



PA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
655 K Street NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20001
PAEAonline.org • 703-548-5538

Statement for the Record
Submitted to
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce
Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee
Hearing entitled, "Divisive, Excessive, Ineffective: The Real Impact of DEI on College Campuses"
March 7, 2024

The PA Education Association (PAEA), representing the 306 accredited PA programs in the United States, welcomes the opportunity to submit a statement for the record concerning recent proposals to curtail equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts at colleges and universities.

Since the beginning of 2023, higher education has faced an unprecedented wave of new legislation aiming to restrict resources for EDI efforts with more than 80 bills being introduced or passed by state legislatures at the time of this writing. At a time of persistent health disparities and growing health workforce shortages, PAEA has consistently opposed these efforts as harmful and counterproductive to the Association's vision of achieving health for all. In February 2023, PAEA's Board of Directors called on state legislatures to abandon said efforts, stating, "To improve access to equitable care for all patients, PAEA is driving efforts to address and eliminate systemic racism and bias in PA education as part of its strategic plan. An important component of achieving this goal is ensuring that PA programs have the resources necessary to support students of diverse backgrounds, which emerging anti-EDI legislation would deny."

Despite these ongoing challenges, PA programs nationwide remain committed to recruiting student cohorts that mirror the diverse communities they aim to serve. In response to these obstacles, programs have committed to continuing recruitment efforts supporting students from underrepresented communities and leveraging initiatives like Project Access to introduce high

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school students to the path of becoming a PA. Additionally, programs have redoubled their support for already enrolled students from underserved communities, ensuring they receive the necessary assistance to complete their programs and contribute to the care of patients throughout the country.

While PA education has displayed resilience, federal policymakers will continue to play a critical role in mitigating the detrimental long-term effects of emerging state restrictions. PAEA urges the subcommittee to abandon anti-EDI rhetoric and instead pursue productive policy efforts to dismantle barriers for students pursuing health professions careers, such as by bolstering pipeline development programs, federal student aid resources, and investments for PA program expansion at minority-serving institutions.

PAEA welcomes the opportunity to continue engaging with members and staff on this critical work. Should you require additional information or have questions, please contact Tyler Smith, Senior Director of Government Relations, at tsmith@PAEAonline.org or 703-667-4356.