



**National
Urban League**

National Urban League - Demand Diversity Roundtable Communiqué

READOUT OF EMERGENCY ROUNDTABLE WITH THE NATION'S TOP CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERS IN RESPONSE TO ASSAULT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

On Wednesday, January 22, the National Urban League convened the nation's top civil and human rights leaders for an emergency strategy session and launch of the new Demand Diversity Roundtable to defend equal opportunity for all.

The Demand Diversity Roundtable signals a bold and unified response from civil society to fight back, stronger than ever, to counter the new Administration's ongoing attacks on our democratic values. The Trump Administration's Executive Orders to dismantle government diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, coupled with its unprecedented decision to upend decades of civil rights protections, which guarded against discrimination in government contracting, represent the latest chapter in a centuries-long scheme, to keep communities divided, disenfranchised, and disempowered. These harmful actions are intended to stoke fear in American workers, and threaten decades of hard-fought progress, making it critically important to stand together in the fight for equal opportunity for all.

More than 20 organizations representing communities totaling over 100 million Americans, reaffirmed their unwavering duty to defending the core American values that strengthen our nation: diversity, equity, and inclusion. Roundtable participants also discussed their steadfast commitment to exposing the divisive myths around diversity, highlighting the fact that 81% of Americans believe that companies should reflect the nation's racial diversity. They also underscored that diversity, equity, and inclusion do not undermine merit or lower standards; instead, they work to address and eliminate bias and discrimination.

Roundtable participants also discussed their efforts to join forces and launch a new nationwide effort to protect and defend diversity, equity, and inclusion, which includes but is not limited to engagement with Congress, outreach to corporate leaders, consumer education with respect to companies that have committed to or rolled back their diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and exploring litigation in state and federal courts to uphold the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



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Voices from the Demand Diversity Roundtable:

- Marc H. Morial, National Urban League President and CEO
"We must be the massive resistance. And, we must energize those who are in elected office, who are our allies and friends, that this is not a moment for paralysis of analysis, it's a moment for action. We must energize those in positions of economic power that collectively the people around this table represent more than \$5 trillion in consumer spending power. That consumer spending power is a tool to be deployed and employed. We must use everything we have to fight this battle."
- Janai Nelson, President and CEO, President and Director-Counsel Legal Defense Fund
"We cannot be distracted by false narratives and rhetoric from a president that is foaming at the mouth with hate and division. We must respond with the rule of law."
- Virginia Kase Solomón, President and CEO, Common Cause
"To the people who oppose us, the ones who attack DEI, they have tried to bastardize that acronym. Instead, they want to Diminish, Exterminate, and Incapacitate progress towards a multiracial democracy in an effort to maintain white supremacy and concentration of wealth."
- Juan Proaño, CEO, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
"Beyond economic concerns, the rollback of DEI initiatives threatens to erase the hard won progress of social inclusion. This deepens existing disparities particularly in employment and education where Latinos have significantly faced barriers."
- Maya Berry, Executive Director, Arab American Institute (AAI)
"One of the key elements that we need to apply consistently across the board to every single American, every single community, is that Arab Americans require public safety. That requires that we are represented and serviced by a workforce that looks like us."
- Gregg Orton, National Director, National Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
"The recent opponents of DEI are attacking it because it works. It is simply about power and control. When our communities of color are given an opportunity to empower ourselves, that directly threatens our opponents' ability to control us—and that's why we fight."



