

Trump’s attack on DEI harms American values

Executive Order 1451 undermines proven benefits of diversity, inclusion, equal opportunity

Throughout history, America has been referred to as a melting pot, where diverse cultures and traditions have blended to form a unique national identity. Diversity is a cornerstone that has been the country’s pride for centuries and is the foundation upon which it has been built.

But on Jan. 21, President Donald Trump dealt a crushing blow to this principle by signing an executive order to remove diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in federal government operations called “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.”

A month later, the Department of Education issued a Dear Colleague letter that gave educational institutions two weeks to remove the use of “race in decisions pertaining to admissions, hiring, promotion, compensation, financial aid, scholarships, prizes, administrative support, discipline, housing, graduation ceremonies, and all other aspects of student, academic, and campus life” as a condition of federal funding pursuant to the Trump’s executive order. Among the key reasons in removing DEI, according to a fact sheet released by the White House on Jan. 22, was to “protect equal opportunity.”

However, the executive order’s effect on racial diversity will have lasting impacts on life in the workplace, school and on opportunity for all Americans. For that reason, The Campanile condemns the executive order for undermining the values of inclusivity within America. However, we affirm the removal of race-based academic programs by the Department of Education as we think other metrics, such as socioeconomic status, provide a more objective metric for supporting students equally.

Fundamentally, DEI is a framework that seeks to include individuals from all backgrounds — of varying ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds and more. But the Trump administration’s definitions of DEI, particularly seen in the Dear Colleague letter, seems to emphasize race as the primary category targeted by DEI initiatives, while in reality it is only one factor. With a vague definition of DEI and thus a vague understanding of what is being banned, the law can be enforced as freely as Trump and his cronies interpret, which we think is an overreach of executive power.

The Campanile also supports diversity and inclusivity in the workplace and in education because of the tangible benefits DEI initiatives bring to organizations. A 2015 report by McKinsey on 336 public companies found that those in the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity in management were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry mean. And those in the top quartile for gender diversity were 15% more likely to have returns above the average.

Also, according to a 2016 Harvard Business Review article, teams with diverse backgrounds focus more on facts than opinions and process facts more carefully. They are also more innovative because diverse teams bring differing perspectives and experiences to the table during the brainstorming process.

While the White House fact sheet claims the executive order is “restoring the values of individual dignity, hard work, and excellence,” it errone-



ART BY CHERIANNE YOON

ously frames DEI as an agent of lowered performance standards. The suggestion that diversity is evidence of incompetence and unfair treatment is inaccurate as empirically, diverse teams do perform better, not worse, than their non-diverse counterparts.

While The Campanile does support diversity and inclusivity as a principle to be upheld in our society, focusing solely on race-based academic programs is not optimal. For example, PAUSD’s Systemwide Integrated Framework for Transformation, which makes efforts “to reduce disparities that flow along the lines of race/ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status,” may perpetuate ideas that certain races perform poorly and need additional support.

When students are in an environment where stereotypes about their racial group impact their education, their performance will drop, according to research conducted on stereotypes by social

psychologists in DEI.

Race is not a predictor of academic performance, and other factors provide a more logical and statistically reliable explanation.

Socioeconomic status, for example, is shown to have a “medium to strong” relation with academic achievement, according to a 2005 study by an assistant professor at New York University. Those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged may have access to fewer academic-support resources. If we want to best support students who are struggling the most, socioeconomic status provides the best way to identify these students.

The Trump administration’s attack on DEI ignores our country’s founding principles of inclusion and tolerance, and framing DEI as being just about race ignores its many other important aspects. When data proves diverse teams thrive, the executive order ignores the facts and steers America away from progress.

Lawmakers should ensure passage of TikTok ban

Decreasing screen addiction among teens, reduce misinformation from algorithms among the benefits

President Donald Trump issued an executive order pausing the ban on TikTok for 75 days on Jan. 20. The ban, which originally forced the Chinese parent company ByteDance to sell TikTok to an American company or shut down services in the United States, was originally upheld by the Supreme Court, but the Trump administration has since said that it will attempt to keep the platform operational.

With the temporary suspension of the ban, The Campanile calls on lawmakers to revisit the ban and ensure its passage to protect American youth, prioritize data privacy and maintain stable public discourse.

First, the ban would help shield young Americans from addictive algorithms. TikTok’s recommendation engine, like many others, has been tailored to maximize users’ engage-

ment. According to Pew Research, American users spend an average of one to two hours per day on TikTok, and TikTok is the world’s most downloaded social media app.

With its reach, our staff finds the additive properties of the algorithm worrying. According to Guillaume Chaslot, the founder of Algo Transparency, a research institute that studies the impact of algorithms, TikTok can be used to micro-target teens based on their personal information, increasing their addiction to the platform. Amnesty International, an international non-

governmental organization focused on human rights, found that TikTok’s algorithm pushes children toward content that harms their mental health, including content related to self-harm.

A ban would also send a clear

message: American data must be protected. ByteDance adheres to Chinese data protection laws where the government’s legal framework allows broad access to data held by domestic companies. According to the U.S. House of Representatives’ Energy and Commerce Committee, “the CCP requires companies, like TikTok’s parent company ByteDance, to secretly share access to a U.S. business or individual’s data without their knowledge or consent.”

With a vast user base, TikTok can collect sensitive data including location, browsing habits and even biometric details that could put people at risk if TikTok uses the information for targeted misinformation. Hence, banning TikTok will prevent American users’ data from being exploited for political and financial gain.

We think banning TikTok will help decrease political misinformation and polarization. Research by the Network Contagion Research Institute, a center dedicated to finding misinformation, found while roughly 80% of Instagram search results on Chinese political topics were negative, only 20% of similar content on TikTok had a negative tone, suggesting that TikTok skews content to minimize criticism toward the Chinese Communist Party.

Among large social media sites, TikTok stands out for its pro-CCP algorithm that can influence the American public with an anti-American political stance. According to the BBC, TikTok has also been used to share AI-generated videos of young people being sent to conflicts zones if the Conservative Party won the UK’s parliamentary elections. Given that TikTok is now the second most popular source of news after X, formerly Twitter, and is owned by a Chinese parent company, The Campanile is concerned about the effect this may have on young adults who consume news on TikTok.

We, however, acknowledge that a ban on TikTok may have unintended consequences. The Campanile understands there are legitimate free speech concerns with a ban, and the creators and small businesses that use the app will be impacted. Additionally, users may migrate to apps such as RedNote with similar issues and data privacy concerns. Nonetheless, these concerns do not outweigh the serious risks TikTok poses as the world’s most downloaded social media app.

The Campanile urges lawmakers to enact a ban that will protect youth and democracy in an increasingly connected digital world.

MARCH’S TOP TEN LIST

THINGS WE LOOK FORWARD TO IN SPRING



10 16-seeds ruining your March Madness bracket

9

The quad finally coming back to life



8

Being able to wear open-toed shoes to school

7

Incessant allergies



6

Wearing shorts one day, then three layers the next

5

Wasting spring break cramming for the AP test you promised you would self-study



4

Not sticking to your “summer bod” workout plan

3

Buying the prom dress you’ve been eying for months



2

Finally being able to tan again

1

Senioritis getting you nearly rescinded



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