

RESOLUTION - TITLE OF BILL/RESOLUTION/LEX



THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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54<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH SENATE

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**RESOLUTION #5410**

**Supporting Student Coalition Letters Concerning DEI on Campus**

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**NOTICE:** *A signature to sponsor means that you only wish for the legislation to be heard, a signature to endorse means that you support the contents and/or actions of this legislation.*

**WRITTEN BY:** Chair Olivia Friske, Chair, Senator, Survivor Advocacy and Feminist Education center, Women and Social Justice Caucus;

**COLLABORATED WITH:**

**SPONSORED BY:** Ellie Lutz, Chair, Internal Affairs Committee, Associate Senator, Warner College of Natural Resources

**ENDORSED BY:** Claire Pickerel, Senator, Warner College of Natural Resources; Madeleine Kamberg, Parliamentarian; Yoseline Rivera, Senator, El Centro; Lina Alvarez, Senator, El Centro; Lauren Davis, Chair, Housing Caucus, Senator, Survivor Advocacy and Feminist Education Center; Vladimir Lora-Pardo, Chair, Students of the Oval Caucus, Senator, Academic Advancement Center; University Affairs Committee; Odeth Tomas Saral, Senator, College of Liberal Arts; Internal Affairs Committee; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Affairs Committee;

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**ABSTRACT:** *The ASCSU senate shows their support for the Student Letter of Solidarity written by the CSU Student Coalition for Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies. This letter was composed February 17, 2025 and delivered to the upper administration of Colorado State University. We also show support for the letter written by The People United published on February 21, 2025.*

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**WHEREAS,**

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A letter sent by the U.S. Department of Education on February 14<sup>th</sup> directing higher education to comply with the outlined interpretation of the supreme court case, Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, that all race-conscious programming is illegal; and,

**WHEREAS,**

Federal funding could be prioritized over the Cultural Resource Centers, RGE (Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies) Department, and DEIA programing; and,

**WHEREAS,**

The Cultural Resource Centers (Asian Pacific American Cultural Center, Black/African American Cultural Center, El Centro, Native American Cultural Center, Pride Resource Center, Student Disability Center, Survivor Advocacy and Feminist Education Center) are integral to the well-being and success to students; and,

**WHEREAS,**

Students have organized a petition regarding DEIA on campus, signed by 3,512 individuals as of February 21<sup>st</sup>, and held several protests in order to show CSU administration how important these aspects of the collegiate experience are; *so,*

**THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**

That ASCSU Senate and other entities within ASCSU that desire to be in support of the Student Letter of Solidarity written by the Colorado State University Coalition for Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies and the letter written by The People United; and,

**THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED**

That the ASCSU Senate and other entities within ASCSU support the sentiments of the students to protect DEI on campus; and,

**THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED**

That a copy of this legislation be forwarded to Amy Parsons, President, Colorado State University; Tony Frank, Chancellor, CSU System; Blanche Hughes, Vice President, Student Affairs; Ben Schrader, ASCSU Advisor; Jason Huitt, ASCSU Advisor; Elisa Randazzo, ASCSU Administrative Assistant; Sagarika Sarma, Interim Director of the Asian Pacific American Cultural Center, Duan Ruff, Director, Student Leadership Involvement and Community Engagement; John Miller IV, Director, Black/African American Cultural Center; Aaron Escobedo Garmon, Director, El Centro; Maggie Hendrickson, Director, Pride Resource Center; Tyrone Smith, Director of the Native American Cultural Center; Victoria Benjamin, Director, Survivor Advocacy & Feminist Education Center; Justin Dove, Director, Student Disability Center;

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PASSAGE AND ENACTMENT OF RESOLUTION 5410  
SESSION OF PASSAGE

Passed in the emergency session on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

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Yays      -      Nays      -      Abstentions

Passed with unanimous consent

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3/10/2025

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ASCSU SPEAKER OF THE SENATE HAYDEN TAYLOR

DATE

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ASCSU PRESIDENT NICK DESALVO

DATE

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**RESOURCES:**

Use this section to place any relevant citations and/or resources used in the producing of this legislation.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/diversity/race-ethnicity/2025/02/15/trump-admin-threatens-rescind-federal-funds-over-dei>

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CSU Student Coalition for Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies Letter:

Dear CSU Administration,

In the wake of current events we, as a coalition of students, are writing to express our solidarity and support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) programs, entire

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departments such as the RGE Department (Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies (formerly known as Women and Gender Studies/ Ethnic Studies)), and Cultural Resource Centers housed under the Office of Inclusive Excellence. It's our firm belief that a more diverse, more equitable, and more inclusive Colorado State University provides a more robust and richer experience for students, staff, and professors.

