



Darden Restaurants

Subsidiaries: Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, Eddie V's Prime Seafood, The Capital Grille, The Capital Burger, Bahama Breeze, Seasons 52, Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen, Ruth's Hospitality Group, Yard House, Seasons 52

Locations: Florida (HQ)

Industries: Food Beverage and Tobacco

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

DESCRIPTION:

Darden Restaurants scored a 100 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, Darden Restaurants 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. Darden Restaurants 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. Darden Restaurants does not provide viewpoint protections for its employees. However, it has not publicly terminated business relationships due to religious beliefs or political views. The company supports the Equality Act and funds multiple LGBT organizations. Darden is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race. For these reasons, Darden Restaurants 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. **Medium Risk**

Darden Restaurants 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). However, Darden Restaurants has not publicly terminated business relationships due to religious beliefs or political views.

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

Darden Restaurants' HRC CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual identity policies (1)(2).

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

Darden Restaurants' 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). Darden Restaurants does not provide viewpoint protections for its employees (3). Darden Restaurants offers unconscious bias and inclusion and diversity training to employees (4).

Corporate Governance and Public Policy

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

Darden Restaurants' HRC 2023 CEI rating indicates the company agrees to allow a controversial stakeholder group focused on sexual identity issues to dictate marketing or advertising strategy (1)(2). By doing so, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. The company signed an open letter in support of the Equality Act (3).

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

Darden Restaurants' 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. Darden Restaurants is a brass sponsor of Out & Equal and sent 17 employees to its summit (3)(4)(5). The company is a corporate partner of the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (6). Darden is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race (7)(8).

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

Darden Restaurants' 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. Darden Restaurants' PAC has been defunct since 2016, but it used to donate in a manner consistent with its business interests (3)(4). Darden Restaurants has not used its lobbying for ideological purposes (5).

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