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***Minority Caucus Vice-Chair***  
State Representative, 77<sup>th</sup> District

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## **Statement on the Harmful Consequences of Executive Order 25-18**

JEFFERSON CITY, MO- Governor Mike Kehoe's decision to eliminate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives from Missouri state agencies is a step backwards for our state's progress toward fairness and equal opportunity. DEI programs exist to break down barriers, expand access to opportunities, and ensure that all Missourians regardless of race, gender, disability, or background have a fair shot at success.

Removing DEI from state agencies risks reversing the progress made in building an inclusive workforce that reflects the diversity of our communities. It limits efforts to address disparities in hiring, economic development, and access to government services, which can disproportionately impact historically underrepresented groups. Furthermore, businesses and industries that value diversity as a key driver of innovation and economic growth may see Missouri as less welcoming, ultimately harming our state's competitiveness.

True equality is not about ignoring differences but about ensuring that every Missourian has the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. Policies that eliminate DEI initiatives undermine this goal and send a harmful message that inclusion and equity are not priorities in our state government.

I stand with those who believe in a Missouri where diversity is valued, equity is pursued, and inclusion is embraced—not cast aside for political convenience. I will continue fighting for policies that ensure every resident has an equal opportunity to prosper.

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