



# Walgreens Boots Alliance

Locations: Illinois (HQ)

Industries: Food and Staples Retailing, Health Care Equipment and Services

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

## DESCRIPTION:

Walgreens Boots Alliance (Walgreens) scored a 95 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, Walgreens 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. Walgreens 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. Walgreens 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. For these reasons, Walgreens receives a High Risk rating.

Note: Walgreens will dispense the abortion drug mifepristone at some of its pharmacies. However, Walgreens has stated that it will not offer the pill in states with anti-abortion laws, despite Democratic pressure to do so.

## 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**

*While Walgreens has not canceled any business relationships due to views or beliefs, the company has received negative press for firing employees who claimed they were wrongly terminated. In each of these cases, Walgreens has not lost a wrongful termination lawsuit. In one prominent example, a pharmacist was fired for stopping an armed robbery using his legally concealed firearm (1). Nonetheless, there are no specific instances of political or religious discrimination. Walgreens received a score of 95/2023 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 (2)(3). Walgreens will dispense the abortion drug mifepristone at some of its pharmacies (4)(5). Walgreens has stated that it will not sell abortion drugs in states that have instituted laws against them, despite significant pressure from Democratic politicians and activists to do so (6).*

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

*Walgreens 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**

*Walgreens HRC 2023 CEI rating indicates 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). Walgreens has implemented mandatory unconscious bias training (3). Although shareholders discussed improving Walgreens hiring nondiscrimination policy to protect against viewpoint discrimination, the company does not protect employees from viewpoint discrimination (4)(5).*

## Corporate Governance and Public Policy

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

*Walgreensng 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. Walgreens spoke out to denounce state legislation that prevented transgender public school students from competing in girls' youth sports or using the women's restroom in schools (3). Walgreens has also implemented ESG practices, including a 2040 net-zero pledge (4). CEO Rosalind Brewer is a member of the Business Roundtable and Former CEO Stefano Pessina signed its 2019 Statement on the Purpose of Corporation, which promotes stakeholder capitalism over traditional obligations to shareholders and customers (5)(6). Walgreens sells Pride-related merchandise on its online store and features pro-LGBTQ news releases (7)(8).*

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

*Walgreens 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 (1)(2)(3). 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 (4)(5). By allowing a political stakeholder group to dictate operations, the company increases health care costs and risks dividing employees, alienating customers and harming shareholders. Walgreens is a brass sponsor of Out & Equal and a corporate partner of the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (6)(7).*

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

**High Risk**

*Walgreens 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. Walgreens has not used its PAC donations for ideological purposes (3)(4).*

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