DATA FOR *PROGRESS*

Accountable Allies: Corporations & Pride

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Introduction

In recent months, a wave of anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry has surged across the nation, spreading dangerous hate speech, fomenting violence, and animating a series of policies that threaten the lives of LGBTQ+ youth.

It is in this alarming context that we celebrate Pride, a celebration that has grown enormously since its inception over 50 years ago. Today, Pride parades attract millions of spectators while generating the economic impact of a major sporting event.

Increased prominence has not eliminated the threat of bigotry against the LGBTQ+ community. In 2022, a new assault on LGBTQ+ youth exploded, with online bigotry transforming into oppressive new laws in eight states that dehumanize LGBTQ+ people and cut LGBTQ+ youth off from lifesaving services. On July 1st, Don't Say Gay, one of the most prominent pieces of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, goes into effect in Florida, further threatening the rights and well-being of the LGBTQ+ community the day after Pride month ends.

The largest Pride celebrations are funded by dozens of corporations that pay, in sum, millions of dollars to sponsor and/or to participate. These corporations claim to be allies of the LGBTQ+ community, but our research indicates that many are, in fact, actively funding anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry. After a review of publicly available campaign contributions from the 2020 and 2022 electoral cycles, we find that 121 companies contributed over $3 million to the sponsors of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in six states. Of these companies, 34 have publicly sponsored Pride events in various cities across the country, and 15 took a Human Rights Campaign (HRC) pledge to oppose anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in the states.

Stemming the flow of corporate money to anti-LGBTQ+ politicians would send a clear message that targeting LGBTQ+ people — especially youth — through legislation and rhetoric is unacceptable. In deep-red states where the LGBTQ+ community has few natural defenders, these corporations have the ability to provide a vital counterweight against the political pressure on conservative legislators to pursue such policies. Given the context — where the U.S. Supreme Court has overturned 50 years of reproductive rights precedent in favor of radical state policies, and signalled that LGBTQ+ protections such as same-sex marriage and the legalization of sodomy could be next — anti-LGBTQ+ legislators in deep-red states should be treated as a very real, very immediate danger.

New Data For Progress polling finds that corporations have a clear incentive to stop such giving: When likely voters are told about the contributions, they are around 30 percent less likely to view the company favorably. A majority of voters say they would take action against the companies because of the contributions.

When companies fail to align their political contributions with their stated values, employees can demand this commitment, and Pride organizations can cut ties with corporations that fail to honor it. Allyship is important social currency for corporations that wish to appeal to a broad range of demographics, and it is an important form of leverage for the LGBTQ+ community in seeking to protect itself from rising persecution.

In this memo, we offer a set of recommendations for LGBTQ+ activists, allies, elected officials, and Pride organizations to hold these purported allies accountable. Our research indicates no comprehensive list of such contributions has ever been assembled previously. This gap has stymied decades of activists seeking to hold corporations accountable for anti-LGBTQ+ practices. With the added transparency of our Accountable Allies project, we urge activists — as leadership and employees of corporations, Pride event sponsors and participants, and local leaders holding the purse strings for community events — to hold corporations accountable where they can.

The State of Corporate Allyship and Past Examples of Corporate Activism in Defense of LGBTQ+ Rights

In the 21st century, corporate support for LGBTQ+ rights has undergone a remarkable shift, and companies have recently proven their capacity to effect positive change for the LGBTQ+ community. For example, in 2015, 379 employers signed an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to legalize gay marriage during the Obergefell v. Hodges case, arguing that laws restricting marriage to heterosexual couples "impose a significant burden on us and harm our ability to attract and retain the best employees."

That same year, Indiana's "Religious Freedom Restoration Act," signed into law by then-Governor Mike Pence, sparked sharp criticism for authorizing businesses to refuse services to LGBTQ+ people on the grounds of religious liberty. The corporate backlash against this bill was swift and united, with several business leaders taking immediate, concrete actions to register their disapproval. The CEO of Salesforce canceled all programs requiring customers or employees "to travel to Indiana to face discrimination," and the CEO of Angie's List halted a $40 million expansion of his company's Indianapolis headquarters. This outpouring of support for the LGBTQ+ community from the business world was "considered by many observers to be the primary factor in getting the law revised" through the passage of Indiana Senate Bill 50 (2015), which clarified that the RFRA could not be used to discriminate against LGBTQ+ customers.

