

1                   **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2                   STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3                   1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

4                   ENGROSSED SENATE  
5                   BILL NO. 796

By: Pugh, Bullard, Hines, Jett,  
and Hamilton of the Senate

6                   and

7                   Crosswhite Hader and Wilk  
8                   of the House

10                  An Act relating to higher education; prohibiting  
11                  certain institutions of higher education from using  
12                  state funds, property, or resources to support or  
13                  require certain activities related to diversity,  
14                  equity, and inclusion; requiring certain institutions  
15                  of higher education to initiate certain review after  
16                  certain date; providing for restructuring or  
17                  elimination of certain unnecessary functions;  
18                  providing certain construction; requiring certain  
19                  institutions to submit certain annual certificate of  
20                  compliance by certain date; providing for  
21                  promulgation of rules; providing for codification;  
22                  providing an effective date; and declaring an  
23                  emergency.

24                  BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

25                  SECTION 1.        NEW LAW        A new section of law to be codified

26                  in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3251 of Title 70, unless there  
27                  is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1           A. No institution of higher education within The Oklahoma State  
2 System of Higher Education shall utilize state funds, property, or  
3 resources to:

4           1. Grant or support diversity, equity, and inclusion positions,  
5 departments, activities, procedures, or programs to the extent they  
6 grant preferential treatment based on one person's particular race,  
7 color, ethnicity, or national origin over another's;

8           2. Mandate any person to participate in, listen to, or receive  
9 any education, training, activities, procedures, or programming to  
10 the extent such education, training, activities, procedures, or  
11 programming grants preferences based on one person's particular  
12 race, color, sex, ethnicity, or national origin over another's;

13           3. Mandate any person swear, certify, or agree to any loyalty  
14 oath that favors or prefers one particular race, color, sex,  
15 ethnicity, or national origin over another's;

16           4. Mandate any person to certify or declare agreement with,  
17 recognition of, or adherence to any particular political,  
18 philosophical, religious, or other ideological viewpoint;

19           5. Mandate any applicant for employment provide a diversity,  
20 equity, and inclusion statement or give any applicant for employment  
21 preferential consideration based on the provision of such a  
22 diversity, equity, and inclusion statement; or

23           6. Mandate any person to disclose his or her pronouns.

1       B. After the effective date of this act, institutions of higher  
2 education within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education shall  
3 initiate a review of diversity, equity, and inclusion positions,  
4 departments, activities, procedures, and programs and, if deemed  
5 necessary, restructure or eliminate functions that are not necessary  
6 for compliance, accreditation, or student or employee support  
7 services intended to broadly support success.

8       C. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or  
9 prohibit institutions of higher education within The Oklahoma State  
10 System of Higher Education, including any agency of the executive  
11 branch supporting those institutions' work, from applying for a  
12 grant or complying with the accreditation requirements of an  
13 accrediting or licensing agency including, but not limited to,  
14 submitting to the grantor or accreditation agency a statement that:

15       1. Highlights the institution's or agency's work in supporting:

- 16           a. first-generation college students,
- 17           b. students from low-income families,
- 18           c. students with unique abilities, or
- 19           d. underserved student populations; or

20       2. Certifies compliance with applicable anti-discrimination  
21 laws, rules, and regulations.

22       D. The provisions of this section shall not be construed to  
23 apply to institutions of higher education within The Oklahoma State  
24 System of Higher Education with respect to:

1       1. A policy, practice, procedure, program, class, or activity  
2 required for compliance with state or federal laws, rules, or  
3 regulations for obtaining or retaining institutional, academic, or  
4 discipline-specific accreditation or licensure;

5       2. The academic freedom of any individual faculty member to  
6 direct the instruction within his or her own course;

7       3. Scholarly research or creative work by an institution of  
8 higher education's students, faculty, or other research personnel or  
9 the dissemination of such research or work;

10      4. An activity of a student organization registered with or  
11 recognized by an institution of higher education;

12      5. Guest speakers or performances on short-term engagements;

13      6. Academic support, tutoring, and career services and student  
14 success centers, so long as the programming is designed and  
15 implemented without regard to race, sex, color, national origin, or  
16 ethnicity;

17      7. Data collection; or

18      8. Access programs for military, veterans, Pell Grant  
19 recipients, first-generation college students, students from low-  
20 income families, students with unique abilities, or underserved  
21 student populations.

22      E. By July 1, 2026, and each July 1 thereafter, institutions of  
23 higher education within The Oklahoma State System of Higher  
24 Education shall electronically submit to the Governor, the President

1 Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
2 Representatives a certificate of compliance with the provisions of  
3 this section.

4 F. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the  
5 promotion of civil discourse, debate, or speech that is protected by  
6 the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

7 G. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may  
8 promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this section.

9 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

10 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
11 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby  
12 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
13 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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15 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION OVERSIGHT, dated  
04/16/2025 - DO PASS.

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