

Candace Owens on DEI: Right or Wrong?

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According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023), Whites make up 77% of the workforce. In addition, 67.9% are men. However, despite these statistics, white male supremacists and their supporters, such as Candace Owens, continue to degrade the addition of women and people of color into the workforce. In the article “Candace Owens Says She’s ‘Terrified’ Of A Female Pilot While Defending Anti-DEI Bigotry” from *NewsOne*, Zack Linky (2023) explains how Owens has an irrational distrust and disgust for diversity in workplaces. He elaborates on these opinions and refutes them, describing how wrong she is for being so conservative and having such horrid ideals. I agree with Linky (2023) that Owen’s beliefs are outrageous and overdramatic. There is no reason for conservatives to be so suspicious of women and people of color in the workforce. Being inclusive does not discredit anyone of their credentials, nor should it make people wary of the credibility of whatever they see as a diverse individual in or that company or organization. In addition, women are not a distraction in a workplace, and if men are being distracted by them, that is the man’s fault. Plus, white men dominate all workplaces anyway, so there really is not anything for these conservatives to fear.

Near the beginning of his article, Linky (2023) states, “Apparently, conservatives believe—or are pretending to believe—that the way DEI and affirmative action work is company recruiters walk down the street and flag down random Black people, people of color and women and shout, ‘Hey, do you want a job you have zero experience or education, because it’s a whole white sausage party over here and we need to make a change!’” DEI stands for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and this is what people like Candace Owens are afraid of. This discrimination is not limited to DEI in the workforce. In the article “Candace Owens: A Conservative Godsend for Racial Inaction” from *Newsweek*, Zervas (2023) declared, “When Derek Chauvin murdered

George Floyd in 2020, Owens was quick to criticize Black Lives Matter's response. Not only did she call the organization 'a fraud,' but she also filmed a documentary to expose the apparent corruption within the organization." This quote shows how Owens's discrimination is not just limited to people in the workforce. It also pertains to any person in the world that represents diversity, and in the case of the quote above, race. Diversity is so important in any circumstance, but especially so in a workplace. In "Why Does Representation Matter in the Workplace" by *Ideas Fest*, they explain, "Diversity in your workplace will bring new ways of thinking about problems, opportunities for innovation and growth, and better decision-making processes that are more representative of your company's customers and consumers." This describes why diversity is so crucial for a workplace and how absurd Owens is to believe the opposite.

Owens and her supporters are not just racist. They are also against any type of inclusion and equity. Linky (2023) also mentions, "Just last year, she called it 'ridiculous' that a disabled woman in a wheelchair was featured in an underwear ad, not because people with disabilities are unqualified to be—*checks notes*—underwear models, but because she's simply 'getting tired of this all-inclusivity thing.'" It is bad enough that we have learned that Owens is racist, but now we know that she is against any type of inclusivity. This quote shows how she is also against people with disabilities. How is it fair for someone to pick on people for characteristics they cannot control? No one is born and picks to be a certain race or gender or have a certain disability. When I was a kid, the only time I ever saw an Asian portrayed in media was in the movie *Mulan*, and I am not even Chinese. Nowadays, Korean culture is growing rapidly in the West, but it was barely prevalent when I was young. We need diversity in the world, especially in media, to be able to connect with all audiences.

Going back to the doubt Owens and her supporters hold for DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) in the workforce, Linky (2023) includes a quote from Owens explaining how she would be terrified if she saw a woman flying her plane because she is worried that the United CEO was just trying to check a box and did not hire her because of her qualifications. In addition, in the article “Candace Owens Is ‘Terrified’ of Women Pilots” from *Newsweek*, Dobkin (2024) claims, “Owens called arguments that inclusive hiring helps to decrease bias and discrimination ‘foolish’ in a comment to *Newsweek* via email on Friday.” This quote furthers my point that Owens is especially against DEI in the workforce. She explains how she has an irrational fear of DEI in the workforce because she fears they do not have the necessary qualifications. It is completely outrageous to have these fears, especially if the job in consideration is something as important and lethal as a pilot. I do not believe that any company would ever hire someone based on their physical attributes and not their schooling and training, especially if lives could be in danger. In addition, being more inclusive should never be considered as “foolish.” Why would representing all diverse types of people be foolish? Everyone deserves to be recognized for their accomplishments regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, etc. However, despite their deserving, they are still discriminated against. I learned in “Learning from Women in Aviation” that:

In the earliest days of aviation, both men and women sought to learn to fly. However, women faced many more barriers in earning a pilot’s license. Many flight schools refused to teach women, and some men didn’t think women were strong or smart enough to become pilots. Black, Brown, and Indigenous women faced additional discrimination. Some women went to Europe to earn their license because they could not get teachers in

the United States. Despite these barriers, women across the country started careers as pilots and aviators.

