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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL OPPOSES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO BAN IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul joined a coalition of attorneys general urging the federal government to rescind the executive order on “Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping” that could be misconstrued to limit implicit bias trainings for federal contractors and federal grantees. [In a letter](#), Raoul and the coalition affirm the vital role implicit bias trainings play in furthering the goals of diversity, equity and inclusion, and seek a commitment from the federal government to expand trainings aimed at understanding and combating racial injustice.

“As Attorney General, I am committed to protecting employees from bias and discrimination in the workplace,” Raoul said. “I urge the federal government to withdraw this order, which could have the effect of discouraging federal contractors and grantees from conducting implicit bias trainings that foster workplace diversity.”

The vague and contradictory executive order sets forth a federal policy “not to promote race or sex stereotyping or scapegoating in the federal workforce or in the Uniformed Services, and not to allow grant funds to be used for these purposes.” The order goes on to provide a deeply troubling definition of “race and sex scapegoating” that gravely mischaracterizes how typical diversity and implicit bias trainings are conducted.

A primary goal of diversity training in the workplace is to raise awareness of the value of collaborating with people of different cultures, races, genders, ethnicities, ages, beliefs, experiences and ideas. The American economy has greatly benefited from diversity and inclusion training as a more informed and diverse workforce has increased ingenuity and creativity, produced dramatic increase in productivity and profits, expanded markets, and attracted diverse talent to American firms.

“All constituents, wherever they may be employed, deserve access to a workplace free of unlawful bias and discrimination. Whether it is intended to ban implicit bias or unconscious bias trainings or merely has the tragic and foreseeable consequence of reducing this important work, we firmly oppose the Order’s application in our states,” the letter states. “Unless the Order is somehow revised to provide clear and unequivocal support for the continued use of implicit bias and unconscious bias trainings, it should be withdrawn.”

Given the vague and contradictory nature of the order, the attorneys general seek clarification regarding the order’s scope and whether its intention is to unlawfully ban or direct the substance of diversity trainings by state actors. As state agencies and officials are frequent recipients of federal grants, the order could be misconstrued as purporting to prohibit states from conducting certain training.

“Equal justice under law will not be achieved until we acknowledge and reckon with the racial inequities that persist in our society. The nationwide movement for racial justice has heightened awareness of not only how we treat each other as individuals, but also the role systems play in affording, or restraining, the advancement of particular groups. Our workplaces, public, private and non-profit, are grappling with how to become more inclusive and equitable. To that end, government should expand and increase its commitment to trainings centered on understanding and combating racial injustice. Now is the time for greater communication and support for diversity, equity and inclusion, not less. We therefore urge you to withdraw the Order,” the letter states.

Joining Raoul in sending the letter are the attorneys general of Connecticut, California, Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin.