

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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July 29, 2025

Dr. Gregory Washington  
President  
George Mason University  
4400 University Drive  
MSN: 3A1  
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Dr. Washington:

The Committee on the Judiciary is examining the extent and nature of discriminatory diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices in the United States. DEI policies can not only violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but they also erode our nation's fundamental values of fairness and merit.<sup>1</sup> To develop legislation that effectively addresses the injustice enabled by DEI policies, the Committee is examining the discriminatory patterns and practices of universities that receive federal funding. We write to request information about George Mason University's compliance with applicable civil rights law, and that you appear for a transcribed interview with the Committee.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits workplace discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.<sup>2</sup> The act outlines unlawful employment practices including the failure or refusal to hire an individual because of their race.<sup>3</sup> The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the entity charged with enforcing some of the statute's requirements, has explained that employers may not justify taking employment actions based on protected characteristics, like race, even if the actions are done to further an "interest in 'diversity.'"<sup>4</sup> On January 21, 2025,

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<sup>1</sup> See Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. No. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241 (1964) (prohibiting discrimination on the ground of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin); See also U.S. Equal Emp. Opportunity Comm'n, *What You Should Know About DEI-Related Discrimination at Work*, EEOC, <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-dei-related-discrimination-work> (last visited July 21, 2025) (noting that under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, employers may not justify taking employment actions based on race, sex, or another protected characteristic by invoking an "interest in 'diversity'").

<sup>2</sup> See 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e-2000e-17.

<sup>3</sup> See 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e-2000e-2(a)(1).

<sup>4</sup> CHRISTINE J. BACK, CONG. RES. SERV., R46534, *THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964: AN OVERVIEW* 61 (2020); See U.S. Equal Emp. Opportunity Comm'n, *What You Should Know About DEI-Related Discrimination at Work*, EEOC, <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-dei-related-discrimination-work> (last visited July 21, 2025).

President Trump issued Executive Order 14,173, directing the federal government to enforce civil-rights laws to end illegal preferences and discrimination espoused by DEI programs.<sup>5</sup> The Executive Order, in part, mandates that executive departments, like the Department of Education, combat illegal “DEI preferences, mandates, policies, programs, and activities.”<sup>6</sup> This includes ensuring higher education institutions that apply for federal grants comply with all federal anti-discrimination statutes.<sup>7</sup>

According to public reports and documents obtained by the Committee, it appears there is a pervasive culture of intolerance at George Mason that violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the Civil Rights Act.<sup>8</sup> During your tenure, George Mason seems to have engaged in racial discrimination in the hiring and promotion of faculty and staff contrary to both federal statutes and executive order.<sup>9</sup> While your purported intent is to “remake [George Mason] into an exemplar of anti-racism,” the available evidence seems to indicate that these policies have done just the opposite.<sup>10</sup>

For example, in July 2020, you announced a series of steps that George Mason was taking to “advance systemic and cultural anti-racism.”<sup>11</sup> These steps included the development of criteria for promotion and tenure decisions that considered the “invisible and uncredited emotional labor that people of color expend to learn, teach, discover, and work on campus.”<sup>12</sup> Under your tenure, George Mason also created a Task Force on “Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence,” appointed “Equity Advisors” to oversee recruiting and employment decisions in every academic department, and required all course syllabi to contain an “anti-racism statement.”<sup>13</sup> George Mason also allegedly provided guidance to campus hiring authorities instructing them to give preference to members of “underrepresented groups.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Exec. Order No. 14,173, Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity, 90 Fed. Reg. 8,633 (Jan. 21, 2025) (stating “the purpose of this order is to [end]ing illegal preferences and discrimination”).

<sup>6</sup> See *id.*

<sup>7</sup> See *id.*

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Just., Justice Department Launches Investigation into Employment Practices at George Mason University (July 17, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-launches-investigation-employment-practices-george-mason-university>; Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Educ., U.S. Department of Education Opens Title VI Investigation into George Mason University (July 10, 2025), <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-opens-title-vi-investigation-george-mason-university>; Diversity-related interview questions for use by George Mason University faculty and staff (on file with the Comm.).

