

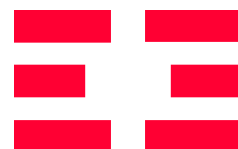


Ben & Jerry's

Locations: Vermont (HQ)

Industries: Food Beverage and Tobacco

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

DESCRIPTION:

Ben & Jerry's is a self-described activist company that regularly uses its corporate resources to promote legislative agendas such as cannabis legalization, increased abortion access, restrictions on free speech, and more. Its attempt to pull its business out of Israel prompted its parent, Unilever, to step in and sell Ben & Jerry's Israeli branch. Ben & Jerry's scored a 100 out of 100 on the 2023-2024 Corporate Equality Index (CEI) from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a political stakeholder

group. By complying with the HRC's controversial demands, Ben & Jerry's increases the risk of dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. It also uses sex and gender ideology criteria in employee recruitment, vendor selection, marketing, and philanthropic support. Ben & Jerry's 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. The company provides a benefits package for employees which covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion and transgender medical procedures for covered employees and dependents, including children. Ben & Jerry's has donated to ideological groups such as Color of Change. The company is committed to carbon neutrality by 2040 and provides a benefits package for employees which covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion. Ben & Jerry's opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces. The company is a Ceres Network Member, committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2040. Ben & Jerry's is a member of the "Don't Ban Equality" business coalition. The company denounced various states' legislative efforts to protect election integrity and security. For these reasons, Ben & Jerry's receives a High Risk rating.

Corporate Weaponization

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

Ben & Jerry's received a score of 100 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 (1)(2)(3). In July 2021, Ben & Jerry's announced that it would end sales in the West Bank, which the company referred to as "Occupied Palestinian Territory" (4). Upon pushback from local subsidiary Ben & Jerry's Israel, the company suddenly decided to end the franchise. When the ice cream chain's parent company Unilever attempted damage control by preemptively selling off the Israeli franchise, Ben & Jerry's immediately attempted to sue Unilever (5).

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

Ben & Jerry's HRC CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual identity policies (1)(2)(3).

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

Ben & Jerry's HRC 2023-2024 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). Ben & Jerry's does not provide viewpoint protections for its employees (4).

Corporate Governance and Public Policy

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

Ben & Jerry's indicates the company agrees to allow a controversial stakeholder group focused on sexual identity issues to dictate marketing or advertising strategy (1)(2)(3). By doing so, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. The company publicly opposes election security legislation (such as the Georgia voting bill), and the company cites the ACLU and Color of Change as "Friends in the Movement" (4). Ben & Jerry's has been a consistent supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement and has publicly supported the Defund the Police slogan and racial reparation policy (5)(6). Ben & Jerry's posted a defense of the Equality Act on its site entitled "The Equality Act and Why We Need It" (7). Ben & Jerry's has tweeted that the justice system "can't be reformed" and "must be dismantled" (8). In 2020, Ben & Jerry's joined the "#StopHateForProfit" boycott of Facebook intended to force the social media site to enact stricter speech rules (9). Ben & Jerry's signed onto the Human Rights Campaign's Business Coalition on Anti-LGBTQ Legislation (10) The company opposed the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act, which would prohibit teaching gender identity and sexual orientation to kids in K-3rd grade (11). Ben & Jerry's also posted a five-part pro-choice commentary on Twitter when the Supreme Court decision ending Roe v. Wade was leaked in 2022 (12). The company had published similar commentaries regarding state-level abortion laws previously (13). In 2022, Ben & Jerry's led a campaign in favor of cannabis reform (14). The company is a Ceres Network Member, committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2040 (15)(16). Ben & Jerry's posted a Tweet statement on July 4, 2023 stating that "it's high time we recognize that the US exists on stolen Indigenous land and commit to returning it" and "The faces on Mount Rushmore are the faces of men who actively worked to destroy Indigenous cultures and ways of life, to deny Indigenous people their basic rights" (17)(181920). 2122).

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

(1)(2)(3). The company's HRC 2023-2024 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 (4)(5)(6). By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. In 2018, Ben & Jerry's donated \$25,000 to Color of Change (78). In 2017, Ben & Jerry's donated to the Anti-Defamation League and called upon others to do the same (9).

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

High Risk

Ben & Jerry's HRC 2023-2024 CEI rating indicates the company publicly advocated for controversial sex and gender ideology through local, state or federal legislation or initiatives (1)(2)(3). By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. Ben & Jerry's does not operate a PAC or engage in lobbying at this time (4)(5)(6).

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