Women have been experiencing unjustly hardships in aviation since aviation first began to rise, and this is just one example. Women, people of color, disabled people, and so many more have been judged and discriminated against since the beginning of time.

Now, you may be wondering how a Black woman came to believe such things. Based on her beliefs, you would think that she faced little to no discrimination in her past, but, surprisingly, this is incorrect. In the article “Candace Owens—Friend of Kanye, Power Troll, Parler ‘Trad Wife’—Is ‘Playing for Keeps’” from VanityFair, Fox (2023) explains:

In the fall of 2005, according to old news reports, when Owens was in her junior year, she was attacked by three white girls. Per the reports, one of them left a voicemail on her phone, calling her a racial epithet and telling her that she ‘probably had a disease’ because she was Black. Soon after in the school hallway, one of them accused her of having sex with one of their boyfriends and threatened a fight with Owens at cheerleading practice after school. That evening, the girls showed up at a local Blockbuster, where Owens was working at the time. When she saw that the girls who had threatened her earlier were outside waiting for her, she tried to run back inside, but they’d blocked the door. The store manager happened to look out the window at that point. He told police that when he ran outside to help her, Owens was lying on her stomach as the three girls beat her and shouted a racial epithet. One girl ripped out Owens’s earring.

Owens faced many hardships in her childhood based on her race, so it would make most sense for her to be on the side of more inclusion and acceptance. Owens response to these confusions is,

as Fox (2023) puts it, “Much of her public messaging centers around the notion that the American left has made Black people believe they are victims, which she’s called ‘a mental plague on Black America.’” From this quote, we can understand Owens’s perspective better. She believes that fighting harder for DEI plagues the minds of those included in the DEI umbrella into thinking that they are all the victims and never in the wrong. Although I can see where she is coming from, I cannot say I agree with her. Just because people in the past were oppressed for their differences does not mean that everyone who has those same differences is going to play the pity card every time they are in trouble. In fact, there are plenty of stereotypes where a Black person is more dangerous than a White, or that a Hispanic is more subject to robbery than a White. These stereotypes would not be stereotypes if people under the DEI umbrella always played the victim. If anything, it shows more so how much Whites play the victim card and act like they are subject to more protection than others. However, people of different races have been victimized in the past. There must be reasoning behind stereotypes. We, as a society, need to recognize that everyone has been a victim of oppression and can be victimized in any scenario. However, we also must take this knowledge and learn to move forward. We need to recognize these victimized people and see them as the people they are now, not who their ancestors were or how those ancestors were treated. We need to see them as the strong and independent people they are, not the weak victim society tends to view them as.

After intense research and critical reading, I still agree with Linky (2023). We both believe that Candace Owens stance on DEI is horrendous and entirely wrong. Surprisingly enough, I understand where Owens comes from, as I mentioned before; however, I cannot say I agree with her. She feels like supporting minorities such as women, people of color, and disabled people are a waste. Although, some companies or organizations hire people or advertise people

solely for DEI purposes, most are not. Just because some are or are including their diversity in the hiring process does not mean that they are any less qualified than a white male would be. Nowadays, diversity is becoming more prevalent in society. For example, colleges and universities are looking for diverse students to make themselves seem more accepting and inclusive. One time I experienced myself being noticed because of my racially diverse characteristic was for the Polar Plunge. I have been doing the Polar Plunge with my school's National Honors Society for the past two years. When the emails were being sent out about signing up this past year, I noticed myself in these emails. After I jumped, there was a photographer who took a picture of me right after I emerged from the ice-cold lake. This picture, along with others, was placed in the emails and on the website to advertise how there is a diverse selection of people jumping for the cause. In addition to this, I also found myself on a billboard. I was not expecting it, and it was so much fun to see myself on a huge billboard. The reason my picture was used to advertise the Polar Plunge is because not only do I represent a female, high-school student, but I also represent racial diversity. The Polar Plunge knows how to take advantage of this to highlight their inclusivity and equality. It is a marketing strategy, and it works. However, just because companies want to display their inclusivity and diversity, does not mean that they will go to such lengths as to employ uneducated or unqualified people. These conservative white supremacists are way in over their head with their conspiracies about DEI in the workforce and in society. I mean, even the statistics are showing them that despite their overdramatic worries, the white male is still dominating all workplaces.

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