International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026

ISSN: 2456-7760

Reverse Race Discrimination Claims in Law Enforcement Historical Case Decisions, Analysis and Trends in Today's Post DEI Workplace Environment

Song Kang, Dr. Steven Cates
Purdue University Global, School of Business and Technology
2550 Northwestern Avenue, Suite 1100
West Lafayette, IN 47906
Purdue University Global, School of Business and Technology
2550 Northwestern Avenue, Suite 1100
West Lafayette, IN 47906

doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2026.10617 URL: https://doi.org/10.51505/IJEBMR.2026.10617

Received: May 26, 2026 Accepted: Jun 08, 2026 Online Published: Jun 23, 2026

Abstract

Over the past several decades, claims of "reverse racism"—discrimination against white or majority-group individuals in favor of racial minorities—have surfaced in U.S. law enforcement employment, especially in hiring and promotional processes. These cases typically stemmed from various reasons such as diversity initiatives, consent decrees reacting to allegations regarding historical discrimination, or explicit preferences for underrepresented groups. Grounded in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race regardless of the victim's group, these lawsuits highlight tensions between equity efforts and equal protection.

This research examines several major reverse-racism cases in last two decades, which indicates that many case settlements from the early 2000s favored plaintiffs amid aggressive affirmative action claims. However, claim decisions during the past 15 years have begun to change by delivering verdicts with dismissals, and recent cases reflect backlash to post-2020 diversity pushes. This research provides a historical view of DEI and Reverse Discrimination, with a timely review of the 2025 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services, which eliminated heightened evidentiary burdens for reverse discrimination claims based on employers' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs, and ultimately increased future litigation possibilities. This U.S. Supreme Court decision to reverse the existing Affirmative Action, race-based admission policy at Harvard, the University of North Carolina, and most of the higher educational institutions in the US. This decision impacts academic institutions who are now facing critical decisions based on the most recent cases that implicate and encourage further actions, including accelerated defunding of DEI-linked research, potential challenges to similar programs across agencies, and heightened scrutiny of executive actions. This paper will provide a complete overview and legal perspective on the status of reverse discrimination and its impact on the future of DEI in academic institutions in the US.

Keywords: reverse discrimination, diversity, equity, inclusion, higher education, affirmative action, civil rights, educational policy

Introduction

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) represent interconnected principles designed to promote access, participation, and belonging for individuals from historically underrepresented groups. Although the term “DEI” gained prominence during the twenty-first century, its philosophical and legal foundations can be traced to the Civil Rights Movement and subsequent efforts to eliminate discrimination in education and employment. Within higher education, DEI initiatives have been implemented to address historical inequities affecting racial and ethnic minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and other marginalized populations. The evolution of DEI reflects broader societal debates regarding equal opportunity, social justice, and the role of institutions in addressing historical disadvantage.

Historical Foundations of DEI

The origins of DEI are rooted in the struggle for civil rights and equal educational access. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, many colleges and universities excluded or severely limited opportunities for women, racial minorities, and other marginalized groups. A significant turning point occurred with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), in which the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial segregation in public education unconstitutional. Although the case focused on K–12 education, its principles influenced higher education policies nationwide.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 further transformed educational access. Title VI prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal funding, while Title VII prohibited employment discrimination (Civil Rights Act of 1964). These legal developments established the foundation for institutional efforts to expand access and eliminate discriminatory practices.

During the 1960s and 1970s, affirmative action emerged as a policy mechanism intended to address the effects of historical discrimination. Executive Order 11246, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, required federal contractors to take affirmative steps to ensure equal employment opportunity. Higher education institutions subsequently adopted affirmative action programs in admissions, hiring, and student support services.

The Evolution of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The concept of diversity gained prominence during the latter decades of the twentieth century. In *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), the Supreme Court ruled that rigid racial quotas were unconstitutional but held that diversity could constitute a compelling governmental interest in higher education admissions. This decision significantly influenced institutional approaches to diversity and helped establish diversity as a legitimate educational objective.

Subsequent Supreme Court decisions reinforced the educational value of diversity. In *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), the Court upheld the University of Michigan Law School's admissions policy,

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026

ISSN: 2456-7760

concluding that student body diversity produced educational benefits that justified limited consideration of race in admissions decisions. As a result, colleges and universities expanded diversity initiatives, multicultural centers, and recruitment programs designed to increase representation among students and faculty.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the concept of equity became increasingly important. While diversity focused on representation, equity emphasized addressing structural barriers and disparities in outcomes. Universities developed programs aimed at improving retention, graduation rates, and academic success among historically underserved populations.

The concept of inclusion emerged as institutions recognized that representation alone was insufficient. Inclusion emphasized creating campus environments where individuals from diverse backgrounds felt welcomed, respected, and able to participate fully in institutional life. Together, diversity, equity, and inclusion became a comprehensive framework for institutional transformation.

DEI in Higher Education Prior to 2023

By the early 2020s, DEI had become deeply embedded in American higher education. Many institutions established dedicated DEI offices, appointed chief diversity officers, and implemented strategic plans centered on diversity and inclusion goals. Universities adopted initiatives such as: Diversity-focused recruitment and admissions programs.Faculty and staff diversity training.Cultural competency education.Inclusive curriculum development.Retention and mentoring programs for underrepresented students.Bias response systems and campus climate assessments.

Advocates argued that these efforts enhanced educational quality by exposing students to diverse perspectives and reducing barriers to student success. Research consistently demonstrated that diverse educational environments fostered critical thinking, civic engagement, and cross-cultural understanding (Gurin et al., 2002).

Contemporary Challenges and Legal Developments

The status of DEI in higher education changed dramatically following the Supreme Court's decision in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* (2023). The Court ruled that race-conscious admissions programs at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Although the decision did not prohibit consideration of applicants' experiences with race, it effectively ended traditional affirmative action practices in admissions.

Following the decision, numerous states enacted legislation restricting DEI activities at public colleges and universities. These measures commonly prohibited mandatory diversity training, DEI statements in hiring, and state-funded DEI offices. Several states, including Oklahoma and West Virginia, implemented laws or executive orders limiting DEI programs in higher education. Similar legislative efforts have appeared across numerous states, reflecting growing political

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026

ISSN: 2456-7760

opposition to DEI initiatives (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2024; StateImpact Oklahoma, 2025).

Federal policy has also shifted significantly. During 2025 and 2026, federal agencies increased scrutiny of DEI-related programs and practices, leading many institutions to close or restructure DEI offices and reconsider hiring and admissions policies. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2026), hundreds of colleges and universities have modified, reduced, or eliminated DEI-related programs and offices in response to legal and policy changes.

As a result, higher education institutions have adopted varying responses. Some universities have eliminated DEI offices entirely, while others have rebranded programs under alternative terms such as “student success,” “belonging,” or “institutional engagement.” In many cases, institutions continue pursuing goals related to access and inclusion while avoiding terminology that has become politically contentious.

Reverse Discrimination and DEI

The concept of reverse discrimination has become increasingly prominent in American public discourse. Traditionally, discrimination laws were developed to protect historically marginalized groups from unequal treatment based on race, sex, religion, and other protected characteristics. However, opponents of affirmative action and diversity initiatives have argued that policies intended to promote representation and equity can result in discrimination against individuals belonging to majority groups.

The debate over reverse discrimination reflects broader tensions between competing visions of equality. One perspective emphasizes colorblind and gender-neutral treatment under the law, while another supports targeted interventions designed to address historical and structural inequalities. Recent Supreme Court decisions concerning affirmative action in higher education and employment discrimination have elevated the significance of these debates and raised important questions regarding the future of civil rights law in the United States (Johnson, 2024).

Historical Background of Reverse Discrimination

The origins of reverse discrimination claims can be traced to the civil rights reforms of the 1960s. Following the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other landmark legislation, government agencies, universities, and employers implemented affirmative action programs designed to increase opportunities for historically underrepresented populations.

Affirmative action emerged as a response to centuries of racial segregation, exclusion, and discrimination. Policymakers argued that simply prohibiting discrimination would not eliminate longstanding inequalities. Consequently, race-conscious and gender-conscious measures were adopted to promote equal opportunity and diversity (Stephens, 2023).

