



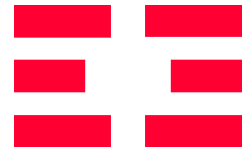
Ascena Retail Group

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

Locations: New Jersey (HQ)

Industries: Consumer Durables and Apparel, Retailing

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

View this company on 1792 Exchange: <https://1792exchange.com/company/ascena-retail-group/>

DESCRIPTION:

Ascena 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. Ascena 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

Ascena 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

Ascena Retail Group's HRC 2023-2024 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).

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

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

Ascena Retail Group's HRC 2023-2024 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). Ascena Retail Group opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (3). The company and its subsidiaries support ESG within its business practices (4)(5). Ascena Group signed an open letter endorsing the Equality Act, a contentious proposal to amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act by adding sexual orientation and so-called gender identity as protected categories. The legislation would, among other implications, grant biological men access to women-only spaces such as sports teams and public restrooms, and compel healthcare providers to deliver sex-denying healthcare (6). The company's CEO Lizanne Kindler 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 (7)(8).

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 2023-2024 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. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (3)(4). Otherwise, there are no publicly known cases of Ascena Retail Group using corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies (5).

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

Ascena Retail Group'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. By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders (1)(2). Ascena Retail Group does not operate a PAC or engage in lobbying at this time (3)(4)(5).

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