “critical” to the military’s ability to defend the Nation.

The Supreme Court may end racial preferences in higher education, but that doesn’t mean all discrimination will stop. As **John B. Daukas** noted in this *Wall Street Journal* [article](#), some school districts kept discriminating even after the landmark 1954 [Brown v. Board of Education](#) ruling.

Colleges and universities, including the Defense Department and military service academies, likely will

read the opinion with an eye toward finding loopholes and ambiguities that distinguish their practices from those of Harvard and the UNC, and allow them to keep on discriminating.

The Administration sees the writing on the wall. They are using Biden's radically woke Executive Order to bequeath eternal life on a powerful Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion bureaucracy, no matter what the Supreme Court says.

Will Congress Act to Protect Meritocracy?

The **U. S. Constitution**, it would seem, is the ultimate guarantor of equal protection under the law. The issue, however, remains unresolved. A future President could rescind this Executive Order and abolish the Diversity Industrial Complex that Joe Biden has established, but that opportunity won't arrive until January 2025.

In the meantime, Congress has the power of the purse, and members have good reasons to defund the Diversity Industrial Complex, which has become something of a racket.

The Defense Department has admitted that it spent **5,359,311 man-hours** for **Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's** mandatory anti-extremism stand-downs, and an additional **529,711 man-hours** for DEI-specific training. An investigation found [less than 100 cases](#) of "extremism" in the ranks, and a [RAND study](#) of Air Force social media posts found almost no cases of offensive speech.

Fox News [reported](#) that the Defense Department spend **\$91,000** on diversity and inclusion seminars for the **Air Force Band**. And the *Daily Caller* [reported](#) that the Air Force is hiring DEI officers at high salary rates ranging from **\$82,000** to **\$183,500** per year.

Sen. Tom Cotton and **Rep. Jim Banks** are sponsoring [legislation](#) to cap the salaries of Defense Department DEI officials at **\$31,000**. That might deter woke professionals whose [job market is drying up](#), but **Sen. Marco Rubio** (R-FL), Rep. Chip Roy (R-TX), and [several others](#) have announced [legislation](#) to abolish Pentagon Chief Diversity Officers and DEI advisors across the board.

At a March 23 Personnel Subcommittee hearing, **Rep. Jack Bergman** (R-MI) asked Defense Undersecretary for Personnel & Readiness **Gil Cisneros**, and three more Pentagon officials, whether DEI training was a "positive" thing for military recruitment. All four [answered](#) "yes," but when Bergman asked why the military was struggling with recruitment, there was a moment of awkward silence.

When Chairman Banks pressed for details of DEI program expenditures, Cisneros could not answer. The House Personnel Subcommittee should demand an immediate report on the activities of Chief Diversity Officers and military-related accomplishments of all DEI offices, organizations, and programs.

If members seek bi-partisan support for sound legislation that defunds DEI mandates and practices, while clarifying expectations of meritocracy and non-discrimination in military personnel policies, that effort just might succeed. Such a move would be a breakthrough accomplishment, leading to more positive actions that could break the back of the Diversity Industrial Complex.

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