

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2025

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Jeffrey R. Balsler, M.D., Ph.D.  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
Nashville, Tennessee 37232

Dr. Balsler:

I write to you today to express my grave concern regarding reports that Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) has begun concealing its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts instead of fully complying with President Trump's executive action to end wasteful DEI programs in educational institutions. For the benefit of Tennesseans and all Americans who rely on VUMC for lifesaving care and research, I urge you to end all DEI programs and fully comply with the President's executive action.

VUMC has recently scrubbed its website of references to DEI initiatives at the institution, going so far as to password protect web pages tied to DEI and climate activism. Concerningly, though, offices such as the Office of Health Equity, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Office for Diversity Affairs are seemingly still active. These offices have advocated for "collectively addressing systemic inequities" and "confronting structural racism."<sup>1</sup> Additionally, VUMC's track record on embracing harmful woke initiatives is grim, as VUMC has previously performed sex-change surgeries on minors before suspending the program after public outrage.

VUMC has been the beneficiary of millions of dollars of federal taxpayer funds. In fact, so far this fiscal year, VUMC has received more than \$66 million in NIH awards. In previous years, instead of using funding to advance core medical research, over \$17 million has been invested in VUMC's DEI and Belonging Program, which was formed to hire "diverse biomedical researchers."<sup>2</sup> This is only one of many examples of VUMC investing in DEI initiatives instead of lifesaving medical research.

President Trump has been clear on this issue. His recent executive orders correctly prohibited DEI programs at federally funded research institutions and ended the recognition of gender identity apart from biological sex.<sup>3</sup> As a beneficiary of federal funding, VUMC has a responsibility to align with the President's executive orders and return to a focus on lifesaving research as opposed to woke DEI initiatives. Instead of covering up VUMC's DEI initiatives, I urge you to comply with

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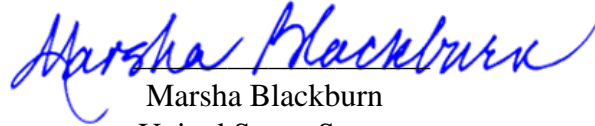
<sup>1</sup>Alec Schemmel, *Vanderbilt Med Center 'Hiding' DEI Resources Behind Password-Protected Web Pages: Report*, FOX NEWS (March 18, 2025), <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/vanderbilt-medical-center-allegedly-hiding-dei-resources-report>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Exec. Order No. 14,173, 90 Fed. Reg. 8633 (Jan. 21, 2025); Exec. Order No. 14,168, 90 Fed. Reg. 8615 (Jan. 20, 2025).

President Trump's effort to responsibly allocate taxpayer dollars and immediately cease all DEI initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marsha Blackburn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senator