We, the undersigned, fully support the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) efforts at Colorado State University. Many DEIA measures are implementations of the Colorado Department of Education's Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education framework coming down from state leadership in Denver and for good reason. The introduction to this framework states:

"Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education draws on decades of research in asset-based pedagogies that recognize that cultural difference (including racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, sexuality and ability) should be treated as assets for teaching and learning. This approach to education, according to Dr. Django Paris, counters dominant narratives about difference as deficits or as characteristics of students and families that should be remediated or assimilated."

In other words, this framework encourages and guides schools to create a welcoming environment for all students; to teach children age-appropriate, accurate history; to connect students across cultural differences and through similarities; and to promote critical thinking skills so students can be informed and compassionate American and global citizens who respect and explore a diversity of ideas from a variety of vantage points. DEIA measures are simply standard 21st-century pedagogy.

Still, in recent months, a campaign to halt DEIA efforts has surfaced in our communities. These efforts are grounded in mistruths and a coordinated, national propaganda campaign. The erroneous foundations of the arguments against DEIA measures have gone unchallenged by some of our school boards- or even endorsed and supported.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and the CO CR-S framework are not an embodiment of critical race theory. Critical race theory is a body of scholarly work that examines the racial dimensions of American law and other institutions in society. This conceptual framework was developed after a substantial amount of highly scrutinized academic work was presented in peer-reviewed journals.

Critical race theory does not appear in K-12 curriculums and is not being proposed. Creating welcoming classrooms and critical thinkers is not "indoctrinating" students with "critical race theory"— it is teaching our children well.

On February 14th, the U.S. Department of Education sent a letter explicitly and misguidedly claiming that DEIA has been a tool utilized by institutions for "smuggling racial stereotypes and explicit race consciousness into everyday training, programming, and discipline." The letter backs this labeling under the notion that they aim to "reaffirm the nondiscrimination

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obligations of schools and other entities that receive federal financial assistance.” Colorado State University is a public land-grant institution that receives federal funding, and therefore it is directly impacted by the letter’s implications. CSU’s students, faculty, and staff will be subject to regulations they do not agree to, that directly target them on the basis of identity, violating their rights.

The letter notes that it will begin taking measures against entities that do not meet their demand to eradicate all identity (race, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.) based practices 14 days after the release date, on February 28th.

We, the undersigned, are appalled by the Department’s mischaracterization of discrimination within higher education in all its stages, as the letter’s references to historical documents and provisions such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 entirely distort - even erase - their intrinsic intentions. The letter relies on what academics and non-academics alike refer to as reverse racism - the idea that folks with racial privilege experience racism. Racism is, however, the systemic oppression of people based on race, which DEIA and historical measures like the Civil Rights Act aim to challenge. DEIA ameliorates a portion of the traumas and grievances that already exist as legacies of the United States’ history with racism and oppression; DEIA does not claim superiority nor preference for any identity. The Department of Education’s verbiage indicates an unawareness of the persistence of racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. that affect marginalized groups today, as they assume that anything identity-specific will inevitably result in supremacy of the group. This is not the case when said group faces institutional oppression.

In the letter, the Department reprimands programs and actions designed to achieve “diversity, racial balancing, social justice, or equity.” Here, we would like to emphasize two of Colorado State University’s Principles of Community: inclusion and social justice. We therefore expect nothing less than continued support from the institution for the programs, people, and practices we rely on to reify these principles. The fact that equity and social justice are, for the Department of Education, a point of critique and a marker of discrimination, is entirely nonsensical and disturbing.

Many individuals already understand systemic racism— and systemic sexism, classism, and heterosexism— because they experience it, and because they have emergent critical thinking skills. Many of these students have spoken in front of their school boards about their experiences of discrimination in their schools and communities, which encouraged administrators to begin or accelerate DEIA efforts. School staff need support as they lead classroom efforts to include all students— not cameras and McCarthy-esque witch hunts- and students need factual information and opportunities to discuss historical and contemporary systemic issues as they arise.

America is a work in progress, a country dedicated to democracy, to doing better, to being better. Here, we make space for everyone to create and experience the promise of liberty and justice for all. And all means ALL. As patriotic Americans, we are compelled to denounce the attack on DEIA. We denounce the vilification of inclusivity. We denounce the attacks on truth,

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democracy, and civility. And we denounce unfounded attacks on CRT. We will not move our communities backward and allow misinformed community members to silence these attempts to address bigotry and exclusionary practices in our public schools.

