

STARRS Candidate Survey comments from candidates:

Do you support or oppose “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” (DEI) programs?

- As the former Chief of Staff of USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins I saw first hand what "DEI" was funding and it wasn't at the benefit of U.S. taxpayers. Some of the egregious items being funded in the name of DEI at USDA were "grants to diversify pest management specialists" and "transgender menstruation research". I support meritocracy not funding radical pet projects on the backs of U.S. taxpayers.
- Because it's out of control...we need Americans that are Best Qualified.
- By prioritizing identity markers like race and ethnicity over individual merit, they inadvertently foster a new form of discrimination that disadvantages qualified candidates and undermines the concept of a level playing field.
- Completely unconstitutional. Discriminate against Caucasian men and women. DEI rewards incompetence. Reinforces "earned helplessness."
- DEI and these fake programs are meant to undermine the stability of the military. It's a Chinese Communist Party agenda.
- DEI has no business in our national security; it weakens our force.
- DEI is cultural Marxism, and is a cancer on society. DEI needs to be eradicated from American culture.
- DEI is heavy-handed communism, and violates the constitutional principle of equal protection of law.
- DEI is inherently discriminatory.
- DEI is not about hiring and promoting the most qualified, people it is having Quotas based on race, gender, sexual orientation etc..
- DEI might cause discrimination against people who are more qualified.
- DEI programs and initiatives has only led to the deterioration of combat readiness of the United States. We must do everything within our powers to stomp it out.
- DEI programs are actually a form of discrimination, not something that prevents discrimination.
- DEI, Affirmative Action, same difference. AA was removed, now DEI. Same program, different name and same results. Every person that is an American citizen are treated as Americans, with the same rights given by our Constitution. To be competitive, we must hire the best of the best (skills, not color, etc). To compete in the world, our companies should be able to hire the best of the best. Creating competition, will sharpen skills of people. There are stories after stories of Americans who have struggled and made it (become wealthy, or even a billionaire). In Pursuit of Happiness (movie, based on a true story). The person who struggled, now is a billionaire and jobs for many others.
- Everything should be based off of merit.
- As a Black woman, I recognize there was a time when policies such as affirmative action and later DEI initiatives were created to address real barriers faced by women and minorities. However, the Supreme Court has now affirmed what the Constitution has always required. In Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard (2023), the Court ruled 6-3 that race-conscious admissions policies violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth

Amendment, marking a significant shift in how institutions approach these policies. This decision reflects a constitutional principle I believe deeply: equal protection under the law must apply equally to every American. Government-driven identity frameworks are not a long-term solution. The Equal Protection Clause, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and recent Supreme Court guidance all point toward the same conclusion opportunity in America must be rooted in merit, personal responsibility, and equal treatment under the law, not permanent bureaucratic systems that divide Americans into categories. If we are truly serious about inclusion, it must be embedded in the culture of our institutions, businesses, and communities rather than enforced through government mandates. My focus is on expanding access to entrepreneurship, workforce training, and economic mobility so advancement is driven by character, discipline, and hard work. That is not the absence of opportunity it is the fulfillment of it.

- I also oppose Justice programs, like the MacArthur Foundation Safety & Justice Challenge, who released dangerous felons based on race, religion, sex, & sexual orientation.
- I am supportive of diversity, equity, and inclusion individually, but I get wary of any umbrella acronyms. The Liberal elite too often use identity politics to avoid talking about the common denominator economic conditions of the Working Class regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, etc.
- I believe every person deserves to be treated with dignity, fairness, and equal opportunity. However, I do not support DEI programs that prioritize identity over merit or create division rather than unity. My focus is on policies that expand opportunity for all, support strong education and job pathways, and ensure people are judged by their character, work ethic, and contributions — not by labels.
- I believe in "Equality" for all who are willing to participate in a free liberated society. DEI programs are racist efforts to equalize outcomes based on things other than effort.
- I believe in equal opportunity for every American, not government-mandated outcomes or divisive programs that prioritize identity over merit. As someone who built my life working with my hands, I know what matters is hard work, skill, and character, not labels. We should be bringing people together around shared American values, not dividing them.
- I believe in equal opportunity for every American, regardless of race, ideology, ethnicity, or religion. Our founding documents affirm the principle that all are created equal and entitled to the same rights and opportunities. Too often, modern DEI programs deviate from that ideal by elevating identity over merit. We should instead prioritize policies that reward hard work, talent, and individual potential. Hiring and admissions decisions should be grounded in qualifications, skills, and achievement, not demographics. My focus in Washington will be on expanding access to opportunity, not mandating outcomes. That means strengthening education, encouraging economic growth, and removing barriers to success, rather than relying on top-down mandates that undermine fairness and unity.
- I believe in equal opportunity not equal outcomes
- I believe in fair competition and merit-based achievement.
- I believe in Merit
- I believe in the foundational American idea that every person is created equal and should have the opportunity to succeed based on their effort, character, and ability. Where I draw the line is this: When DEI becomes about quotas instead of qualifications, When it judges people by race, gender, or background instead of merit, When it forces ideology in schools, workplaces, or the military, When it creates division instead of unity, That's not equality—that's a step backward.

