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## **NH Businesses and Organizations Stand in Opposition to Legislative Efforts to Limit Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training**

New Hampshire Businesses for Social Responsibility (NHBSR) and over 50 employers across the state oppose HB 544, An Act Relative to the propagation of divisive concepts and its inclusion in the House Budget as 2021-0925h. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training along with an informed understanding of systemic racism and sexism is critical to the ability of our businesses to build strong workplaces.

NHBSR's open letter to the Legislature and the Governor is signed by over 50 companies and includes many of New Hampshire's large employers, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health, Hypertherm, Northeast Delta Dental and Stonyfield. As leaders in social responsibility, these organizations work to support our communities and build strong workplace cultures where all people can reach their fullest potential. These signatories understand the value of diversity, equity and inclusion. The letter of opposition focuses on four key areas that would be negatively impacted by HB 544 - innovative thinking and problem solving critical to business growth, employee retention, competitive advantage and most importantly, the value of each employee and their diverse backgrounds.

Earlier this year, NHBSR offered a Workplace Racial Equity Learning Challenge for which almost 700 people registered. The Challenge included weekly discussions in which participants shared the importance of open inquiry around difficult topics. Should a law like HB 544 be enacted, over half of the registrants could not have participated.

NHBSR's Executive Director, Michelle Veasey states, "We believe that NH businesses, nonprofits, government agencies and educational institutions

must be free to explore the history and impact of racism and sexism as they feel appropriate. We cannot back away from challenges. Our country and our state are strongest when we work together to find opportunities and innovate to create new pathways that build on a shared understanding. For this reason, we strongly oppose HB 544 and the House Budget Amendment 2-21-0925h."

We invite all workplaces in New Hampshire to sign on to this statement. Membership in NHBSR is not required. Veasey shares "Our hope is that this statement speaks directly and strongly to New Hampshire's desire to be more diverse, to lift up equity as our vision and to fully embrace all of our residents."

#### ABOUT NHBSR

New Hampshire Businesses for Social Responsibility is a member-based, nonprofit organization that convenes, inspires, and supports businesses and community stakeholders to build a more sustainable and prosperous state for all. More information on NHBSR and upcoming events, resources, and membership can be found at [nhbsr.org](http://nhbsr.org).