

For Immediate Release

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Governor Refuses to Meet with Civil Rights Leaders on the Racism of SB 202

In a stunning turn of events, the Governor of Indiana has turned down a request from a coalition of civil rights, faith-based, and professional associations to meet with him to discuss the racist implications of SB 202 and its impact on Indiana's Black community.

The group, which includes the Indiana NAACP's President Sadie Harper-Scott and the leader of Concerned Clergy of Indianapolis, Pastor David Greene, asked to meet with Governor Holcomb to inform him of serious concerns about the bill's attack on civil rights, and challenge him to veto the harmful bill. "In what it targets—diversity, equity, and inclusion—and who it targets—Black university faculty—SB 202 is clearly racist" said Rev. Greene. "It's most surprising that the Governor seems unwilling to hear how this bill will negatively impact an entire segment of Hoosier citizens."

The request comes on the heels of release of the Statement on the Civil Rights Impact of SB 202 endorsed by over 1000 Hoosier residents and 68 state organizations (see [Statement and list of signers](#)) calling out the bill's discriminatory implications. President Harper-Scott of the Indiana NAACP State Conference stated "Our leaders don't seem to recognize how SB 202 turns Indiana back towards its deeply racist past...but the citizens of Indiana certainly do."

Both civil rights leaders and the Statement point to abundant evidence supporting their claims:

- **SB 202 contains specific attacks on DEI:**
 - *Forbids universities to admit students, hire, promote, or renew faculty with statements on diversity, equity, and inclusion in their materials.*
 - *Forces universities to report yearly to the legislature how much they spend on diversity, equity and inclusion instruction.*
- **"Intellectual diversity" is *not* about protecting conservative speech, but rather a code word for attacking DEI:**
 - *IN [Higher Education Commission survey results](#) (Sept. 2023) show 75% of Indiana undergraduates agree their campus "highly values" free speech.*
 - *SB 202's language is drawn directly from a [similar Florida bill](#), simply replacing the term "DEI" in that bill with the words "intellectual diversity."*
 - *The bill is part of a [nationwide campaign](#) by well-funded organizations to attack university DEI programs.*
- **Requirements that universities establish systems for students to report on faculty violating its provisions target faculty of color more than others:**
 - *Most often assigned to teach cultural diversity courses, faculty of color are [more likely to receive complaints](#) from students who resist that type of instruction.*
- **SB 202 negates recent extensive efforts by [Indiana universities](#) to diversify their student and faculty populations**
 - *Faculty resignations have [increased dramatically](#) in states with these bills, especially among [faculty of color](#).*

“We all know SB 202 will harm faculty through loss of tenure and other draconian penalties, but it’s critical to understand that *all these sanctions are primarily designed to keep faculty from talking about racism and discrimination,*” said Professor Emeritus Russ Skiba, co-founder of the University Alliance for Racial Justice.

Civil rights leaders remain undeterred in their opposition to the bill. Said Rabbi Aaron Spiegel, Executive Director of the Greater Indianapolis Multifaith Alliance, “In the face of a clearly racist bill, we will—we must—continue to call out its impact. We believe that Governor Holcomb’s legacy will be tarnished if he supports a bill that so clearly targets Black, Brown and marginalized Hoosier citizens.”

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