Similarly, North Carolina drew corporate outrage in 2016 and 2017 over a controversial "bathroom bill," which banned trans people from using the restrooms of their choice. Many prominent businesses reacted by pulling current and planned operations out of the state. A year after its passage, the Associated Press estimated that the law had cost the state at least $3.76 billion in lost business over the next 12 years due to boycotts. Prominently, the NCAA leveraged its importance to the college-athletics-revering state by banning championship events from being held in North Carolina until the law was repealed. Other high-profile boycotts included PayPal's cancellation of the construction of a headquarters that would have added an estimated $2.66 billion to the state's economy; Deutsche Bank's freezing of expansion plans; CoStar's relocation of a new research center to Virginia; and the NBA's switch of the All-Star Game from Charlotte to New Orleans. The Financial Times, among others, named "corporate pressure" as the primary factor driving the law's partial repeal, a compromise bill passed just in time to meet the NCAA's deadline for setting the next six years of championship-game locations. The financial pressure applied by these businesses made a real, visible, and enduring difference. Indeed, after a year of ongoing backlash, nearly two-thirds of North Carolina voters said they would rather eliminate the law's negative economic impact than see the law enforced. The shift is a testament to the power of corporations to swing public opinion by taking a strong stand for LGBTQ+ rights.

The Problem With Funding Both Sides

Companies are increasingly taking public stances on social issues, often because these laws threaten the companies' employees and their families, make it harder to attract talent in the state, and can trigger economic retribution from key business partners in other states who object to infringements on minority rights.

Companies must also consider how their stance (or lack thereof) on social issues affects how their customers perceive them. The share of customers who consider a brand's alignment with their values before making a purchase has risen dramatically in the past 10 years, and a majority of people in the U.S. think businesses have a responsibility to speak out on social issues.

Corporations are accountable to a wide array of stakeholders, and aligning political giving with these stakeholders' varied interests is a challenge the business community is still wrestling with. But when legislation singles out a marginalized group and poses a clear and present danger to their rights and safety, corporations should actively oppose it. Many corporations make public statements to this effect, including over 250 that signed a recent HRC pledge to oppose anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in state legislatures. Some go further and exercise their lobbying muscle in opposition to the bills. Yet corporations have largely escaped scrutiny for their campaign contributions to the politicians behind legislation attacking the LGBTQ+ community.

FUNDING ANTI-LGBTQ+ POLITICIANS HURTS YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

Companies should be scrutinized for their political contributions. These contributions represent their stance on issues important to the public, as business lobby groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce argued extensively in the landmark Supreme Court case Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, which found that corporations' giving to political campaigns is free speech protected under the First Amendment. With research showing consumers are increasingly interested in whether companies are aligned with their values, corporations can no longer avoid answering for their contributions — and they have an obligation to be transparent about them.

Campaign contributions are a key lever for corporations to make their voices heard in the political process. For companies that oppose anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, continuing to give campaign funds after a politician has introduced such legislation invites the politician to view their opposition as inauthentic or inconsequential. For any corporation, such contributions send a message that anti-LGBTQ+ policies are acceptable.

Stances on LGBTQ+ issues are only one of many issues that corporations must consider in their campaign giving, and many argue that they cannot make contribution decisions based only on a single criterion. Yet on every issue a company seriously considers as part of those decisions, it must draw a red line around policies that it cannot support or associate itself with. The policies outlined in our previous policy memo clearly meet that criterion, as they eliminate access to necessary healthcare, force families to flee states in fear of criminal prosecution, and drive suicide attempts among LGBTQ+ youth.

Defeating the anti-LGBTQ+ movement is a long and difficult project, and corporations can make it easier by withdrawing the financial support that helps anti-LGBTQ+ politicians win reelection year after year. Instead of continued support for such politicians, corporations that are aligned with their values will pursue accountability.

These policies are harmful, and corporations must join with every major medical association in opposing them unequivocally. Continuing to fund the sponsors of these policies undermines the good work corporations do by advocating for pro-LGBTQ+ policies in the public, and aligns corporate brands with anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry and persecution. No one wins from such hypocrisy except the politicians who are empowered to court votes by stoking bigotry. In order to help counter these hateful policies, Data for Progress recommends the following policy and advocacy recommendations, including: activism to hold corporations accountable for their giving, increased public support for Pride celebrations, and policy changes to take the focus of Pride away from corporations and back on communities.