- I believe they are unconstitutional and undermine equal protection by replacing merit with identity-based preferences.
- I do not support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs because I believe they often emphasize identity categories over individual merit and qualifications, which can undermine fair and performance-based decision-making. My preference is for approaches that ensure equal opportunity without embedding race, gender, or other identities as deciding factors in personnel and programmatic choices.
- I get it. I know there are discrimination concerns. I am a black female professional and I have not always been given what I consider to be a fair shake in life. However, fighting racism with more racism and discrimination is not the way to resolve this issue. Individuals have to pursue happiness no matter what. Yes, that includes discrimination. Hold unfairness accountable and keep working hard for what you want in this life. That is the best way. This is the way I try to live my life.
- I oppose DEI programs when they prioritize race, sex, or identity over merit, qualifications, and equal treatment under the law. I support equal opportunity for every American regardless of background, but government, military, education, and hiring decisions should be based on performance, character, and ability rather than quotas or ideological mandates.
- I oppose DEI programs. They function as institutionalized discrimination by race, sex, and other identity categories rather than merit. They lower standards in hiring, promotions, admissions, and contracting by prioritizing demographic outcomes over individual competence and qualifications. This produces worse results in critical fields like medicine, engineering, aviation, education, and public safety while breeding resentment and division among those passed over for less qualified candidates. True fairness and excellence require color-blind, sex-blind, merit-based evaluation of every person as an individual, not engineered group quotas or equity mandates that treat people as avatars of their ancestry or biology. Government, schools, and corporations should eliminate all such programs and return to objective, performance-driven standards.
- I oppose government-imposed DEI programs that prioritize identity over merit and undermine unity, cohesion, and equal treatment under the law. I support equal opportunity—not enforced outcomes or ideological mandates in institutions like the military.
- I oppose government-mandated DEI programs that replace merit, excellence, and equal opportunity with divisive identity politics. Americans should be judged by character, competence, and hard work—not race, gender, or ideology.
- I oppose programs which advance applicants, students, employees, etc. based on anything other than merit. In short, DEI initiatives, are anti-American and have caused irreparable damage to generations of Americans.
- I support Diversity and Equality. I do not support Equity. Equity requires treating people differently based on their identity in order to achieve equal outcomes or proportional representation. This inevitably leads to preferential treatment for some groups and/or the lowering of standards for others, which creates resentment, division, and conflict among demographics in our diverse nation. In theory, I support Inclusion — but only up to the point where it does not demand conformity, suppress dissenting viewpoints, or compromise merit, safety, or fairness.
- I support equal opportunity and merit-based standards. Every American deserves a fair shot — regardless of race, gender, background, or zip code, and no one should be discriminated against or given preference unfairly. Where I draw the line is on policies that undermine standards, readiness, or performance. In healthcare, the military, or government, competence must always come first. Lives depend on it. I believe in expanding opportunity, enforcing civil rights laws, and removing barriers that prevent qualified people from competing. But I do not support quotas or lowering standards in the name of politics. The focus should be excellence, fairness, and accountability, not ideology.

- I support equal treatment under the law and merit-based opportunity, not government-imposed ideology or discrimination based on race or identity.
- I support merit based performance measurement processes.
- I support merit. Anything less than a merit based system is a path to failure.
- I support meritocracy
- I support Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's mission to promote standards of excellence that ensure the best people are in the military based on their physical fitness and qualifications. DEI is failed standard that promotes mediocrity and puts our nations military readiness at risk of ruin.
- I'm a firm believer in merit, accomplishment, track record and experience. With that being said, I have no accomplishment, track record or experience in politics. I do believe we have a choice to make in getting away from the two party system. I would never consider myself a DEI vote. I don't care what color, creed, sex (lack thereof), religion or anything such as that. If they are the best human suited for the job, so be it. I believe the right person for the job is the right person for the job. No matter what their identity, color, background or any of the like. If they have the skills, training and education to do it, nothing should hold them back. I think DEI is an extension of gaslighting. Where the media and certain aspects of society have worked over the years to mentally berate people into thinking they are less than others. We are all on this rock together, and together we are stronger.
- In the military, DEI means DIE. Unacceptable.
- It excludes anyone who is not black. This means Asians, Indians, Middle Eastern, Europeans, and anyone with white skin. I think DEI programs are extremely racist. I was absolutely appalled when they were being promoted as being inclusive. They are the furthest things from being inclusive. In colleges, they slap people with plagiarism and the people have no idea where they get it from and it's only because of the skin color because the person is not black. The DEI programs are about all about black supremacy. They have nothing whatsoever to do with inclusivity. The opposite is true. There's zero equity with that. It is the most offensive program that could ever have been created by any Democratic brain because it's not democratic at all. And I am a Democrat saying that. Anyone who runs these, especially in the state that I'm in in Maryland they are the most racist people. They are absolutely racist. And Democrats are all about equality. The DEI programs are the furthest thing from equality that could possibly be. It is sincerely about black supremacy and about pushing out anyone who is not descended from a slave, including black Africans, who are immigrated here in the past hundred years. DEI is evil. Absolutely evil. you're welcome to share that with whoever you'd like because that right, there is the biggest racist program that there could possibly be. DEI focuses 100% on making all black Americans believe that they are 100% victims and not the heroes of their own destiny and they would prefer to set everyone else on fire and then help their own selves. That is what DEI is about and then they want to pay them as if they are royal royalty. This has been milked extensively, making multiple people about wealthy than they should've been and dropping the gap even further creating a criminal layer of victims who believe that they should be given and owed everything. That is what DEI has created. DEI is a black supremacy monstrosity designed for keeping black Americans rooted in manufactured hatred and victimization, essentially as if they're willing slaves in 2026. It's psychologically manipulative and erodes the mental health of all like a cancer.
- It is racism
- I've always believed in equality for all, so this subject is just white noise.
- Merit based America

