



OWBA Statement In Support of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

As the Executive Board of the Ohio Women's Bar Association, we want to be clear about our support for the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI").

The primary purpose of the OWBA is to maintain the honor and integrity of the legal profession; foster communication among women attorneys; promote and advance the position of and the opportunities available to women attorneys in order to more accurately reflect the role of women in a democratic society; ensure women attorneys' participation in bar associations; encourage participation in social and political areas affecting the community; monitor the legislation, policies and practices affecting the status of women and opportunities available to women and seek changes where necessary; promote and provide continuing legal education in areas of current interest to the community and, in particular, to the legal profession; and gather and disseminate information of interest to women. Our organization is open to all; we exclude no one on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, religion, immigration status, or ethnic background. We are non-partisan and do not advocate for or against any particular piece of legislation or any particular candidate. That said, the beliefs that women in our profession deserve equitable treatment, women's voices should be included without discrimination, and a diversity of backgrounds and viewpoints is of benefit to all, are integral to our reason for existing, and we will continue to stand up for these beliefs.

Qualified women, within the legal profession and in all industries, have benefited from opportunities to compete for roles, enter into, and thrive within their respective fields, where they were previously denied these opportunities not based on merit, but solely because of their gender.

More importantly, all levels of government and the private sector have reaped the many benefits of including women and other diverse groups in their workforce including increased creativity, improved collaboration, diverse perspectives in decision-making, higher profitability, better employee retention, and a more positive work culture, as women and diverse voices often bring unique skills and approaches to problem-solving that enhance overall performance.

Women have made significant strides, but there is still much work to be done. We invite you to visit the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau website and review the statistics regarding the continued wage disparity between women and men in the private sector (Data and Statistics

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U.S. Department of Labor). The data proves that intentional programs and initiatives to combat the effects of discrimination are still vital to protecting women and their economic security.

Further, we firmly reject the idea that oppressing one disadvantaged group will protect another.

As women lawyers and supporters of women lawyers, we stand in solidarity with underrepresented groups of all kinds. The suppression of diverse voices and disregard for the basic concepts of justice and equity are antithetical to our mission. Our profession uniquely positions us to ensure the protection of all citizens, and we have a moral and professional obligation to do so. When we became lawyers, each of us swore an oath to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the United States and the State of Ohio, and we will continue to uphold those laws to further advance diversity, foster inclusion, and protect all citizens.