



## CKE Restaurants

Subsidiaries: Hardee's, Carl's Jr.

Locations: Tennessee (HQ)

Industries: Food Beverage and Tobacco

### RISK LEVEL:



Medium Risk

### DESCRIPTION:

CKE Restaurants often 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. CKE Restaurants occasionally embraces corporate initiatives that redirect its central focus from business goals to partisan policies and divisive issues at times. 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**

*CKE Restaurants received a score of 45 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, CKE Restaurants 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. Lower Risk**

*CKE Restaurants has the Shining Star Foundation which donates to any CKE employee who is facing a hardship. This includes: "Natural disasters such as flood, fire, tornado, earthquake, hurricane, etc. that creates a need for assistance beyond employee's capabilities. Damage to home or living environment, fires, or other unusual unforeseen expenses not covered by insurance. Serious illnesses or injuries to the employee, loss of an immediate family member, or other emergency situations beyond the capabilities of the employee to handle alone" (1)(2). Due to the foundation's mission, religious organizations are not discriminated against. Additionally, Carl's Jr. has used its corporate funds to donate to many religious organizations which has been attributed in part to its Catholic founder, Carl Karcher (3).*

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

*CKE Restaurants does not publish a nondiscrimination policy (1). The company launched a mandatory Inclusion and Anti-Racism "Cultural Intelligence" training for team members (2).*

## Corporate Governance and Public Policy

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

**Medium Risk**

*CKE Restaurants CEO, Ned Lyerly, signed the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion pledge, which includes a commitment to promote DEI through bias education training in the workplace (1)(2).*

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

**Medium Risk**

*CKE Restaurants' 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. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (1)(2).*

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

**Lower Risk**

*CKE Restaurants' PAC has been defunct since 2012 and the company has not lobbied for ideological purposes (1)(2)(3).*

*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