

# EMPOWERED AND ENGAGED

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### Affirmative Action and DEI: A Personal Perspective

Exploring the true meaning of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and the lasting harm of systemic discrimination and anti-DEI attitudes.



### A New Generation Watching Closely

Examining the hopes and concerns of a politically engaged generation. Young adults demand more than promises — they expect bold, lasting change.



## Upcoming Events

**Saturday July 19, 2025**  
*General Body Meeting*  
American Legion Post 58  
1 pm

**Saturday August 16, 2025**  
*General Body Meeting*  
Mount Zion Baptist Church  
1 pm



El Paso Branch NAACP



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# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION – DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION

by Raymond Cartwright, NAACP El Paso Branch Assistant Treasurer

*Why do these terms provoke such strong feelings of animosity and division?*

*Who truly bears the brunt of Affirmative Action, and who benefits from it?*

*What impact does Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have on individuals and communities?*

**To understand these questions, let's first define DEI:**

**Diversity** encompasses the presence of a variety of identities and attributes within a community. This can include race, age, gender identity, disability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, language, and political views. Embracing diverse perspectives can foster innovation and creativity in problem-solving.

**Equity** refers to the fair allocation of resources and opportunities, ensuring that everyone has what they need to thrive and participate fully in society. Unlike equality, which provides the same resources to all, equity takes into account the varying starting points and personal circumstances of individuals, distributing resources according to specific needs.

**Inclusion** is the intentional practice of ensuring that diverse individuals have equal access to opportunities and are actively engaged in decision-making processes. This involves fostering an environment where everyone is welcomed, respected, and valued for their unique contributions, ensuring that no one feels excluded.

In contrast, I've encountered what I term Anti-DEI (ADEI)—a mindset adopted by those who allow their biases and prejudices to dictate their actions. This mindset, often rooted in fear or ignorance, can lead to discriminatory practices and exclusion. Although I have not personally reaped the benefits of DEI, I have faced discrimination rooted in ADEI.

Reflecting on my experiences, I graduated in 1955 as an Honor Student from an Army Guided Missile school, trained as an electronics technician. The policy was to retain the top graduate as an instructor, a role I aspired to, especially since the base was my hometown. However, I was assigned to Fort Bliss, Texas, 1200 miles away. When inquiring about my transfer, I was told the officer in charge preferred not to have "colored soldiers" in his unit. When offered the chance to appeal, I declined, recognizing that I would be under the authority of someone whose prejudices would overshadow my contributions, placing my career at risk.

This situation exemplifies violations of the fundamental principles of DEI.

In the 1950s, a time of significant racial segregation and discrimination, qualified Sergeants could apply for promotion to the officer ranks. Despite repeatedly applying for ten years and witnessing my trainees advance, I faced prolonged setbacks.

My admission to Army Aviation School was delayed by six months, making me the only Black student



among 400. During training, I consistently received below-average grades from my instructor, who claimed my flying technique was flawed. This led to my failure to graduate, a disappointment that not only affected my career but also my self-esteem and confidence. It haunted me for two decades until I pursued private flight training in El Paso, ultimately earning my Private Pilot's License.

Now, my children and grandchildren join me in the skies, but my wife refuses to fly with me, citing concerns about the safety of small aircraft.

While it was not my intention to share my personal narrative in this presentation, my experiences serve as poignant examples of the detrimental effects of Anti-Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. As you ponder the initial questions I posed, consider the broader implications of these concepts on individuals and society as a whole.

## THE YOUNG ADULT PERSPECTIVE ON THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

by Ariana Carter



Young adults across the country are closely watching the new administration, weighing promises against past experiences. This generation has grown up during times of political and social turbulence, which has created a heightened sense of awareness and skepticism. There is a strong desire for leadership that not only acknowledges the pressing issues of the day but also takes meaningful action to address them.

One of the most urgent concerns is the climate crisis. Many young people are anxious about the planet's future, having witnessed years of inaction and minimal progress. Environmental policy is not seen as a distant issue, but rather a personal and immediate threat. There is a call for the administration to implement bold and lasting reforms that prioritize sustainability and environmental justice.

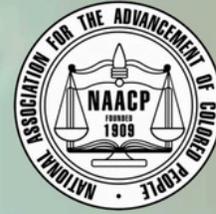
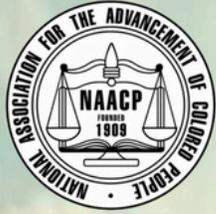
Economic challenges also weigh heavily on this demographic. Rising student debt, job market instability, and the high cost of living make financial independence difficult to achieve. Young adults are looking for policies that offer genuine relief. For example, affordable education, healthcare, and pathways to stable careers. The current system is often viewed as stacked against younger generations trying to build a future.

In addition, social justice remains a priority. This generation has led to many conversations surrounding racial equity, gender rights, and inclusivity. There is a growing expectation that these values will be reflected in national policy and leadership. Empty gestures are no longer enough, and substantive change is demanded, especially in policing, immigration, and civil rights.

The new administration is being met with both hope and hesitation. Many young adults are ready to hold leaders accountable and stay civically engaged. This moment offers an opportunity to rebuild trust and prove that political systems can work for everyone, especially those who will inherit the consequences of today's choices.



# HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DORIS LAVERNE HARDWICK



## Resolution

*"Though you are gone, your spirit lives on in our hearts."*

### *Honoring the Life and Legacy of Doris Laverne Hardwick*

**WHEREAS**, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) recognizes and honors individuals whose lives have been devoted to the cause of justice, equality, and the unyielding pursuit of civil rights for all people; and

**WHEREAS**, Doris Laverne Hardwick, a proud daughter of El Paso and a lifelong champion for justice, served as President of the El Paso Branch NAACP from January 2021 to December 2022, during one of the most challenging and pivotal periods in our nation’s recent history; and

**WHEREAS**, under her leadership, the El Paso Branch expanded its advocacy efforts to address systemic inequities in policing, education, and healthcare, standing firmly against racial discrimination and economic injustice affecting African Americans and underserved communities in the Borderland; and

**WHEREAS**, Mrs. Hardwick spearheaded voter education drives, mobilized community members to participate in local and national elections, and worked to hold public institutions accountable for equitable representation and transparent governance; and

**WHEREAS**, Mrs. Hardwick uplifted the next generation of leaders by mentoring youth, encouraging them to serve with purpose and to rise in defense of justice, ensuring that the spirit of the Movement lived on in every neighborhood and school; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 26, 2025, Doris Laverne Hardwick answered her final call to rest, leaving behind a legacy not of titles or accolades, but of lives changed, doors opened, and truths spoken in the face of adversity;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the El Paso Branch NAACP, in full unity and solemn remembrance, celebrates the life and mourns the passing of Doris Laverne Hardwick, a courageous leader, a faithful advocate, and a beloved sister in the struggle for civil and human rights;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and all those whose lives she touched, and we pray they find comfort in knowing her service has made a lasting difference in the fight for justice and equality;

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution be presented to the Hardwick family and archived with honor in the official records of the El Paso Branch NAACP, so that future generations may study her example and be inspired to continue the work she so nobly advanced.

Respectfully and humbly submitted on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025,

Carl Dwyer, President El Paso Branch NAACP