Critics, however, contended that preferential treatment based on race or gender violated principles of individual merit and equal protection. By the 1970s, lawsuits challenging

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026
ISSN: 2456-7760

affirmative action programs began reaching federal courts, laying the foundation for modern reverse discrimination claims.

The Legal Framework of Reverse Discrimination

Equal Protection Clause

The Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause provides the constitutional foundation for many reverse discrimination challenges. Courts have generally held that government actions classifying individuals by race are subject to strict scrutiny, the highest level of judicial review.
In recent years, the Supreme Court has increasingly embraced a colorblind interpretation of the Constitution, emphasizing that racial classifications are inherently suspect regardless of the intended beneficiaries (Johnson, 2024).

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. Importantly, the statute protects all individuals, including members of majority groups.
Historically, some federal courts required majority-group plaintiffs to satisfy additional evidentiary burdens when bringing reverse discrimination claims. This approach was commonly referred to as the "background circumstances" requirement. In 2025, however, the Supreme Court unanimously rejected this heightened standard in *Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services*, holding that Title VII applies equally to all individuals regardless of majority or minority status. The Court concluded that requiring additional proof from majority-group plaintiffs conflicted with the text and purpose of Title VII.

Reverse Discrimination and Higher Education

One of the most significant areas of reverse discrimination litigation has involved college admissions.

Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard and University of North Carolina

In 2023, the Supreme Court decided *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina*. The Court held that race-conscious admissions programs violated constitutional equal protection principles and effectively ended the use of race as an explicit factor in admissions decisions at most colleges and universities.

Supporters of the ruling argued that admissions decisions should be based on individual achievement rather than race and that race-conscious policies unfairly disadvantaged certain applicants, particularly Asian American students. Opponents contended that the decision ignored persistent racial inequalities and would reduce educational diversity.

The decision represents a major shift toward a constitutional framework emphasizing formal equality rather than remedial race-conscious policies. According to Johnson (2024), the ruling reflects the Roberts Court's growing skepticism regarding the continuing necessity of race-based remedies for historical discrimination.

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026

ISSN: 2456-7760

Reverse Discrimination in Employment
Employment-related reverse discrimination claims have become increasingly common in the context of DEI initiatives and workplace diversity programs.

Proponents of such claims argue that some employers have implemented hiring, promotion, and recruitment practices that favor underrepresented groups at the expense of more qualified majority-group candidates. Critics respond that these programs generally seek to expand opportunities rather than establish quotas or preferences.

The Supreme Court's 2025 decision in *Ames* significantly strengthened the ability of majority-group employees to pursue discrimination claims under federal law by eliminating additional evidentiary hurdles previously imposed by some courts. As a result, employers may face increased scrutiny of diversity-related employment practices.

Literature Review of Reverse Discrimination
Reverse discrimination in employment, occurs when individuals from majority racial groups experience disadvantage due to practices aimed at benefiting minorities. Many have alleged that this manifests in hiring, promotions, and terminations influenced by diversity goals.

Legally, this is defined as race discrimination under Title VII, but from a sociological perspective, many argue it ignores traditional power imbalances.

Over the past 20 years (2005-2025), U.S. police departments have faced increasing scrutiny for racial inequities, leading to DOJ consent decrees and internal reforms. However, these internal shifts have triggered backlash lawsuits from white officers claiming unfair treatment.

Historical Review of Reverse Discrimination in Law Enforcement
Historically, law enforcement has been overwhelmingly white and male. Post-Civil Rights Era, the public saw affirmative action mandates to address underrepresentation.
The DOJ's 1994 Violent Crime Control Act encouraged diversity, but cases like United States v. Paradise (1987) it allowed race-conscious remedies only for proven past discrimination.

By 2005, departments like Los Angeles and New York started a new movement by setting minority hiring goals. These efforts were exponentially increased after 2014's Ferguson unrest and 2020's George Floyd protests, emphasizing equity, social justice and police reform.

