



Ascena Retail Group

Subsidiaries: Ann Taylor, LOFT, Lane Bryant, Cacique, Lou & Grey

Locations: New Jersey (HQ)

Industries: Consumer Durables and Apparel, Retailing

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

DESCRIPTION:

Ascena 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, 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. Ascena 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's CEO signed the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion pledge. Ascena opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces. The company supports the Equality Act and ESG within its business practices. For these reasons, Ascena 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**

Ascena 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)

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

Ascena Retail Group's HRC CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual identity policies (1)(2). The company does not discriminate against religious organizations in their charitable giving. Ascena Retail Group's charitable giving efforts primarily focus on the well-being of women and children (3)(4)(5).

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

Ascena'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). The company's CEO has signed the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion pledge, which includes a commitment to promote DEI through

bias education training in the workplace (3). Ascena Retail Group holds mandatory unconscious bias training for employees (4). Ascena Retail Group and its subsidiaries Ann Taylor, LOFT, Lane Bryant, and Cacique do 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

Ascena Retail Group's 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. (3). The company and its subsidiaries support ESG within its business practices (4)(5). Ascena Group signed an open letter in support of the Equality Act (6).

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

Ascena Retail Group's subsidiary Lane Bryant funds GLSEN, which engages in LGBTQ advocacy (1)(2). The company'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 (3)(4). By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders.

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

Ascena Retail Group 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. Ascena Retail Group does not operate a PAC or engage in lobbying at this time (3)(4)(5).

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