We urge you to please renew your commitment to education, and resist the tide of anti-intellectual fascism that threatens our futures and the lives of future generations.

Solidarity Forever,  
CSU Student Coalition for Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies

### The People United Letter:

President Parsons,

We are writing on behalf of The People United, a coalition of students and community members who are deeply concerned about CSU's response to recent federal directives regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. In your email to the CSU community, you assured us that the university is "confident that the institution currently complies with the law." Yet, despite this confidence, your response has been to shift employee duties, alter human resources policies, and modify CSU's websites, all **before** any formal legal challenge has even been made against the university.

Your message attempts to frame these decisions as necessary steps to secure federal funding, but the truth is clear: CSU is not simply complying with the law—it is preemptively erasing and dismantling resources that directly support marginalized students. If CSU truly stands by its values as a land-grant institution committed to "unlocking the doors of opportunity for all," then why have these changes already happened? Why were mentions of undocumented students erased from CSU's website with no explanation? Why were DEI and Safe Zone trainings quietly put on hold? Why has there been zero transparency about how decisions are being made regarding the Cultural Resource Centers and the Department of Race, Gender, and Ethnic Studies? And this isn't just about pausing programs—it's about sending a message that these students, faculty, and staff are expendable. CSU employees who have historically led efforts to support undocumented students were suddenly denied funding to attend a regional conference, explicitly told they could not represent CSU on the subject. Faculty and staff are left in the dark about their roles and whether their work is being phased out. If CSU was truly standing firm, it wouldn't be making these decisions behind closed doors. CSU has a choice to make. Other universities across the country are standing with their students and refusing to cave to these attacks on DEIA. Meanwhile, CSU is bending at the first sign of pressure. Instead of defending its community, it is making quiet changes, preemptively complying before anyone has even forced its hand. If the concern is federal funding, then find another way to fund these programs. If the concern is legal challenges, then let it get to that point and fight for us. Students, faculty, and staff should not have to pay the price for CSU's unwillingness to take a stand.

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We are demanding a real answer. Either find a way to fund and protect these programs, or be honest and admit that CSU is willing to sacrifice its values and its students for the sake of compliance. We are calling on you to stay the course until you are forced to change, not before. You cannot claim to put students first while erasing the very programs that make this university a place where all students can thrive. CSU must take a public stance against these federal directives and commit to fully funding and protecting all DEIA programs, the Cultural Resource Centers, and student resources without preemptive cuts, rebranding, or erasure. If CSU won't take a stand, we will. But make no mistake, we are watching, and we will not let this go unanswered.

We look forward to your response. The People United

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**THAT THIS LEGISLATION SHALL BE FORWARDED TO:**

**Amy Parsons**, President of Colorado State University  
**Tony Frank**, Chancellor of the Colorado State University System  
**Blanche Hughes**, Vice President for Student Affairs of Colorado State University  
**Evan Welch**, Talent Development Specialist, ASCSU Advisor  
**Lindsay Mason**, Director of Off-Campus Life, ASCSU Advisor  
**Ben Schrader**, Director of the Adult Learner and Veteran Services, ASCSU Advisor  
**Jason Hewitt**, ASCSU Advisor  
**Elisa Randazzo**, ASCSU Administrative Assistant  
**Sagarika Sarma**, Interim Director of the Asian Pacific American Cultural Center  
**Duan Ruff**, Director, Student Leadership Involvement and Community Engagement  
**John Miller IV**, Director, Black/African American Cultural Center  
**Aaron Escobedo Garmon**, Director of El Centro  
**Maggie Hendrickson**, Director of the Pride Resource Center  
**Tyrone Smith**, Director of the Native American Cultural Center  
**Victoria Benjamin**, Director for the Survivor Advocacy & Feminist Education Center  
**Erica Ross**, Assistant Director for Educational Programs for the Survivor Advocacy & Feminist Education Center  
**Justin Dove**, Director of the Student Disability Center

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**ARCHIVE INFO [Parliamentarian Use Only]**

**INTRODUCTION DATE/SESSION:**

Introduced on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the 54<sup>th</sup> senate.

**ARCHIVE DATE:**

**COMMITTEE'S REVIEWED:**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Affairs Committee  
Internal Affairs Committee

**MONETARY? Y/N**

N

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University Affairs Committee