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# Longstanding Bipartisan Support for DEIA

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Republican and Democratic presidents have for many decades invoked the national imperative of achieving diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

On June 25, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed [Executive Order 8802](#) prohibiting ethnic or racial discrimination in the nation's defense industry, including in companies, unions, and federal agencies, and establishing the Fair Employment Practice Committee. EO 8802 declared that "the democratic way of life within the Nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its boundaries." The executive order prohibited "discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries and in Government, because of race, creed, color, or national origin."

Building on this order, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed [Executive Order 10479](#) on August 13, 1953, establishing the anti-discrimination Government Contract Committee. EO 10479 made clear that "all qualified persons employed or seeking employment on government contracts" are "entitled to fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of employment" when being paid by public funds. The order explicitly prohibited discrimination on the basis of "race, creed, color or national origin" and required all contracting agencies to ensure compliance with the order by revising and strengthening their nondiscrimination provisions.

This was superseded by [Executive Order 10925](#) signed by President John F. Kennedy on March 6, 1961, which established the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. Here, President Kennedy stated that "Whereas discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin is contrary to the Constitutional principles and policies of the United States" and therefore directing that "existing non-discrimination contract provisions reveal an urgent need for expansion and strengthening of efforts to promote full equality of employment opportunity."

On September 24, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed [Executive Order 11246](#) prohibiting federal contractors and federally assisted construction contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment decisions on the basis of race, color, religion, and national origin.

President Johnson amended the executive order with [Executive Order 11375](#) on October 13, 1967 to include a prohibition on sex discrimination in employment by federal contracts and federally assisted contractors and subcontractors. EO 11375 reiterates the directives of EO 11246 while explicitly adding that where “Executive Order No. 11246 of September 24, 1965, carried forward a program of equal employment opportunity...regardless of race, creed, color or national origin” it was now explicitly “desirable that the equal employment opportunity programs provided for in Executive Order No. 11246 expressly embrace discrimination on account of sex.”

President Barack H. Obama further amended Executive Order 11246 with [Executive Order 13672](#), issued on July 21, 2014, to expand nondiscrimination on the basis of sex to include “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” as protected classes.

On his first day in office — January 20, 2021 — President Joseph R. Biden signed [Executive Order 13985](#): Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. There, President Biden invoked equal opportunity as “the bedrock of American democracy,” calling diversity “one of our country’s greatest strengths.” The EO further states that “[a]ffirmatively advancing equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity is the responsibility of the whole of our Government.” The EO provides guiding definitions of “equity” and “underserved communities” and directs federal agencies to conduct equity assessments using these criteria as a basis.

On June 25, 2021, President Biden signed [Executive Order 14035](#): Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce, which calls on the federal government to employ “a workforce that reflects the diversity of the American people,” citing evidence that “diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplaces yield higher-performing organizations.”

On February 16, 2023, President Biden signed [Executive Order 14091](#): Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, which states that “by advancing equity, the Federal Government can support and empower all Americans” particularly those who have previously been “underserved...and adversely affected by persistent...inequality.”