Policy and Advocacy Recommendations

Corporations exert significant influence over the political system and broader society in America, and history has shown that self-proclaimed corporate allies can significantly influence LGBTQ+ policy through public statements and advocacy. When they influence such policies in harmful ways (e.g., by donating to sponsors of anti-LGBTQ+ bills), activists must hold them accountable. To facilitate this process, we have compiled a list of corporations that have given campaign contributions to the politicians sponsoring some of the worst anti-LGBTQ+ bills in Appendix B. Below, we make recommendations for how this information can be used, but we encourage activists everywhere to use it in whatever ways make sense for their community.

EDUCATE CORPORATE EXECUTIVES ON THE IMPACT OF ANTI-LGBTQ+ POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Educate corporate leadership and the government affairs team and in the C suite on the impacts of the recent assault on LGBTQ+ rights in the states.
- Present the issue as a DEI concern and present options for concrete actions the company can take in support of LGBTQ+ rights.

Campaign funding has a significant impact on electoral outcomes, and corporations are a major source of this funding. Corporations are ultimately responsible for the impact of their contributions on elections and the policies that result from them; when a corporation funds a campaign for a politician who goes on to enact anti-LGBTQ+ policies, the corporation has contributed to the enactment of that policy.

Corporations serve groups of stakeholders with a wide range of interests, and most focus their political giving on advocating for the company's business interests as a result. Recent research has found numerous examples of companies failing to align their political giving with their stated values, including on LGBTQ+ issues.

Companies determine which contributions serve their business interests through a complex and opaque set of internal criteria. In the process of making these determinations, companies too often rely on a narrow definition of their business interests, missing the implications of policies like restrictions of civil rights on their employees and the business environment in which they operate.

Because the impact of anti-LGBTQ+ policies is undercovered in the media, in many cases corporate leadership may be unaware of the extent of these impacts, or their role in supporting the politicians behind them. Corporate leadership may not be aware, for instance, that politicians funded by their corporate PAC are putting 1 in 3 transgender teenagers at risk of losing access to medically necessary gender-affirming healthcare, or that they've funded politicians who have supported or enabled calls for violence against LGBTQ+ people.

Corporate departments charged with directing their company's political giving should educate themselves and their corporate leadership about the negative impacts of the current assault on LGBTQ+ rights sweeping state governments across the United States (see Data For Progress's memo "Holding Corporations Accountable: The Assault on LGBTQ+ Youth").

Policy change must accompany education on the impact of these contributions, and employees have an important role to play in advocating for these changes.

EMPLOYEES CAN AND SHOULD HOLD THEIR COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE

- Check if your employer is one of the corporations funding anti-LGBTQ+ politicians (listed in Appendix A).
- Alert corporate executives and stakeholders to the harmful effects of their political giving on the LGBTQ+ community and allies.
- Advocate for your employer to cease campaign contributions to anti-LGBTQ+ politicians.

In 2016, advocacy from Salesforce and other businesses (especially those connected to the NBA and NCAA) was key to preventing anti-trans bathroom bills from becoming law in many states. More recently, Disney advocated against LGBTQ+ bigotry when it became clear that Florida's Don't Say Gay bill was likely to pass. As a result, employees who were aware of Disney's longstanding financial support for Florida's Republican Party began to pressure the company to speak out in opposition. After weeks of silence from Disney, employees began staging walkouts in protest. These walkouts generated coverage in the press, and after a few days, Disney CEO Bob Chapek announced Disney was freezing political contributions in Florida and that he would personally advocate to the governor that he veto the bill. The move was clear evidence that employee activism can rapidly shift major corporations' behavior around these issues.

While Governor Ron DeSantis signed Don't Say Gay anyway and launched a retributory attack against Disney's special governance rights in Central Florida, the repercussions of Disney taking a stance against the legislation has helped set a precedent for corporations advocating against LGBTQ+ hate. This demonstrates the power in numbers: Each corporation that stands up for what's right represents more campaign contributions and economic activity in their jurisdictions that legislators have to lose.

To send this signal loud and clear, corporations should consider issuing public statements that they will freeze support for politicians who support anti-LGBTQ+ policies until the politicians apologize for the harm they have caused and begin actively advocating for pro-LGBTQ+ policies instead.

