



Target

Locations: Minnesota (HQ)
Industries: Food and Staples Retailing, Retailing

RISK LEVEL:



Medium Risk

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DESCRIPTION:

Target is Medium Risk. The company often yields to political activism in shaping corporate governance, potentially alienating consumers, dividing employees, and harming shareholders. The company elevates merit, excellence, and integrity ahead of race and identity-based policies. Target 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. High Risk

Target pulled two books off its shelves that upset one Twitter user because of the books' critical stances towards transgender ideology (1). This book banning included Irreversible Damage by Abigail Shrier (2). The company also abruptly stopped selling Matt Walsh's previously best-selling children's book (3). Target is currently facing a shareholder lawsuit for the \$12 billion share value loss that ensued from its transgender advocacy (4)(5).

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

Target does not discriminate against charitable organizations based on views or beliefs. However, it will only give to religious organizations that provide non-sectarian services (1).

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

Target had a history of supporting DEI in its business practices. However, in January 2025, the company pledged to end its three-year DEI goals and end DEI in its supply chain (1)(2)(3). The company does 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

Target advocated against the Georgia voting integrity bill (1). The company 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 (2). Target opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (3)(4). The company opposed legislation in Iowa intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (5). Target opposed the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act, which would prohibit teaching gender identity and sexual orientation to kids in K-3rd grade (6). The company's CEO Brian Cornell is a member of the Business Roundtable and signed its 2019 Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation, which promotes stakeholder capitalism over traditional obligations to shareholders (7)(8). Target is a Ceres Network Member, committed to carbon neutrality by 2040 (9)(10)(11). To celebrate LGBTQ Pride month in 2023, Target sold compression tops and binders sized for preteens and baby-sized "tuck-friendly" swimsuits (12)(13). The company's CEO Brian Cornell suggested that conservative customers boycotting the company due to sales of transgender-themed merchandise were more dangerous than rioters from the 2020 George Floyd protests (14). In February 2025, America First Legal and Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier filed a class action lawsuit against Target for misleading investors over market risks of LGBTQ activism related to its 2023 Pride Campaign which featured "tuck-friendly" swimsuits (15). Target Board Chairman & CEO, Brian Cornell, denounced various states' legislative efforts to protect election integrity and security (16). The company's CEO, Brian Cornell, 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 (17)(18). Target had an extensive history of using its reputation to support divisive causes and scored a 100 out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's 2025 Corporate Equality Index. However, in January 2025, the company pledged to shift some of its corporate policies and practices back toward neutral. Target pledged to stop submitting data to the HRC, focus Employee Resource Groups on business, and end their Racial Equity Action and Change (REACH) initiatives in 2025 (19)(20)(21)(22).

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

Target provides a benefits package for employees that covers travel/lodging costs for an abortion and transgender medical procedures for covered employees and dependents, including children (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6). The company had a history of selling LGBTQ youth apparel and funding non-business causes. However, in January 2025 it pledged to no longer market LGBTQ merchandise to children and to stop funding non-business causes. It pledged to "further evaluate corporate partnerships to ensure they are directly connected to our roadmap for growth" (7). Target is a coalition member of OneTen, appearing to prioritize diversity over merit in its hiring (8)(9)(10). Target and Target Foundation are a corporate partner of Ashoka, a global network of entrepreneurs focused on widespread, systemic social and environmental change (11). Target is a Platinum Sponsor of NYC Pride (12). Target is a partner of the HRC's Foundation (13)(14). Target sponsored the following 4x events in 2025: Utah Pride, Pride Houston 365, Gulf Association of Pride, 2025 Utah Pride (15)(16)(17)(18). Otherwise, there are no publicly known cases of the company using corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies (19).

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

Target donated to the Equality PAC and lobbied for ideological purposes (1)(2)(3).

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