Joint Statement by Bar Associations throughout New York State regarding Presidential Executive Order #14173

As leaders of bar associations throughout New York State, we stand against illegal discrimination, and in solidarity with the affinity bar associations, to uphold the rule of law and the New York legal community's professional commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Lawyers in New York State must take continuing legal education courses ("CLE") in diversity, equity and inclusion to maintain their license to practice law. The Rules of Professional Conduct in NYS, Rule 8.4, prohibit lawyers from engaging in unlawful discrimination.

The January 21, 2025 Presidential Executive Order #14173, "Ending Illegal Discrimination And Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity," ("EO") Section 1 provides:

> Purpose, "[h]ardworking Americans who deserve a shot at the American Dream should not be stigmatized, demeaned, or shut out of opportunities because of their race or sex." https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-02097.pdf
>
> Section 4 of the EO "Encouraging the Private Sector to End Illegal DEI Discrimination and Preferences" directs the Attorney General to consult with the heads of relevant federal agencies and to coordinate with the Director of OMB in submitting a report within 120 days to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy with recommendations "for enforcing Federal civil-rights laws (sic) and taking other appropriate measures to encourage the private sector to end *illegal* [emphasis added] discrimination and preferences, including DEI." The EO states that the Attorney General's report shall contain a proposed strategic enforcement plan with steps to deter illegal DEI programs or principles and includes state and local bar associations on the list of entities that federal agencies "shall identify" for "potential civil compliance investigations."

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We agree that no person should be "stigmatized, demeaned, or shut out of opportunities because of their race or sex" and are proud that this aligns with the licensing and ethical obligations of all lawyers admitted to practice in New York.

We affirm our commitment to the rule of law and diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging for the entire New York State legal community without regard to a person's race, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, HIV/AIDS status, military or veteran status, national origin, pregnancy, religion, sex, sexual orientation or any other bases under the law.

SIGNED (as of 3/31/25):

Bar Association of Erie County
Brooklyn Bar Association
Defense Association of New York
LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York
Metropolitan Black Bar Association
Minority Bar Association of Western New York
Minority Bar Foundation, Inc.
Monroe County Bar Association
New York County Lawyers Association
NYS Academy of Trial Lawyers
Onondaga County Bar Association
Puerto Rican Bar Association, Inc,.
Schenectady County Bar Association
Westchester County Bar Association
William Herbert Johnson Minority Bar Association
Women Trial Lawyers Caucus
Women's Bar Association of the State of New York