Workers have every right to demand their employers respect basic rights for their LGBTQ+ employees and their families. When they do so, they can change the behavior of an important institution and make it more difficult for politicians to attack the LGBTQ+ community.

INCREASE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PRIDE

- Municipal governments are more natural partners for Pride than corporations.
- Pride provides immense economic and social benefits.

In the face of the resurgent bigotry against LGBTQ+ people, new expressions of support for the LGBTQ+ community are especially meaningful. One such gesture would be increasing public support for Pride celebrations, which are the most prominent symbols of the LGBTQ+ community. Like many nonprofits, the budgets of most Pride organizations were severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic,and many cities could provide assistance to cover the costs of security, staff, and other expenses for the event.

Many other community events justify the public funding they receive by the economic impact they generate; cities often foot some of the bill for sporting events and facilities, for example. Pride clearly meets these criteria: In 2019, L.A. Pride generated $74.7 million in economic output and $42.2 million in direct expenditures in Los Angeles County. The nonprofit operating L.A. Pride had annual revenue of just $4.4 million, of which $1.1 million was an allocation from the West Hollywood City Council. Pride events deserve to be valued in the same way as other events that contribute so much to the life of communities, and increasing public assistance to Pride would provide a powerful gesture of support at a time the community sorely needs it.

RECLAIM PRIDE FOR LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES AND ALLIES

- No corporation should be allowed to advertise its brand at Pride — as sponsors or as march participants — while funding anti-LGBTQ+ politicians. Those that have done so in the current campaign cycle should claw back the contributions and pledge to make no more going forward.
- Pride organizations should establish vetting criteria that require that all participating corporate entities have 1) denounced anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and 2) pledged to permanently suspend donations to the sponsors of such legislation.
- LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations should celebrate and uplift stories of corporations that honor their commitments to LGBTQ+ equality in their political giving (who “walk the talk”).

Because corporations control work culture and many other key elements of LGBTQ+ people's lives, proponents of their participation argue that their involvement should be actively cultivated. But as corporations have become increasingly central to Pride celebrations, they have reoriented the celebration to their needs in ways that undermine the event's original function as an act of protest and defiance against the bigoted institutions of an imperfect society.

LGBTQ+ activists have long warned against the increasing corporatization of Pride celebrations. In cities like New York, activists have for decades celebrated Pride with quasi-official gatherings separate from the officially sanctioned Pride March. These alternative celebrations include Dyke March, New York City Drag March, Queer Liberation March, and dozens of others in cities around the world. While many people find value in alternative spaces to celebrate Pride, these celebrations are often not widely advertised and can be difficult for new members of the LGBTQ+ community to discover. Because of this, Pride spaces that are focused on community can become sidelined while the parade of corporate floats attracts the majority of mainstream attention.

Corporations make contributions that many consider to be useful to the mission of Pride celebrations. They provide stable funding that enables many Pride celebrations to operate at a vastly larger scale than would otherwise be possible. On a budget of $13 million, New York City's 2019 World Pride celebration honoring the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising was attended by up to 5 million people.

However, examples of overreach exist. In exchange for a contribution of $100,000, Amazon attempted to have Seattle Pride 2022 renamed "Seattle Pride Parade Presented by Amazon." The attempt to make a celebration of LGBTQ+ history and community focus on a single corporation sparked so much outrage that Seattle Pride announced it was cutting ties with Amazon, its largest sponsor.

In their statement, Seattle Pride also took issue with Amazon's support for anti-LGBTQ+ politicians, citing $11,000 the company had contributed to politicians backing anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in Washington state and $450,000 the company had contributed to members of Congress who voted against the Equality Act in 2021. They wrote, "We simply cannot partner with any organization actively harming our community through the support of discriminatory laws and politics."

