

June 29, 2021

Governor Chris Sununu  
107 N. Main St.  
Concord, NH 03301

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Dear Governor Sununu,

We are writing to inform you of our collective resignation from the Governor's Advisory Council on Diversity and Inclusion, effective immediately.

On June 25, 2021 you signed into law a provision that aims to censor conversations essential to advancing equity and inclusion in our state, specifically for those within our public education systems, and all state employees. This will directly impact those who are working with some of our state's most vulnerable populations, including educators, child welfare workers, and law enforcement.

This is in direct conflict with the stated purpose of the Council laid out in your 2018 Executive Order instructing us to identify ways to "combat discrimination and advance diversity and inclusion." We accepted your appointment to this council out of commitment and love for this state and your stated desire to advance diversity and inclusion. Given your willingness to sign this damaging provision and make it law, we are no longer able to serve as your advisors.

As members of the Council on Diversity and Inclusion, we have spent hundreds of hours in conversation with over a dozen New Hampshire communities over the past three years. We have heard the stories of struggle from individuals who have experienced racism, sexism, ableism and other forms of systemic discrimination right here in the Granite State. We have also heard uplifting stories of growth and learning from local leaders, police departments, and educators coming together to collectively address implicit bias and bias incidents. We have a responsibility to those community members to uplift their truth and ensure their voices are heard over the growing din of politically motivated fear mongering currently dominating the public discourse.

Governor, we feel obligated to inform you that—contrary to your recent public statements—systemic racism does in fact exist here in New Hampshire. You appointed us to explore these issues, and we have reported our findings to you in detail every step of the way. The pain that we heard in the voices of those who came to the meetings to convey their truths and lived experiences served as a call to action. The only way to truly serve all Granite Staters is to acknowledge what is true for some of the citizens, continue to implement many of the strategies suggested by teams and councils you appointed to examine discrimination, and heal from the wounds of the past so we can create a brighter future for our children.

We sent you two letters urging you to oppose this damaging legislative proposal, both in its original form and as passed by the Senate, and requested a chance to meet with you to seek a solution that didn't derail the important efforts underway in New Hampshire. The Council has continuously worked to deliver to you our findings, sent you our opinion that this would weaken—not strengthen—the state's anti-discrimination laws, and urged you to oppose this provision. Your disregard of this work makes clear that we are no longer able to fulfill the Council's mandate.

It should not be taken lightly that nearly every member of the Council that is not part of your administration is resigning today, as we collectively see no path forward with this legislation in place.

Despite our resignation from this Council, we are more committed than ever to advancing the real work that is needed to build a more equitable and inclusive Granite State. Separate from the Council, we will find ways to support local educators, municipal employees, and community leaders as they grapple with the corrosive impact of this legislation, which we are already seeing at a local level throughout the state. We look forward to many future honest and difficult conversations about race, gender, and other forms of discrimination and bias. We also hope that, in time, you will come to understand the true damage that this legislation has caused to the fabric of New Hampshire's communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dottie Morris  
Devon Chaffee  
Maria Devlin  
Sharon Harris  
James Maggiore  
Dr. Salman Malik  
Dr. James Morse  
Pawn Nitichan  
Sheriff Eliezer Rivera  
Allyson Ryder