- Merit has built this country and forces individual accountability, which DEI undermines. DEI cannot be applied universally and is harmful to everyone.
- Merit is the only qualifier in hiring, academic admissions or any other pursuit. Prioritizing arbitrary and unrelated qualifications having to do with race, gender, ethnicity, is counterproductive.
- Merit is the only way to get ahead in life.
- My opponent, Kevin Lincoln said, "We should be leading the nation in matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion."
- My platform, the 'Blueprint for Socioeconomic Evolution,' is predicated on the strength of a unified civic foundation. I oppose DEI programs because they institutionalize fragmentation by magnifying our differences rather than our commonalities. To evolve as a society, we must move beyond policies that reinforce civic division. I believe we must apply Rousseau's principle of 'Civil Religion' to our modern governance. For a Republic to function, it requires a shared set of values and a common identity that transcends private dogma and individual identity politics. At a public level—especially within our military and government—we should never focus on what divides us; we must focus on the 'General Will' and our shared mission. By submerging these private distinctions in favor of merit and collective duty, we ensure that our social infrastructure remains unbreakable and focused on the future of our nation.
- No, I do not support DEI Programs as, Americans have witnessed the obvious lack of skills and experience. The example I would use is SCOTUS Ketanji Brown Jackson who is an embarrassment and Kamala Harris which was also an epic fail.
- Oppose is not a strong enough word. This is not in alignment with the founding fathers, nor the Holy Bible
- People should be judged by the content of their character, not their skin color.
- The antidote to the legacy of racism is merit based hiring. Individuals should see advancement in their profession due to their work and skills, not the category they belong to or the box they check.
- The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantees American's rights to be treated equally, which is not necessarily the same as equitably.
- These are racial quotas and inherently racist. Pick the best candidates based on skill and aptitude. Diversity will work itself out.
- They are racist based and ended up being taught by racists. The Constitution already protects each individual citizen's rights. DEI programs work on the assumption that all European Americans are racists, ignoring the fact that it was European Abolitionists who fought to free slaves and who fought to have new states added to the Union to be free states, not slave states. Racism is abhorrent but no-one can look into the soul of another and know what they think or believe.
- Things should be earned not given.
- This goes against the constitution, giving special rights to individuals.
- This opinion is not associated with ADA protections for Disabled Veterans or VA Preferences
- To stop racism we need to stop talking about race.

- We are all meant to have equal opportunity; that does not mean unfairly advantaging certain individuals over others for factors about themselves they did not choose, such as skin color, or gender.
- We are already created equal; thus DEI is not needed as it's a special interest program.
- We need qualified people in every job!
- What one has done; what one can do helps define merit. One's character, experiences and capabilities amount to merit. and only merit helps our country, its economy, its society and its values grow and prosper.
- When in the navy as an African American, my first outfit supported my fast advancement, but the next one harassed me down a rank. So, I understand the "spirit of DEI," but it's not the answer if the employee candidate is not qualified. DEI won't be needed if public education is educating our kids. Whereby, I support the framework of "parent-teacher centric" public schools that's proven to produce successful public schools, specifically the "parental-school staff partnership" (PSSP) where parents and grandparents are aides to teachers in classrooms and hall monitors. DEI places the "cart in front of the horse." PSSP is less costly administratively because it minimizes discipline issues and eliminates bullying.
- While I recognize the value of cultural awareness and sensitivity, I am skeptical of programs that elevate or reward individuals for biological traits. I adamantly oppose government financial investment in programs that identify preferred classes of any kind.