

Trump's Anti-DEI Push faces resistance from Corporate America



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Former U.S. President Donald Trump intensified his criticism of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies, linking them—without evidence—to a fatal plane crash in Washington, D.C. His remarks, echoing broader conservative opposition to DEI initiatives, come amid his administration's ongoing rollback of diversity programs in federal hiring and contracting.

Trump's attack on the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) diversity efforts follows a growing movement among right-wing figures to challenge DEI policies across various sectors. Tech billionaire Elon Musk previously claimed that DEI compromises safety, stating, "DEI means people DIE," in response to California wildfires. However, major U.S. corporations continue to defend diversity initiatives, citing their benefits in talent development and business performance. Supporters argue that DEI expands hiring pools, enhances workplace innovation, and improves financial performance. Research by Boston Consulting Group, analyzing data from over 27,000 employees across 16 countries, found that companies embracing diversity saw increased profits and reduced employee turnover. Ken Frazier, the first Black CEO of a major pharmaceutical firm, emphasized that DEI helps identify and develop hidden talent, ensuring a more equitable hiring process.

Despite political pressure, corporate commitment to DEI remains strong. A Heritage Foundation report revealed that 486 of the Fortune 500 companies still publicly support DEI efforts. Some firms, including Walmart and Target, have modified their DEI strategies under legal and consumer scrutiny, but experts describe these changes as mostly superficial.

Retail giant Costco recently rejected a conservative-backed proposal to reconsider its diversity policies, asserting that DEI enhances employee retention, customer engagement, and product

innovation. As political debates continue, corporate leaders maintain that diversity remains a competitive advantage rather than a liability.