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# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Attorney General Brown Urges U.S. Department of Education to Maintain Commitments to Student Equity and Opportunity**

### ***Coalition of 18 States Submit Letter in Response to ED's Proposed Grantmaking Priorities Eliminating Commitment to Equity and Inclusion for all Students***

**BALTIMORE, MD (June 20, 2025)** – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today joined a multistate coalition of 18 attorneys general in urging the U.S. Department of Education to continue advancing grantmaking priorities intended to promote equity in access to educational resources and opportunity, address existing disparities in education, and help schools comply with federal laws requiring schools to foster inclusive learning environments for all students.

The request to the Department was made in a [comment letter](#) sent by Attorney General Brown and the coalition to Secretary of Education Linda McMahon.

The letter was sent in response to the Department's publication of new [Proposed Priorities](#) for assessing grant applications, which would eliminate the Department's grantmaking priorities to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools. The new Proposed Priorities would replace the Biden Administration's previous Supplemental Priorities including such commitments, which the Department has disparaged as being "discriminatory" and "divisive."

In the letter, Attorney General Brown and the coalition highlight the importance of continuing priorities related to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion to promote educational success for all students and ensure schools' compliance with federal laws.

Specifically, the coalition asserts that abandoning the Supplemental Priorities' commitments related to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion would further exacerbate existing harm to school districts already experiencing inequities in access to resources, high-quality education, opportunity, and more. Indeed, such priorities were specifically designed to address these inequities, especially in low-income schools and amidst a nation-wide shortage of certified teachers, by supporting the success of all students, regardless of background.

Notably, the coalition underscores that—contrary to the Department’s position—initiatives promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and different perspectives and experiences were not forbidden by *Students for Fair Admissions v. President & Fellows of Harvard Coll.*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023).

On the contrary, properly developed and implemented diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives help to prevent unlawful bias and discrimination, boost student and teacher morale, and remove barriers to inclusion and opportunity for students, ensuring that no student is left behind due to their background or identity.

Furthermore, the coalition asserts that eliminating the previous priorities would put schools at increased risk of violating various federal laws that require schools to engage in actions that support diversity, equity, and inclusion for the success of all students. Such federal laws include Title VI, which prohibits discrimination in education based on race and other protected characteristics; the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which requires schools to implement various practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a condition for federal funding under Title I; and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), which requires schools to ensure individualized inclusion for students with disabilities as a condition for certain federal funding.

Accordingly, Attorney General Brown and the coalition urge the Department to modify its new Proposed Priorities to include previous priorities advancing equity for students and to comply with existing federal law.

Joining Attorney General Brown in submitting the comment letter are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.

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