

Senator Brian Lenney Announces Bill to Disband DEI Bureaucracies in Idaho Public Higher Education

Nampa, ID – December 18, 2023 – State Senator Brian Lenney of the Idaho Freedom Caucus is spearheading a bill for the 2024 session to reshape Idaho's public higher education. His legislation, banning the funding and creation of DEI offices, mirrors similar movements in Oklahoma, Florida, Texas, and Iowa, prioritizing merit and equal opportunity over DEI initiatives.

“This bill aligns Idaho with a growing national trend. We're taking a stand against the unnecessary expenditure on DEI bureaucracies, focusing our resources on academic excellence and merit-based opportunities. Our goal is to ensure a fair and effective educational system for all Idahoans, free from the influences of identity politics,” stated Senator Lenney.

Key Provisions of the Bill:

1. The bill bars the use of funds to support DEI offices, officers, and employees at Idaho's public higher education institutions.
2. It eliminates the consideration of diversity statements in employment and college admissions processes.
3. The legislation also prohibits mandatory diversity training for students, faculty, and staff at these institutions.

The proposed legislation is not only a policy shift but also a fiscal strategy. The removal of directors and support staff for DEI offices across four major universities in Idaho is projected to return approximately \$4,592,000 to the general fund for fiscal year 2025. This significant saving enhances our ability to allocate funds more effectively towards critical educational resources and facilities.

Senator Lenney emphasizes, "This isn't just about streamlining operations; it's about ensuring taxpayer dollars are used in the most efficient way possible to support the primary educational needs of our students."

This bill represents a turning point in Idaho's higher education, aligning it with a national movement towards a more efficient, financially responsible approach in public colleges and universities.

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