



The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society
www.tms.org

The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society Position Statement: Concerning the Proliferation of State Legislation Hostile to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Issued: October 1, 2023

The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society (TMS) is a U.S.-based professional society that provides a peer network for minerals, metals, and materials scientists and engineers working in industry, academia, and government positions around the world. The work of TMS members enables high-tech startups, improves the efficiency of existing industries, creates well-paying jobs, raises the standard of living, and educates the next-generation workforce. Achieving such impactful results requires a talented, motivated, innovative, and well-educated workforce capable of meeting the opportunities and challenges of today while anticipating those of tomorrow. However, the United States has too few STEM professionals to satisfy its employment needs. Developing and maintaining this vital workforce is significantly imperiled by the trend of sweeping legislation that targets the rights and quality of life of many of these groups, as well as the organizations that support them.

Many TMS members from underrepresented groups have expressed apprehension of traveling to and residing in states where legislation may result in them being profiled, harassed, or even arrested and charged with a crime, for their race, their ethnic origin, or their gender identity. These legislative actions are even now disenfranchising underrepresented communities in STEM on college and university campuses, in the research environment, in business development, in defense industries, and in professional societies. By eroding our already insufficient STEM workforce, these continued actions have the potential to be calamitous for U.S. competitiveness.

TMS has professional members working at institutions within all 50 states. Like the states themselves, the TMS membership is diverse and represents many differing values and perspectives. That being said, TMS holds as a core value a principle of non-exclusion from society participation on the basis of sex or gender identity, race, religion, country of origin or residence, or sexual orientation. While TMS intends to fulfill its contractual obligations, made many years in advance, to organize events at the times and locations prescribed by those agreements, we are also bound by principle to weigh the confluence of state and local regulations governing potential future contracts in a holistic evaluation of, among other important considerations, the extent to which TMS would be able to provide a safe and welcoming environment for our entire membership.

In addition, TMS is deeply concerned that current and proposed legislation prescriptive of what can and cannot be discussed as part of training or education will have a chilling effect on the exchange of ideas among peers at workplaces, educational institutions, and technical meetings where TMS members participate. In having members of the STEM community gagged explicitly by legislative action, or by a fear of retaliation, the preeminence of the U.S. science and engineering establishment and its advancement is put under threat.

TMS implores state governments to abandon the tide of counterproductive rhetoric and repeal legislation that creates hostile work environments and prevents inclusion and education of our current and the next generation workforce. Instead, TMS implores governments to cultivate greater participation from marginalized and underrepresented groups, including Black and LGBTQIA+ individuals, in education, government, and business, in support of a more diverse workforce, and particularly to the benefit of the STEM community. In the meantime, TMS will focus on supporting our members who must navigate the uncertainties, complexities, and anxieties resulting from actions that distract or hamper dedicated scientists and engineers from performing the valuable work that they do to improve the nation's economy and quality of life.