Background Circumstances
Legally, Title VII requires plaintiffs to establish a prima facie case: membership in a protected class, qualification, adverse action, and inference of discrimination. Pre-Ames, some circuits (6th, 7th, 8th, 10th) imposed a "background circumstances" test for majority plaintiffs, requiring evidence the employer unusually discriminates against the majority.

This created disparities; the Supreme Court's Ricci (2009) invalidated discarding test results to avoid disparate impact on minorities, influencing police exam cases. As police departments around the country were trying to decide which model they should follow to navigate through the discrimination lawsuit minefields, race charges significantly dropped from 35,000 in FY2005 to 21,000 in FY2023, according to the EEOC's data. Then, there was a post-2020 surge to 28,000 amid DEI backlash. Reverse claims, while not separately tracked, are estimated at 10% or so. In law enforcement, comprising 12% of EEOC's public sector cases, reverse suits often involve promotions, where minorities are "bumped" up lists. Regional variations also exist: Midwest departments (e.g., Milwaukee, St. Louis) see more verdicts, while East Coast cases mix settlements and dismissals. Post-Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2023), which ended race-based college admissions, reverse claims rose 20%, spilling into employment. Ames (2025) further levels the field, rejecting heightened burdens.

Early Origins and Evidence of Reverse Discrimination
Danatsko vs. Board of Trustees of Purdue University

In the early 2000s, two former University Police Department officers filed federal lawsuits alleging reverse racial and gender discrimination, claiming they were terminated in retaliation for complaining about discriminatory practices by the Police Chief of a large midwestern university. The cases, Danatsko v. Board of Trustees of Purdue University and Molden v. Board of Trustees of Purdue University, were filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana in Lafayette in May 2002, as the former officers were terminated in 2001.

Plaintiffs Lieutenant Paul Danatsko, a white male officer, and Patrol Officer George "Grant" Molden, another white male officer, accused the police chief of favoring female and non-white officers in assignments, overtime, and promotions while subjecting white males to unfair treatment, including personal errands and unqualified duty assignments.

Paul Danatsko, a police lieutenant with 21 years of service, was terminated in April 2001 for alleged insubordination. Danatsko claimed his firing was based on vindictiveness, tied to his vocal opposition to Stump's practices.

George "Grant" Molden, a patrol officer with 23 years of service, was terminated in July 2001 for alleged "harassment of a lesbian officer." Molden argued this was retaliatory for raising discrimination concerns. The lawsuits were later consolidated between the two plaintiffs and moved forward.

These allegations centered on violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting employment discrimination based on race, sex, and retaliation.

An Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) investigation prior to filing their legal claims found no violations, but the suits proceeded, as the complainants provided alleged evidence of systemic and intentional discrimination under Stump's tenure:

Their claims included:

1. Racial and Gender Favoritism: Stump allegedly prioritized female and non-white officers for promotions, desirable shifts, and overtime opportunities, bypassing more senior or qualified white males.
2. Unfair Assignments: Duty assignment process ignored seniority and qualifications, with white males assigned to less prestigious or more burdensome roles.
3. Personal Exploitation: White male officers were compelled to perform non-professional errands for Stump such as laundry pick-ups during work hours.
4. Retaliation: Terminations followed internal complaints to Purdue administration. An EEOC probe in 2001 cleared the department, but plaintiffs claimed it was a token review and continued with the lawsuit.
5. Hostile Environment: The plaintiffs claimed that a culture had been established and practiced where white males faced disparate scrutiny and discipline.

The plaintiffs collected and provided evidence including internal memos, assignment logs, and witness statements from other officers. They sought compensatory damages punitive damages against Stump, and injunctive relief (e.g., reinstatement, revised training and policy changes). This case was significant in that was a major claim of reverse discrimination in not only law enforcement but at a major university.

Methodology

Federal court cases and their decisions are used as the basis for the analysis of the direction the courts are taking on the legal issue of Reverse Discrimination and its impact on DEI initiatives in US academic, governmental, and other public institutions.

