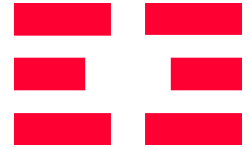




Merck

Locations: New Jersey (HQ)
Industries: Health Care Equipment and Services

RISK LEVEL:



High Risk

View this company on 1792 Exchange: <https://1792exchange.com/company/merck-co/>

DESCRIPTION:

Merck & Co. 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. The company 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

Merck received a score of 95 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, the company 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

Merck's HRC 2025 CEI rating indicates the company will not donate to non-religious charities unless they embrace controversial sexual identity policies (1)(2). The company's grant application guidelines require that organizations abide by its nondiscrimination policy, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, thereby excluding some religious charities (3).

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

Merck's HRC 2025 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 was a signatory of the Gender & Diversity KPI Alliance, appearing to prioritize diversity over merit in its business structure through the establishment of gender and racial targets for its leadership composition and its support of DEI in its hiring and promotions (3)(4). Merck's CEO and President Rob Davis signed Catalyst's Champions for Change pledge, indicating its support of

DEI in its leadership composition through the establishment of gender and racial targets (5)(6). The company does not provide viewpoint protections for its employees (7)(8).

Corporate Governance and Public Policy

Uses corporate reputation to support causes, organizations, or policies hostile to freedom of expression. High Risk

Merck's HRC 2025 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). The company opposed various state and local legislation intended to protect parental rights, girls' sports, bathroom facilities, and gendered spaces (3). Merck's CEO Robert Davis is a member of the Business Roundtable, which supports stakeholder capitalism over traditional shareholder obligations (4). The company's CEO Robert M. Davis 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 (5)(6). Merck 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 (7).

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

Merck's HRC 2025 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 (1)(2). The company directly and indirectly funds Planned Parenthood through partnering with affiliate groups and organizations such as the Family Planning 2020 program (3)(4). Merck is a Bronze sponsor of the HRC (5). The company is a partner of the HRC's Foundation (6)(7). Merck is a bronze partner of PFLAG, an LGBTQ+ activist group that promotes books for children with sexually explicit and gender fluid content and advocates against laws that inform parents of their child's gender dysphoria or prevent unapproved transgender medical treatments for minors (8)(9)(10). The company has pledged over \$20 million to the Black Lives Matter movement and/or related causes, though it is unclear which organizations received funding (11)(12). Merck is a member of the MCCA, indicating its focus on recruiting, retaining, and promoting employees based on race (13)(14). The company is a copper sponsor of Out & Equal (15). Merck is a corporate partner of the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (16). The company is a coalition member of OneTen, appearing to prioritize diversity over merit in its hiring (17)(18)(19). Merck sponsored the Bucks-Mont Pride Festival in 2025 (20). Otherwise, there are no publicly known cases of the company using corporate funds to advance ideological causes, organizations, or policies (21).

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

Merck's HRC 2025 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). The company donated to the Equality PAC (3)(4). However, Merck has not used its lobbying for ideological purposes (5).

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