<sup>9</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 2000(e)(2) (2025).

<sup>10</sup> Email from Dr. Gregory Washington to George Mason University students, faculty, and staff (Sept. 25, 2020) (on file with the Comm.).

<sup>11</sup> Email from Dr. Gregory Washington to George Mason University students, faculty, and staff (July 23, 2020) (on file with the Comm.).

<sup>12</sup> See *id.*

<sup>13</sup> Email from Dr. Gregory Washington to George Mason University students, faculty, and staff (July 23, 2020) (on file with the Comm.).

<sup>14</sup> Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Educ., U.S. Department of Education Opens Title VI Investigation into George Mason University (July 10, 2025), <https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-opens-title-vi-investigation-george-mason-university>.

In addition, even following the issuance of Executive Order 14,173, evidence suggests that George Mason has not fully complied with federal law. George Mason deleted information on its university website containing references to DEI policies.<sup>15</sup> However, instead of eliminating its DEI office as required by the Executive Order, George Mason simply changed its name to the “Office of Access, Compliance, and Community.”<sup>16</sup> In a contemporaneous email to the George Mason community, you emphasized that despite the name change, George Mason remained “committed” to the “substance of that office.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, following the Executive Order, George Mason made mere cosmetic changes to its discriminatory DEI programs, while maintaining the “substance” of unlawful policies that promoted hiring and tenure preferences based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.<sup>18</sup>

The Civil Rights Act exists to protect all Americans from illegal discrimination in public places. The available evidence strongly suggests that George Mason University under your leadership is engaged in conduct that unlawfully promotes such discrimination. Accordingly, to advance our oversight, we request that you appear for a transcribed interview. In addition, we request that you produce the following documents and information:

1. All documents and communications from July 1, 2020, to present, between or among any George Mason University employee, contractor, or affiliate referring or related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, anti-racism, and/or inclusive excellence;
2. All documents and communications from July 1, 2020, to present, between or among any George Mason University employee, contractor, or affiliate referring or related to any job applicant’s race or gender;
3. All internal George Mason University policies issued between July 1, 2020, and present, referring or related to the use of race or diversity in the hiring of faculty and staff;
4. All documents and communications from July 1, 2020, to present, between or among any George Mason University employee, contractor, or affiliate referring or related to the Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence task force or Equity Advisors; and
5. All documents and communications from November 1, 2024, to present, between or among any George Mason University employee, contractor, or affiliate referring or related to compliance with any federal mandate or Executive Order referring or relating to DEI, including but not limited to the renaming of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office.

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<sup>15</sup> Email from Dr. Gregory Washington to George Mason University community (Mar. 3, 2025) (on file with the Comm.).

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> See e.g., 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (2018); Exec. Order No. 14,173, Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity, 90 Fed. Reg. 8,633 (Jan. 21, 2025).

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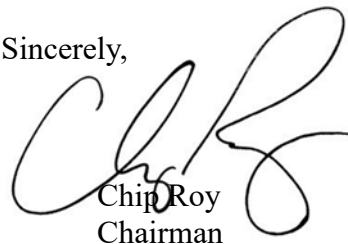
Please produce all documents and communications and schedule your transcribed interview as soon as possible, but no later than 10:00 a.m. on August 12, 2025. If you are represented by counsel, please forward this letter to your attorney and ask that he or she respond promptly on your behalf.

Pursuant to the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on the Judiciary has jurisdiction to conduct oversight of matters concerning civil rights and liberties to inform potential legislative reforms.<sup>19</sup> If you have any questions about this matter, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.



Jim Jordan  
Chairman

Sincerely,



Chip Roy  
Chairman

Subcommittee on the Constitution and  
Limited Government

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member

The Honorable Mary Gay Scanlon, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the Constitution  
and Limited Government

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<sup>19</sup> Rules of the House of Representatives, R. X, 119th Congress (2025).