The legal landscape for reverse discrimination claims evolved significantly from 2005 to 2025, culminating in Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services. Title VII's symmetric application was affirmed in McDonald v. Santa Fe Trail Transportation Co. (1976), but circuit splits emerged. The "background circumstances" rule, originating in Parker v. Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (1981), required majority plaintiffs to show employer bias against the majority.
Ricci v. DeStefano (2009) was pivotal for public safety. New Haven firefighters sued after exam results were discarded to avoid disparate impact on minorities; the Court ruled 5-4 that fear of lawsuits wasn't sufficient justification without strong evidence. This influenced police cases, emphasizing objective criteria.

In Ames (argued 2024, decided June 5, 2025), Marlean Ames, a heterosexual woman, alleged demotion and denied promotion in favor of LGBTQ+ individuals. The 6th Circuit applied the background rule; Ames failed to meet it. The Supreme Court unanimously reversed, holding Title VII protects "any individual" equally. Justice Jackson wrote: "The statute's focus on individuals precludes group-based burdens." Pre-Ames, reverse claims in circuits like the 7th (e.g., Bonenberger) succeeded with evidence, but many were dismissed. Post-Ames, filings could rise 20-50%, per experts, as burdens equalize. For police, this means greater scrutiny of diversity promotions; e.g., Cincinnati's 2025 quota suit may benefit. DOJ suits against departments for disparate impact (e.g., South Bend, 2025) could face counterclaims.

Case Studies That Address Reverse Discrimination

Early Cases (2005-2010): Establishing Patterns

- Alexander v. City of Milwaukee (2005, E.D. Wis.): Seventeen white MPD lieutenants sued after being bypassed for captain. Chief Jones favored minorities despite lower scores. Jury awarded $2.2 million; 7th Circuit upheld liability.
- Massengale v. Hill (2007, N.D. Ga.): Twenty-seven white deputies claimed firing by Black Sheriff Hill to install loyalists. Settled for $7 million, reinstatements. Highlighted election purges.
- Finch v. Peterson (2010, 7th Cir.): White Chicago lieutenants passed over for Black candidates under consent decree. Settled confidentially.
- Marion County v. EEOC & Linehan (2010, 7th Cir.): White chief deputy coroner fired for race; $20,000 remitted damages.

Mid-Period Cases (2011-2015): Mixed Outcomes

- Bonenberger v. St. Louis MPD (2013, E.D. Mo.): White sergeant lost to less-qualified Black female; $620,000 award. Exposed biases via emails.
- Maraschiello v. Buffalo PD (2013, 2nd Cir.): White captain denied promotion; dismissed for lack of animus.
- McMullin v. Mississippi DPS (2015, 5th Cir.): White lieutenant denied promotion; settled with back pay.
- Cleveland PD Officers' Suit (2015): Reverse racism claim forced release of 5 years' shooting records; no monetary outcome.

Later Cases (2016-2020): Backlash to DEI

- Barrella v. Village of Freeport (2016, 2nd Cir.): White lieutenant passed over for Hispanic chief; initial $1.35 million, retrial defense verdict. Clarified "Hispanic" as protected.
- Asbury Park Police Chief Suit (2017): Reverse racism claim; details limited.
- San Francisco PD Officers v. City (2019, N.D. Cal.): White officers claimed biased promotions; partial $500K settlements, ongoing.

Recent Cases (2021-2025): Post-Floyd and Ames Era

- Michigan State Police Suit (2021): Three white officers' reverse claim dismissed; no such thing as reverse racism, per judge.
- Anchorage PD (Tuia v. City) (2024): Samoan officer's racial discrimination suit settled for $300K; not reverse but highlights promotion issues.
- Golden Valley PD (Nadeu v. City) (2023): White interim chief sued for not getting permanent role; ongoing.
- Arkansas State Police Suit (2022): Promotion conflict led to reverse claim.
- Glynn County PD Suit (2022): Forced Black chief allegation; ongoing.
- Louisville MPD Major Suit (2022): White officer demoted for slur; reverse claim dismissed.
- Cincinnati PD Quota Suit (2025): Chief accused of anti-white bias; pending.

