

Sen. Eric Wimberger opening remarks, May 7, 2024:

Long ago striving for “diversity” was a quest for diversity of thought. It was race-neutral and embodied Civil Rights Act era directives to act without regard for race, creed, color or national origin. Historically many believed people having certain immutable characteristics had nothing valuable to add, since immutable characteristics were inextricably tied to personal traits, and there was no need for that personality trait. Turning our back on those destructive policies, we’d spent a half century attempting to see each other as individuals, promoting the more noble idea that worthy ideas can come from someone regardless of what they may look like. Getting a particular statistical mix of people was not the goal inasmuch as it was not being afraid of having a mix of people to attain better things.

In recent years critical theories overtook conventional notions of diversity and introduced DEI. Academics and politicians gave up on looking beyond immutable characteristics, believing it an impossibility. To them, people are tribal, and they cannot escape implicit biases to their tribe. People with immutable characteristics develop a common and predictable culture and beliefs. Therefore, the diversity of thought can be achieved by embracing stereotypical behavior as a natural fact and creating a managed mix of immutable characteristics.

Instead of diversity of immutable characteristics being the inconsequential byproduct in a quest for thought diversity, critical theorists figured the only way to create diversity of thought was to focus on the immutable traits. A perfect mix of superficial characteristics, to them, brings with it different viewpoints by definition. The statistically related parity is “equity.”

Embracing “viewpoint epistemology,” DEI forces people to see individuals as part of groups sharing immutable characteristics, and to stereotype character traits associated with those groups through “cultural awareness” and “cultural responsiveness.” Then, by discriminating against individuals based on those immutable characteristics, leaders can keep score among those various groups for equity.

DEI is a neo-Marxian philosophy meant to pit one socially constructed class against another. When the identities in DEI relate to race or ethnicity, it is nothing short of rebranded ethnic nationalism. DEI efforts seek to retrench concepts from before the Civil Rights Acts, proposing that a person of a particular immutable characteristic ought to get what they deserve, since discrimination against the individual is the way to achieving a preconceived group equity target.

Governor Evers’ pursuit of DEI in Executive Order 59 has divided Wisconsinites into identity groups against each other. Benefits to an individual can upset the equity balance among the artificially created groups. When those group disparities persist, that is called “systemic discrimination” against the group, and regulators must adjust outcomes for parity rebalance. Mandatory DEI training resembling struggle

sessions is the order of the day, forcing you to acknowledge you must have less because your group has too much.

Thinking of DEI from another angle, it can be understood as pursuing equity among groups in association with a statistical standard. For instance, if a group has a particular statistical representation in society at large, then an organization should seek that statistical representation in it. That appears noble at first from a perspective of fighting for someone who has been kept out of the organization unjustly. But it's not a one way street. If statistical equity is the goal, then DEI advocates must conclude it's possible to have "too many of those people." You see that frequently today in the context of college admissions policies across the country actively discriminating against Asians and Jews since universities think there are too many and negatively impacting subjective notions of college culture.

It further leaves out the individual need through averages. Imagine there are two women and two men. Each man has \$50, creating an average for men of \$50. One woman has \$90 and the other woman has \$0, creating an average of \$45. DEI praxis concludes that the woman with \$90 may get \$10 more to create the equity among gender groups of \$50. It may also conclude each man should get \$2.50 less to create equity at \$45. In both circumstances, the woman with \$0 remains unassisted. DEI is not antithetical to keeping that one woman penniless in perpetuity.

I look forward to this audit to uncover the monies spent and tactics used to achieve the overt discrimination against individuals directed in Executive Order 59. I will ask agency leaders if they think their departments are systemically discriminatory — and, if so, what is the optimal percentage of an immutable characteristic to obtain equity. As for myself, I don't accept the premises of DEI. I have not given up on a colorblind society. I choose to see others as peers who happen to have inconsequential physical traits, and not as an intersectional mix of immutable characteristics for social management.

Thank you, Chairman.