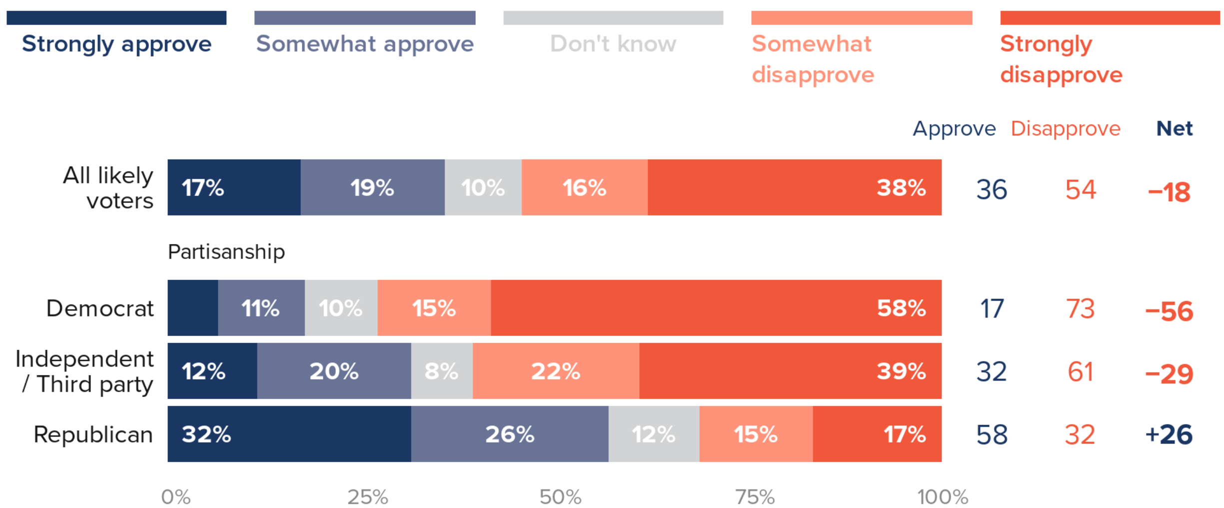
This sentiment is reflected in Data For Progress's polling on public opinion surrounding corporate involvement with anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. A recent survey of likely voters finds that 54 percent disapprove of corporations that make contributions to anti-LGBTQ+ politicians, while only 36 percent approve, an -18-point margin of disapproval.

A Majority of Likely Voters Disapprove of Companies That Fund Anti-LGBTQ+ Politicians

A number of national corporations have made campaign donations to lawmakers who sponsor the following types of bills:

- Banning any discussion of gender identity and sexual orientation in schools
- Restricting the ability of transgender students to play on sports teams
- Preventing people from receiving gender-affirming treatment

Do you approve or disapprove of corporations making donations to lawmakers who sponsor legislation that targets LGBTQ+ issues?



May 4–9, 2022 survey of 1,157 likely voters

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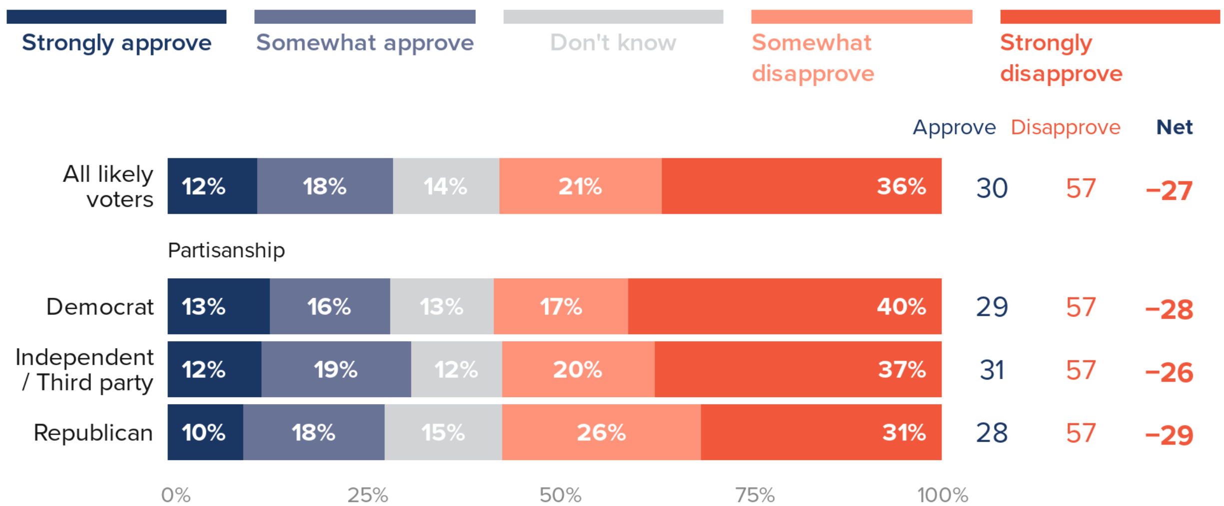
Voters' disapproval for corporations increases when they contribute to both anti-LGBTQ+ politicians and LGBTQ+ organizations like Pride. The margin of disapproval for companies that make both kinds of contributions instead of just to anti-LGBTQ+ politicians increases from -18 points to -27 points, with the number of people who disapprove rising to 57 percent and approval falling to 30 percent. This drop in approval ratings shows that consumers want consistency from their brands, and brands pay a price for failing to provide it.