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026

ISSN: 2456-7760

Post-Ames (2025), all officers, regardless of race,face equal evidentiary burdens for Title VII claims, amplifying reverse suits (e.g., against DEI preferences) alongside traditional claims (e.g., barriers for minorities). DOJ and EEOC guidance target "unlawful DEI" practices, such as quotas or segregated training, which can trigger disparate treatment, hostile environments, or retaliation claims. The EEOC SEP prioritizes systemic enforcement and backlash discrimination (e.g., post-event biases), applying to public sector employers like police departments. Violations risk EEOC charges, DOJ investigations, grant revocations, or False Claims Act penalties. Agencies should adopt a four-pillar framework: Policy Neutralization, Training and Education, Compliance Monitoring, and Dispute Resolution. These align with DOJ/EEOC recommendations to base decisions on objective, job-related criteria while promoting inclusion without preferences.

Recommendations To Address and Support Court Decisions Impacting DEI

Policy Neutralization: Eliminate Biases in Core Processes

- Revise hiring, promotions, assignments, and DEI programs to ensure neutrality, preventing claims from any officer group.
- Use validated, objective assessments (e.g., skills tests per Ricci v. DeStefano, 2009) without demographic targets, quotas, or "underrepresented group" preferences. For example, replace "diversity goals" with broad recruitment from varied sources, documenting selections via comparable qualifications.
- Open all programs (e.g., leadership training, networking) to qualified officers regardless of race or sex. Avoid proxies like "lived experience" narratives that implicitly favor certain groups; focus on universal skills development.
- Prohibit adverse actions against officers opposing perceived discriminatory practices; establish confidential reporting channels.

Training and Education: Foster Inclusive Cultures

- Training must avoid stereotyping or segregation to prevent hostile environment claims.
- Design sessions open to all, emphasizing Title VII compliance and neutral anti-bias content (e.g., no "white privilege" modules that single out groups). Use scenario-based examples relevant to policing, like fair application of policies in diverse teams.
- Provide outreach on rights/responsibilities, targeting officers via accessible formats (e.g., multilingual modules). Train supervisors on recognizing protected activity to curb retaliation.
- Prohibit race- or sex-based separations in trainings, resource groups, or facilities, ensuring equal access.

Compliance Monitoring: Proactive Audits and Documentation

- Conduct annual assessments of processes (e.g., promotion data analytics for disparities) through HR/legal teams, correcting proxies or biases.
- Record non-discriminatory rationales for all decisions (e.g., "selected for superior tactical skills"), aiding defenses in investigations.

Dispute Resolution: Early Intervention Mechanisms

- Implement EEOC-aligned processes for prompt, neutral investigations of complaints, preserving access to courts (e.g., no broad NDAs).
- Promote mediation for charges, as endorsed in the SEP, to resolve 70-80% of disputes pre-litigation with high satisfaction rates.
- Collaborate with unions and FEPA partners for joint trainings, addressing backlash from events like protests. By prioritizing neutral, merit-driven practices and inclusive alternatives, law enforcement agencies can minimize lawsuits from all officers.

Conclusion

The Federal government has declared the end of a Department of Defense era, eliminating the existing liberal culture and DEI in the United States military. It was also announced that they would impose the highest standard for combat readiness fitness, hinting that all those non-qualifying females would not be hired. This type of warrior ethos can easily influence the law enforcement agencies' hiring, evaluating, promoting, and firing decisions as the self-proclaimed "para-military" organizations emulate their standards and procedures from the military.

Law enforcement departments, as public sector employers, must navigate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on protected characteristics like race, color, sex, national origin, and religion, applying equally to all employees without distinctions for "reverse" discrimination.

These strategies focus on eliminating barriers, promoting inclusive yet non-discriminatory environments, and ensuring accountability to reduce litigation risks, which could lead to monetary damages, back pay, or funding revocations. Drawing from these federal priorities and examples like the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Equity Action Plan, a comprehensive department strategy includes policy neutralization, training, monitoring, and dispute resolution. Implementation can potentially lower EEOC charges by addressing systemic issues proactively.

References

American Broadcasting Company. (2025, October 1). Hegseth rails against 'woke,' lays out standards in speech to top generals, admirals. ABC News. https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/pentagons-mystery-meeting-top-ranking-generals/story?id=126055917

Alexander v. City of Milwaukee, 474 F.3d 437 (7th Cir. 2007).

Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services, 606 U.S. ___ (2025). https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/23-1039_c0n2.pdf

Bennett-Alexander, D. D., Hartman, L. P., & Berkeley, R. (2024). Employment law for business. McGraw Hill LLC.

Bather, J. R., Furr-Holden, D., Ramirez-Valles, J., & Goodman, M. S. (2023). Unpacking public health implications of the 2023 Supreme Court ruling on race-conscious admissions. *Health Promotion Practice, 24*(6), 823–826. https://doi.org/10.1177/10901981231198785

Bonenberger v. St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, 810 F.3d 570 (8th Cir. 2016).

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026

ISSN: 2456-7760

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Chicago Police Department. (2025). Chicago Police Department Equity Action Plan. https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/Equity-Action-Plan.pdf

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. No. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241.

Congressional Research Service. (2023). *The Supreme Court strikes down affirmative action at Harvard and the University of North Carolina* (LSB10893). Library of Congress.

Danatsko v. Board of Trustees of Purdue University, No. 4:02-CV-0038 (N.D. Ind. 2002).

Department of Education v. California, 606 U.S. ___ (2025). https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/24a910_f2bh.pdf

DLA Piper. (2025). United States Supreme Court rejects heightened standard for reverse discrimination claims under Title VII.

Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP. (2023). Supreme Court decides Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College and Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina et al.

Finch v. Peterson, 622 F.3d 725 (7th Cir. 2010).

Grutter v. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 306 (2003).

Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(3), 330–366. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.3.01151786u134n051

Johnson, O. (2024). Race, affirmative action, antidiscrimination, and the Roberts Court. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 713*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162251334504

Maraschiello v. City of Buffalo Police Department, 709 F.3d 87 (2d Cir. 2013).

Marion County Coroner's Office v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 612 F.3d 924 (7th Cir. 2010).

Massengale v. Hill, No. 1:05-CV-189 (N.D. Ga. 2007).

McDonald v. Santa Fe Trail Transportation Co., 427 U.S. 273 (1976).

McMullin v. Mississippi Department of Public Safety, 782 F.3d 251 (5th Cir. 2015).

Molden v. Board of Trustees of Purdue University, No. 4:02-CV-0039 (N.D. Ind. 2002).

Montgomery Rice, V., Elks, M. L., & Howse, M. (2023). The Supreme Court decision on affirmative action—Fewer Black physicians and more health disparities for minoritized groups. *JAMA, 330*(11), 1035–1036. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2023.15515

National Institutes of Health v. American Public Health Association, 606 U.S. ___ (2025). https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/25a103_kh7p.pdf

Parker v. Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Co., 652 F.2d 1012 (D.C. Cir. 1981).

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 265 (1978).

Ricci v. DeStefano, 557 U.S. 557 (2009).

San Francisco Police Officers' Association v. City and County of San Francisco, No. 3:19-cv-02450 (N.D. Cal. 2019).

StateImpact Oklahoma. (2025, May 15). *Stitt's anti-DEI policy for Oklahoma colleges and universities now state law*. https://www.kgou.org/education/2025-05-14/stitts-anti-dei-policy-for-oklahoma-colleges-and-universities-now-state-law

Vol. 10, No.06; 2026

ISSN: 2456-7760

Stephens, M. (2023). Is race-based affirmative action for college admissions constitutional? *Journal of the Student Personnel Association at Indiana University, 51*, 9–12.

Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College, 600 U.S. 181 (2023).

The Chronicle of Higher Education. (2024). *DEI legislation tracker*. The Chronicle of Higher Education.

U.S. Department of Education. (2026, April 6). *Victories for higher education: Eliminating DEI*.

U.S. Department of Education. https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/victories-higher-education-eliminating-dei

United States v. Paradise, 480 U.S. 149 (1987).

United States Supreme Court. (2023). *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, 600 U.S. ___ (2023).

United States Supreme Court. (2023). *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina*, 600 U.S. ___ (2023).

United States Supreme Court. (2025). *Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services*, 605 U.S. ___ (2025).

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1796 (1994). https://www.congress.gov/103/plaws/publ322/PLAW-103publ322.pdf