

January 29, 2025

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I would first like to congratulate you on your historic victory. I pray that God will keep you, your family, and administration safe. I also pray that you will seek His guidance as you reawaken the spirit of greatness in our nation.

My reason for writing you this letter is to thank you for placing such a high priority on eradicating the evil and divisive ideology of DEI and to request that you have newly appointed Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth place some of his attention towards the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). As you may recall, you tweeted in 2017 that "The VMI cadets looked awesome in my inaugural parade. . . much better than the overrated Citadel, Naval academy and West Point cadets!"

Unfortunately, that VMI has now lost its way due to the VMI Board of Visitors (BOV) and Superintendent turning the focus to DEI and away from honor, meritocracy, and excellence. It could also be argued that the VMI Administration politicized your Inaugural Parade and then lowered themselves to pettiness by not recognizing the cadets at the award-winning Cadet newspaper for being members of the Press Corps covering your "peaceful transfer of power."

Governor Youngkin was elected, in part, to eradicate "inherently divisive concepts," such as DEI. Like yourself, he wasted no time doing so with his first executive order. Unlike yourself, he failed in "promises made, promises kept." His lack of political courage has been disheartening to many VMI alumni. The Corps of Cadets deserve better from their Commander-in-Chief.

In your "Restoring America's Fighting Force" Executive Order, Sec. 4 calls for "Abolishing the DEI Bureaucracy." Not only should that take place within the Federal Government and DOD, but at colleges and universities across the nation receiving federal funding, especially colleges with ROTC units. Although Virginia's Chief Diversity Officer claimed that DEI was dead when he spoke at VMI in 2023, Dr. Jay Greene and Mr. Mike Gonzalez of the Heritage Foundation published an article later in the year titled ***The Dangerous DEI Bloat at Virginia's Public Universities*** in which they concluded:

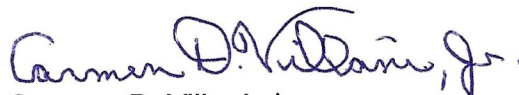
“Surprisingly, public universities in Virginia have larger diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) bureaucracies than taxpayer-funded universities in any other state. . .Virginia policymakers must rein in this dangerous DEI expansion.”

Clearly, DEI wasn't dead but thriving. What did change? DEI was now referred to as Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion or DOI. It should also be noted that the VMI BOV placed DOI under the auspices of the “Corps and Personnel Affairs Committee.” It is reasonable to conclude this renaming as a deliberate effort to hide the commitment by several VMI officials to “imbed DEI concepts across all disciplines.” In an interview with VMI's Chief Diversity Officer appearing in a VMI Alumni publication just last year, she made it clear that the VMI DOI programs are designed to align with other programs, such as the Department of Defense's “**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion** and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2022-2023 (emphasis added).” I believe it is safe to say that Defense Secretary Hegseth will strongly disapprove of this alignment.

Common sense has yet to eradicate DEI from VMI so that is why I believe withholding federal funding is the one sure way to do so from my alma mater. To risk the loss of federal funding and ROTC scholarships due to an intransigent VMI leadership in keeping DEI/DOI would be a grave disservice to the cadets. The VMI leadership MUST return to the understanding that our greatness IS NOT defined by our diversity as promoted by DEI/DOI, but the common bond a diverse student body and citizenry embrace.

In closing, it would be an honor to assist Defense Secretary Hegseth and have the support of fellow VMI graduate and your National Security Advisor, Michael Waltz '96, in ensuring that DEI/DOI is actually “dead” at VMI. From the reaction of the Corps of Cadets when it was announced that you had won the election, I'm confident they would approve (see Clay Travis' post on X).

God Bless America,



Carmen D. Villani, Jr.

VMI, Class of 1976

USAF Veteran (Pilot)

Cc: Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth