

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515–4205**

July 16, 2025

The Honorable Linda E. McMahon  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon,

I applaud your exceptional efforts to fight for fairness in America’s institutions of higher education. I write to alert you to troubling evidence that Belmont University—while publicly claiming compliance with the Trump Administration’s directives to eliminate all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs—has simply relabeled its DEI bureaucracy as “HUB” (Hope, Unity, and Belonging) and is continuing precisely the activities the Department has ordered universities to discontinue. If accurate, this conduct violates Executive Order 14173 (Combating Radical Ideologies in Higher Education”, contravenes your Department’s March 27 guidance, and may also run afoul of Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Leaked video recordings from Belmont officials, including Assistant Director of “Student Success and Flourishing” Jozef Lukey, reveal an intentional strategy: *“We’re trying to create as inclusive a space as possible without attracting notice.”* This suggests that they are concealing their conduct because they know it may violate the law. According to the recordings, staff are also concealing the presence of illegal-alien students from federal authorities—an apparent violation of both immigration law and the Department’s guidance that federally funded institutions must not aid or abet unlawful presence.

This conduct extended beyond student-facing programming. Sources at Belmont have confirmed to my office that in late April of this year, well after President Trump issued Executive Order 14173, Belmont University was still conducting elections on Qualtrics to serve on their Faculty Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Committee *for next academic year*.

Belmont is not an isolated case. A growing number of institutions appear to be engaged in the same cosmetic rebranding:

- American University renamed its “Center for Diversity and Inclusion” the “Center for Student Belonging.”<sup>1</sup>
- Northeastern University renamed its “Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion” the “Office of Belonging.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theeagleonline.com/article/2025/05/breaking-center-for-diversity-and-inclusion-to-be-rebranded-as-center-for-student-belonging>

<sup>2</sup> <https://huntnewsnu.com/83151/campus/northeastern-purges-dei-websites-and-messaging-amid-trump-executive-order/>

- George Mason renamed its DEI office the “Office of Access, Compliance, and Community.”<sup>3</sup>

These examples are in addition to the situation at Harvard University, which rebranded multiple DEI offices as offices of “Community and Belonging” and “Community and Campus Life” as it fights your Department’s excellent work to take corrective action to stop the racist practices there.<sup>4</sup>

These rebranding exercises thwart both the letter and the spirit of Executive Order 14173 and subsequent Departmental guidance, which bar the use of federal funds for programs that treat students or employees differently on the basis of race or sex, and indicate that these institutions likely continue to violate Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 on a routine basis. They also impede Congress’s oversight responsibility by obscuring the true extent of non-compliance on campus.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that the Department:

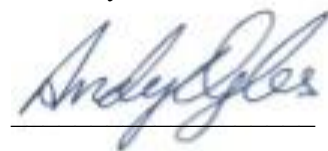
1. Initiate an immediate compliance review of Belmont University’s “HUB” operation to determine whether its activities differ in substance from the prior DEI program;
2. Issue clarified guidance affirming that cosmetic name changes constitute non-compliance and will trigger loss of Title IV eligibility and other federal funding and
3. Report to Congress on the prevalence of post-EO 14173 DEI rebranding across federally funded institutions and the enforcement actions the Department is undertaking.

I would also appreciate your perspective on how Congress can best support your department in its efforts to ensure that discriminatory DEI initiatives find no refuge – under any name – at institutions receiving taxpayer dollars. Many of my colleagues and I stand ready to provide legislative or other support to assist the department with this work.

Belmont’s actions demonstrate contempt for both federal law and for the taxpayers who finance higher education. Without swift enforcement against such actions, more institutions may be emboldened to adopt the same shell game, undermining the Administration’s efforts to restore color-blind, merit-based policies in American education. Belmont University, like all universities, must understand that if they persist in promoting racist DEI programs in violation of their students’ rights, they will be defunded.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I stand ready to assist the Department in any way necessary to ensure robust enforcement.

Sincerely,



Andy Ogles  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> <https://wtop.com/education/2025/07/students-faculty-and-lawmakers-rally-behind-george-mason-university-amid-trump-administration-civil-rights-probe/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.campusreform.org/article/harvard-rebrands-dei-office-office-community-campus-life/27898?>