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- Kelley Robinson, President, Human Rights Campaign Foundation
"When we talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion, let's not sugar coat it: it's good for people, but it's also good for business. What this work is really about is attracting top talent, about earning the business of consumers across this country and the world, it's about increasing the bottom lines of business."
- Fatima Goss Graves, President and CEO, National Women's Law Center
"The reason that they are using the phrase 'DEI' every single time is to make it more alienating and to strip the power away from the ideals of diversity. The other thing they are trying to do right now is to bully businesses and schools and anyone who has been trying to shift their culture to finally address the scourge of discrimination into submission, and that bullying is now going to take the effect of having the force and weight of the federal law behind it."
- Amy Spitalnick, CEO, Jewish Council for Public Affairs
"The only path forward is one in which we recognize that our safety and our futures are inextricably linked, that diversity and pluralism are our greatest strengths, that building strong inclusive coalitions where all of us can show up as our true selves without having to check our identities at the door, is existential to all of our communities."
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, Co-founder and Executive Director, African American Policy Forum
"They're coming after the entire infrastructure that has been created from the Civil Rights Movement. We know we have to fight collaboratively, we have to fight collectively, we have to fight creatively. But, we also have to fight with an idea that we refuse to allow any of what we have created to be lost."
- Damon Hewitt, President and Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
"When they say they are against diversity, equity and inclusion, what they are really telling us is that they are for the opposite of diversity: racial isolation; they are for the opposite of equity: gross inequity and unfairness; they are for the opposite of inclusion: racialized exclusion."



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- Brenda Victoria Castillo, President and CEO, National Hispanic Media Coalition
"We are the consumers, we are the customer base. The U.S. is projected to become more diverse by 2045, and diverse Americans are projected to account for 50.3% of the population. Studies show that businesses are more successful when they build workforces that represent the communities that they serve and are their customer base... Anti-diversity, as far as I'm concerned, is anti-business."
- Samantha Tweedy, President, The Black Economic Alliance Foundation
"Diversity is popular with Americans, and it's popular with Americans of all stripes, because Americans understand that it creates value for businesses. This is good for the company, it's good for the economy as a whole, good for our country, and certainly worth defending."
- Alphonso David, President and CEO, Global Black Economic Forum
"Over the last few years, coordinated disinformation campaigns have sought to discredit and redefine diversity, equity, and inclusion by framing it as divisive, unnecessary, or worse—perpetuating mediocrity. The 2025 'anti-DEI' Executive Orders that have been issued by this new administration seek to place restrictions on programs that, at their core, seek to do one thing: advance economic opportunities."
- Margaret L. Huang, President and CEO, the Southern Poverty Law Center
"This is the same battle of hate we've been waging against for generations, only now, it's dressed up with new names and new vocabularies."
- Sheila Katz, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women
"Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion is not political, it is moral. It's about treating every person with dignity and fairness, creating workspaces and schools where all people, regardless of their race, religion, gender, and abilities, can thrive."
- Rev. Shavon Arline-Bradley, President and CEO, National Council of Negro Women
"Our buying power and our people power has not been honored. It is important to stand, even if there are no words. The work cannot end. I call on us now to collaborate, advance justice, and advance people's rights."



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- Derrick Johnson, President and CEO, NAACP
"I would like to remind all Americans— it will be you next. Because as services are privatized, the cost of things will go up because profit will be placed over people. The outcome is to enrich a small class of individuals by leveraging our tax dollars in ways in which our democracy will be so undermined that we will be looking at a federal government that will be a shell of itself if we don't stand up now."
- Melanie Campbell, President and CEO, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
"This moment demands vigilance. DEI rollbacks are an attack on progress, and we must respond with unity, as we are today, and with resolve."

The Demand Diversity Roundtable stands united under the belief that America is fully capable of providing an abundance in opportunities for all communities, and that no Executive Order can undermine our equal rights protections enshrined by the U.S. Constitution. Diversity is about securing America's future: a future where innovation thrives, prosperity is shared, and our collective strength as a nation is amplified through the contributions of all.

- Visit <https://nul.org/event/demand-diversity-roundtable> to watch the inaugural meeting of the Demand Diversity Roundtable and to learn more about this initiative.
- View our [FAQs on DEI](#) to educate yourself about the truth of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Take our [Demand Diversity Pledge](#) to join us in this fight for equal opportunity for all.