



Cisco Systems

Locations: California (HQ)

Industries: Technology Hardware and Equipment

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

DESCRIPTION:

Cisco Systems scored a 95 on the 2023 Corporate Equality Index (CEI) from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a political stakeholder group. By complying with the HRC's controversial demands, the company increases the risk of dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. The company covers transgender-related medical costs for its employees and their children and provides specific sexual orientation and gender identity-based benefits. It also uses sex and gender ideology criteria in employee recruitment, vendor selection, marketing, and philanthropic support. Cisco Systems forces employees to undergo multiple ideological trainings and uses its reputation, corporate funds, and political influence to support controversial sex and gender ideologies, organizations, and legislation. Cisco is a founding member of the Partnership for Global LGBTI Equality (PGLE), endorsed the Equality Act, and has donated to the Equality PAC. The company endorsed stricter gun control legislation and matched employee donations to ideological organizations. Cisco is a signatory of the Business Roundtable's 2019 Statement on the Purpose of Corporation, which promotes stakeholder capitalism. The company opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces. Cisco denounced various states' legislative efforts to protect election integrity and security. The company signed an amicus brief in opposition to the 2016 North Carolina bathroom bill HB2, which required people to use the bathroom of their biological sex. Cisco is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race. For these reasons, Cisco Systems receives a High Risk rating.

Corporate Weaponization

Has denied service to customers, suppliers, or vendors due to their political views or religious beliefs OR corporately boycotts, divests, or sanctions regions, people groups, or industries. **High Risk**

In 2011, Cisco terminated a contract with a high-ranking consultant for authoring a book expressing his agreement with the Biblical definition of marriage (1). Cisco has hired a new CEO since this incident, though current CEO Chuck Robbins was a senior vice president at the company at the time of the firing. However, the company later backtracked this decision, apologizing and stating that the consultant remained a vendor with the company (2). Cisco received a score of 95 on the 2023 Corporate Equality Index (CEI) from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a political stakeholder group. The company recruits employees based on sexual identity issues. The company discriminates against vendors that do not promote divisive sex and gender policies, indicating it prioritizes sexual issues over merit (3)(4)

Charitable giving (including employee matching programs) policies or practices discriminate against charitable organizations based on views or religious beliefs. **High Risk**

Cisco's 's HRC CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual

identity policies (1)(2). Cisco will donate to religious charities, but the receiving charity must have a policy that recipients of charitable works and donations are “not encouraged or required to learn about, adhere to, or convert to that organization’s religious doctrine as a condition of receiving service from the program” (3)(4).

Employment policies fail to protect against discrimination based on political affiliation/views and/or religion.

High Risk

Cisco’s HRC 2023 CEI rating indicates the company provides a specific benefits guide with a comprehensive explanation of transgender services funded by the company (1)(2). Cisco offers unconscious bias training as part of its “core curriculum” for managers and employees (3)(4). The company does not provide viewpoint protections for its employees (5).

Corporate Governance and Public Policy

Uses corporate reputation to support ideological causes and/or organizations hostile to freedom of expression.

High Risk

Cisco’s HRC 2023 CEI rating indicates the company forces employees to attend multiple, controversial trainings on gender identity, sexual orientation, transgender issues, and divisive racial ideology. The company provides gender transition guidelines for its employees and a specific benefits guide with a comprehensive explanation of transgender services funded by the company (1)(2). (3)(4)(56). Cisco’s CEO also publicly spoke out against the Georgia voting bill, and the company has joined the Civic Alliance to oppose various state-level election security laws (7)(8). Robbins has also publicly supported stricter firearm regulation in the United States (9). Cisco CEO Chuck Robbins is a member of the Business Roundtable and signed its 2019 Statement on the Purpose of Corporation, which promotes stakeholder capitalism over traditional obligations to shareholders and customers (10)(111213). The company signed an amicus brief in opposition to the 2016 North Carolina bathroom bill HB2, which required people to use the bathroom of their biological sex (14).

Uses corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies hostile to freedom of expression.

High Risk

Cisco’s HRC 2023 CEI rating indicates the company covers transgender related costs for its employees and their children, including paid short-term leave, puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, chest surgeries, genital surgeries, medical visits and lab monitoring, travel and lodging. Additionally, the company has pledged philanthropic support of at least one organization or event that promotes sex and gender ideology (1)(2). By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. established a donation fund to “fight racism and discrimination” which funds Color of Change, the Human Rights Campaign, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Anti-Defamation League and other ideological organizations (3). The company is a founding member of the PGLE (4). Cisco has also made progress on its 2020 pledge to donate \$5 million to the Black Lives Matter organization and related causes (5)(6). Cisco is a Bronze sponsor of Out and Equal (7). The company is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race (8)(9).

Uses corporate political contributions for ideological, non-business purposes.

High Risk

Cisco’s HRC 2023 CEI rating indicates the company publicly advocated for controversial sex and gender ideology through local, state or federal legislation or initiatives (1)(2). By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. Cisco donated to the Equality PAC and has lobbied for ideological

purposes (3)(4)(5).

The contents of this website and related resources (collectively, the "materials") are general in nature and intended for educational use only. Nothing in the materials or any other 1792 Exchange content constitutes legal or professional advice for any specific matter. Anyone seeking legal or professional advice should obtain such advice from competent counsel. Since individual circumstances vary, anyone reviewing the materials and/or any other 1792 Exchange content is strongly urged to obtain specific legal and/or other professional advice before acting or refraining from acting based on such materials or other 1792 Exchange content. 1792 Exchange accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage, howsoever incurred, which may result from accessing or relying on the materials or any other 1792 Exchange content. Further, 1792 Exchange disclaims, to the fullest extent permitted by law, all liability for any acts or omissions based on the materials or any other 1792 Exchange content.

USER AGREEMENT: Company reports and other resources are intended only for the private educational use of the registered user. Republishing and distributing reports and resources is strictly prohibited. By downloading reports and resources, the user accepts these conditions.

© 1792 Exchange 2023