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Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to express the ACLU of Kentucky's opposition to Senate Bill 6.

States have experienced a wave of anti-intellectual, anti-DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) bills in their legislatures since 2020, when the fight against systemic racism became a central policy theme in response to the police killings of Black people like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Kentucky is no exception.

While bill sponsors claim none of the provisions in SB 6 should be "construed to affect First Amendment rights or academic freedom," it is a thinly veiled attempt to silence discussions of race, gender, and sexuality on campuses. If SB 6 is passed into law, it will suppress free speech and deny people the right to an accurate, complete, and inclusive learning environment.

Our country often overlooks its history of racial violence and injustice. Efforts to combat systemic racism and embrace diversity in all its forms aim to provide students with a comprehensive picture of our past, however unflattering. Our history should make us uncomfortable, so we might learn from our mistakes.

These bills are cookie-cutter pieces of legislation generated by special interest groups and partisan organizations who do not consider Kentucky's unique challenges and circumstances.

Eliminating DEI programs from Kentucky's institutions of higher education will make it harder for people who are already marginalized to succeed and perpetuate cycles of generational poverty. Kentucky cannot afford to turn away those who seek to become the doctors, educators, and leaders we so desperately need.

Our policies should reflect and celebrate diversity, rather than stifle it. Our population is growing and changing, and that is a good thing. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are signs of evolution, and if we do not embrace them, we will be left behind.

Dismissing inequities, or legislating Kentuckians' ability to even discuss our differences, does not erase racism, bigotry, or any other and will only exacerbate the problems our society state, and society face.

I respectfully encourage you to vote No on Senate Bill 6.

Sincerely,

Kate Miller  
Advocacy Director