

**DESCRIPTION:**

Winston & Strawn is High Risk. The company yields to political activism in shaping corporate governance, potentially alienating consumers, dividing employees, and harming shareholders. The company implements race and identity-based policies that replace merit, excellence, and integrity with preferential treatment and outcomes. Winston & Strawn embraces corporate initiatives that redirect its central focus from business goals to partisan policies and divisive issues. This approach fails to safeguard free exercise, free speech, and free enterprise.

**Corporate Weaponization**

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

*Winston & Strawn received a score of 100 on the 2025 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 (1)(2). However, it has not publicly canceled customers, suppliers, or vendors based on political views or religious beliefs (3).*

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

*Winston & Strawn's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual identity policies (1)(2). The firm does not appear to discriminate against charitable organizations based on views or beliefs. Winston & Strawn's charitable giving focus areas are "primarily to non-profit organizations that our attorneys, staff, and clients are actively engaged in supporting" (3)(4).*

**Employment policies fail to protect against viewpoint or other discrimination and/or are ideological in nature. High Risk**

*Winston & Strawn's HRC 2025 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). Winston & Strawn received a letter from the American Alliance for Equal Rights (AAFER), demanding its diversity fellowship stop using race as a determining factor of who qualifies for the program. After refusing to make changes, AAFER filed a lawsuit but dropped it once the firm made "substantial changes" to its fellowship. The firm only allowed law students who belong to "a disadvantaged and/or historically underrepresented group in the legal profession" into its diversity fellowships. The case was dismissed when Morrison and Foerster removed this language from the application (3)(4)(5). Winston & Strawn is Mansfield Certified,*

indicating its support of DEI in its recruitment, hiring, promotions, and leadership composition (6)(7). The firm is a member of The Diversity and Flexibility Alliance, indicating its support of DEI in its recruitment, retention, promotions, and leadership composition (8)(9). Winston & Strawn protects its employees against viewpoint discrimination (10).

## Corporate Governance and Public Policy

**Uses corporate reputation to support causes, organizations, or policies hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk**

Winston & Strawn's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company agrees to allow a controversial stakeholder group focused on sexual identity issues to dictate marketing or advertising strategy. By doing so, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (1)(2). Winston & Strawn is committed to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 (3). The company's CEO, Thomas P. Fitzgerald, signed the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion pledge, which includes a commitment to promote DEI through bias education training in the workplace, strategize on DEI programs/initiatives with other signatories, and engage boards of directors when developing and evaluating DEI strategies (4)(5). Winston & Strawn supports DEI within its business practices, employing a DEI Committee (6)(7). Otherwise, there are no publicly known cases of Winston & Strawn using its reputation to advance ideological causes or policies (8).

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

Winston & Strawn provides a benefits package for employees that covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion and transgender medical procedures for covered employees and dependents, including children (1)(2)(3). Winston & Strawn's HRC 2025 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. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (4)(5). Winston & Strawn is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race (6)(7). The firm has a pro bono partnership with the HRC to repeal legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (8)(9). Winston & Strawn pledged 100,000 pro bono hours, the equivalent of \$50 million investments over 5 years, to support racial equity (10). Otherwise, there are no publicly known cases of Winston & Strawn using corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies (11).

**Uses corporate political actions and/or financial contributions for ideological, non-business purposes. High Risk**

Winston & Strawn's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company publicly advocated for controversial sex and gender ideology through local, state or federal legislation or initiatives. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (1)(2). Winston & Strawn is a partner of the Center for Reproductive Rights, building case law, advocating before policy makers, and engaging in litigation to challenge bans and restrictions on access to abortion (3). Winston & Strawn filed an amicus brief in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment (4). The firm is a part of the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance, committed to work on initiatives that fight "systemic racism" (5)(6). Winston & Strawn has not used its PAC donations for ideological purposes and has not reported on its lobbying (7)(8)(9).

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