



The State Employees' Association Of New Hampshire, Inc.

Service Employees International Union, Local 1984, CTW, CLC

HB 544 Does More Harm than Good

By: Mikayla Bourque, SEA/SEIU 1984

HB 544 summarized, "Prohibits any public employee training or education in New Hampshire that teaches "divisive concepts." The definition of "divisive concepts" includes several concepts on race and sex, such as the concept that "an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously."

We, the Lavender Caucus of the SEA/ Local 1984, strongly oppose HB544. This bill does nothing to prevent divisiveness but only seeks to obfuscate the truth. We know that homophobia is a problem in our society and in our political lives. [Recently, State Rep. Dick Marston, R-Manchester, caused the House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee meeting to end abruptly](#) when he raised the chairman's ire by referring to the LGBTQ+ community with the words "deviant sexuality."

It will be a roadblock to holding discussions around accountability, equality, and justice. This dangerous and ignorant bill has real-world consequences. I, as the chair of the Lavender Caucus, representing the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex & Questioning (LGBTIQ) communities within NH, strongly oppose this bill.

[According to the Concord Monitor](#), the bill is similar to the federal executive order issued by President Donald Trump in November 2020 that restricted federal institutions from using curriculum about systemic racism, white privilege, and other race and gender bias issues. President Joe Biden rescinded the order on Jan. 20, 2021, the day of his inauguration.

NHPR states that the bill text reads, "topics that would be banned include ideas that New Hampshire or the U.S. is fundamentally racist or sexist, that individuals are inherently oppressive due to their race or sex, that individuals should feel discomfort or guilt on account of their race or sex, that meritocracy and "hard work ethic" is inherently oppressive, and or any other form of race or sex "stereotyping" or "scapegoating." The bill addresses race and sex, but not gender.

This bill was heard by the House Executive Departments and Administration committee on February 18th; please reach out to the committee members at HouseExecutiveDepartmentsandAdministration@leg.state.nh.us to let them know this bill should be tabled or voted as Inexpedient to Legislate or ITL.

The Lavender Caucus is a committee of the SEA/SEIU 1984. The Lavender Caucus is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex & Questioning (LGBTIQ) Caucus of the Service Employees International Union whose purpose is to facilitate open and respectful communication between the LGBTIQ community and the labor movement.

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