Voters Strongly Disapprove of Companies That Donate to Both LGBTQ+ Organizations and Anti-LGBTQ+ Politicians

Some corporations donate to lawmakers who sponsor legislation that targets LGBTQ+ issues and also donate to LGBTQ+ organizations and Pride, which are events that celebrate LGBTQ+ rights and the community.

Do you approve or disapprove of corporations that donate to lawmakers who sponsor anti-LGBTQ+ legislation and also sponsor LGBTQ+ organizations and Pride celebrations?



May 4–9, 2022 survey of 1,157 likely voters

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Understanding that contributing to LGBTQ+ groups presents the appearance of allyship, many LGBTQ+ organizations vet corporations for bad behavior before entering into important financial relationships. These criteria are ill-suited to address the current landscape of LGBTQ+ rights, and should be updated to increase accountability for the corporations.

DEVELOP ROBUST CRITERIA FOR ALLYSHIP

By highlighting political contributions, Seattle Pride identified a flaw in the way LGBTQ+ groups assess corporate allyship. Most Pride organizations and LGBTQ+ groups assess corporate allyship through the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index (CEI). With LGBTQ+ rights under the largest coordinated assault in over a decade, such groups must expand their definition of allyship to include political actions like campaign contributions.

First introduced in 2002, the CEI is primarily a measure of how seriously a corporation takes LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace. The standards have become steadily more rigorous over the years and are credited with encouraging improvements at many companies. But it has also been criticized for failing to capture important elements of corporations' behavior, such as their political activity. A recent example is ExxonMobil, which banned the use of Pride flags outside its offices shortly after receiving an 85 out of 100 on the 2022 CEI.

As Seattle Pride explains:

> "Unfortunately, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) employer grading system is not comprehensive enough for Pride organizations to rely on when vetting and selecting partners. We must make a more concerted effort to determine an alignment of values and actions. For example, Amazon has a perfect HRC score despite the aforementioned support of anti-LGBTQIA+ politicians and organizations, as well as publicly reported workers' rights issues including instances of employee discrimination and bullying. This is why Seattle Pride is requiring all corporate partners to participate in a diversity, equity, and inclusion survey and evaluation process."

According to public records, this year alone, over 30 corporations are simultaneously sponsoring Pride celebrations and contributing to the sponsors of the most extreme anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in the country:

Company	Total Contributed to anti-LGBTQ+ Politicians	# of Politicians Contributed to	# of States Where Contributions Made
Toyota	$601,500.00	7	3
Southern Company (Georgia Power, Alabama Power, Mississippi Power)	$376,500.00	40	2
AT&T	$307,137.52	67	6
Comcast	$121,350.00	40	4
Amazon	$87,900.00	17	1
FedEx	$79,700.00	24	2
State Farm	$79,550.00	32	3
General Motors	$48,500.00	10	4
Budweiser	$45,250.00	24	4
Enterprise	$41,300.00	30	6
Jack Daniel's (Brown-Forman)	$34,250.00	13	1
ConocoPhillips	$27,502.64	2	1
Walmart	$25,500.00	8	3
Chevron	$21,000.00	6	2
JPMorgan Chase	$11,500.00	3	2
NBC	$11,000.00	7	1
PNC	$10,000.00	1	1
Bank of America	$10,000.00	1	1
Aetna	$8,250.00	5	2
Cox Enterprises	$6,500.00	6	2
Truist	$6,000.00	7	1
Walgreens	$4,500.00	6	3
Sysco	$4,000.00	2	2
Citigroup	$3,000.00	2	2
Capital One	$2,500.00	1	1
Microsoft	$2,000.00	2	1
Johnson & Johnson	$1,750.00	3	3
T-Mobile/Sprint	$1,700.00	4	2
White Oak	$1,000.00	1	1
Trulieve	$1,000.00	1	1
Gilead	$1,000.00	1	1
Target	$500.00	1	1
Outfront	$500.00	1	1
iHeart Media	$114.75	1	1
Grand Total	$1,983,754.91	95	6

Because most Pride organizations do not have the resources to conduct their own DEI surveys to assess corporate allyship, we provide a full list of Fortune 500 companies that have made such contributions in Appendix B as a resource for Pride organizations that wish to consider political giving as a sponsorship criterion.

