



**For Immediate Release**  
March 13, 2024

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### **30 Civil and Human Rights Organizations Urge Congress to Oppose Anti-DEIA Funding Cuts**

This week, thirty civil and human rights organizations sent a [letter](#) to congressional leaders urging them to remove all provisions in the pending fiscal year 2024 budget legislation which would prohibit federal agencies from funding diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) programs, programs pertaining to “critical race theory,” and the implementation of racial equity-focused executive orders. The provisions at issue are riders, meaning they are supplemental language added to the legislative text but are irrelevant to the purpose of the bill. The letter from the civil and human rights organizations emphasizes the rider provisions’ adverse impact on the federal government’s ability to advance equal opportunity and civil rights for better service to all Americans.

The civil and human rights organizations’ letter, sent to Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Speaker Mike Johnson, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, House Appropriations Committee Chair Kay Granger, Ranking Committee Member Rosa DeLauro, Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Patty Murray, and Committee Vice Chair Susan Collins, outlines the risks of the proposed bans while also outlining the benefits of federal programs that increase access to opportunity for marginalized and underrepresented communities.

“These provisions included in the remaining FY24 appropriations bills unfairly target critical initiatives designed to ensure equal opportunity for people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups,” said Hamida Labi, Senior Policy Counsel at the Legal Defense Fund (LDF). “In order to fully realize our nation’s multiracial democracy, we must ensure that pathways to opportunity are open to all, especially for communities that have historically faced barriers. We urge Congress to reject these dangerous riders—and reaffirm its commitment to equity for underserved communities.”

“We must recognize the vital contributions of DEIA and other measures have to ensuring equal access for underrepresented groups, increasing opportunity, and in strengthening our nation as a whole,” said Amalea Smirniotopoulos, Senior Policy Counsel and Co-Manager of the Equal Protection Initiative at LDF. “It is crucial that Congress reject the riders and recommit to advancing our nation’s democracy for all.”

The letter is signed by [LDF](#), [American Association of University Women](#), [American Civil Liberties Union](#), [American Federation of Teachers](#), [Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC](#), [Autistic Self-Advocacy Network](#), [Education Law Center Pennsylvania](#), [Girls, Inc.](#), [Japanese American Citizens League](#), [LatinoJustice PRLDEF](#), [Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#), [National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities](#), [NAACP](#), [National Black](#)

Justice Coalition, National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment, National Center for Transgender Equality, National Council of Jewish Women, National Education Association, National Employment Lawyers Association, National Employment Law Project, National Institute for Workers' Rights, National Partnership for Women and Families, National Women's Law Center, PFLAG National, Poverty and Race Research Action Council, Sikh Coalition, Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund, Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF), UnidosUS, and Sarah C. von der Lippe, Pro Bono Counsel, Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Read the full letter [here](#).

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*Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.*