Our research reveals that the disconnect between corporations' public support for the LGBTQ+ community and their quiet funding of anti-LGBTQ+ politicians is rampant. Over 200 corporations signed onto an HRC pledge to oppose anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in the states, including dozens that signed in response to the current wave of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Nevertheless, at least seven of these corporations gave campaign contributions to anti-LGBTQ+ politicians in the 2020 and 2022 electoral cycles: AT&T, CVS Health, Gilead Sciences Inc., Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Microsoft, T-Mobile.

Moreover, the HRC pledge does not explicitly prohibit contributions to the sponsors of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Rather, it shifts the responsibility onto the politicians alone, forfeiting any sense of responsibility held by the corporations that claim opposition yet simultaneously donate to those same politicians. Organizations like the HRC should reevaluate their criteria for any such pledges, which judge corporations solely by their words and HR policies, and not by their political actions on LGBTQ+ rights.

HOLD CORPORATE ALLIES ACCOUNTABLE

The LGBTQ+ community and its allies have become an important constituency among consumers, and signaling support for them has become essential for brands that wish to be viewed as inclusive. Withholding the benefits of participating (i.e., advertising) in Pride festivities allows the LGBTQ+ community to hold corporations accountable for the full range of their activities that actively harm it.

As the most visible and recognizable symbol of the LGBTQ+ community, Pride is the most effective forum for holding those who claim to be LGBTQ+ allies accountable to their promises. Activists seeking to push back against the attack on LGBTQ+ youth should petition their local Pride celebrations to cut ties with any corporation funding the politicians sponsoring these bills until it publicly pledges to cease such contributions. No corporation funding the attack on LGBTQ+ youth across the country should be able to claim ally status or advertise its brand during the LGBTQ+ community's celebration of the long fight against bigotry and oppression.

Holding corporations accountable for these contributions is also important because it creates political accountability for politicians pursuing anti-LGBTQ+ policies and amplifying anti-LGBTQ+ hate. If politicians know that supporting anti-LGBTQ+ policies will mean the loss of campaign funds, they will be far less likely to use such policies and rhetoric to rally voters. This pressure would provide a countervailing force against the increasing anti-LGBTQ+ extremism of the Republican Party.

Activists seeking to work with Pride organizations on accountability campaigns should recognize that Pride organizations require funding to perform their many important functions for the LGBTQ+ community. Those who pursue this type of activism should also consider advocating for public funding of Pride parades to ensure that Pride is not dependent on corporations for stable funding.

Implementation of these policy and advocacy recommendations will look different in every community, and leaders and activists should tailor them to the unique needs of their LGBTQ+ population. Doing nothing, however, puts the lives of LGBTQ+ people and youth in particular at risk. Leaders ought to take risks to meet this moment.

Conclusion

As anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment rises in pockets of the U.S., the need for strong and authentic allyship rises as well. Organizations with the power and infrastructure to intervene in the political arena must assess whether their performance is aligned with the values around LGBTQ+ equality they profess to hold.

History shows that progress on LGBTQ+ rights has often been achieved with the support of unlikely allies, corporations like Salesforce prominent among them. In many of the states where the assault on the LGBTQ+ community is most intense, corporations are among the most powerful voices that claim to support the dignity and equality of the LGBTQ+ community. It is in these communities that corporations have the greatest potential to act as allies, and aligning their political contributions with their pro-LGBTQ+ values is the logical first step.

It is often difficult to build consensus within a corporation for changes in policies around political issues, and activists play an important role in this process by holding corporations accountable when they fall short. The research we provide in this project indicates that by aligning their political giving with their values, corporations can benefit their reputations while standing in allyship with the LGBTQ+ community at a time it is sorely needed. By holding these difficult conversations and changing policies to align with values, corporations can authentically join in the celebration of Pride.

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