

Levi Strauss - Proposal #5 Statement
Justin Danhof, Esq., Executive Vice President
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I'm Justin Danhof of the National Center for Public Policy Research and I move Proposal #5, which seeks to protect Levi's from a myriad of legal and reputational risks stemming from its racist actions and employee programs.

But first, I have a question. Is Levi's still a publicly traded corporation or a far-left political action committee? Under Chip Bergh's leadership, it's increasingly hard to tell. It's hard to know where to begin. From his assaults on the 2nd Amendment,ⁱ to his fierce resistance to President Trump's immigration policies,ⁱⁱ to climate hysteria,ⁱⁱⁱ to supporting the sexualization and grooming of very young children,^{iv} to trying to cancel women's sports and religious liberty,^v to extreme stances on race, sex and gender – aside from Larry Fink, Bergh is perhaps the most destructive politicized CEO in America.

Let's start with elections and race.

Bergh has repeatedly attacked popular voter protection measures in locations such as Georgia and Texas, wildly claiming that they are “racist” and a “step backwards.”^{vi} What's his proof? Of course, he doesn't provide any. Bergh has said Levi's will do everything in its power to stop voter protection legislation from moving forward.^{vii} Perhaps he has no idea that 80 percent of Americans support these initiatives – including requiring an ID to vote.^{viii} Why is the company working against the will of four-fifths of the American electorate? It's not only conservatives who support voter ID requirements; a majority Democrats do as well.^{ix} Oh, and by the way, so do most black Americans.^x At last year's shareholder meeting, Bergh claimed he wasn't talking about voter ID specifically, but maintained that the laws in Georgia and Texas were still somehow irreparably racist, again without providing a shred of evidence. Since ID is the primary provision in these laws, Bergh's semantic obfuscation is impossible to take at face value. Perhaps someone on the board of directors should show a bit of courage and tell Bergh to speak the truth before he parrots extreme leftist lies on his next CNBC appearance. We won't hold our breath.

Under Bergh, Levi's has also teamed with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) in its efforts to cancel women's sports and end federal religious freedom protections.^{xi} How does that help shareholders? And recently, the company again teamed with HRC in its opposition to state-level parental rights legislation.^{xii} Those laws, such as the high-profile one in Florida, seek to protect very young children from inappropriate sexual discussions. Why does Levi's want to sexualize young children?

And Bergh's partisan toxicity extends to the company's internal policies as well. Just ask former Levi's executive Jennifer Sey. Despite her track record of great work and supporting nearly every possible left-wing cause throughout her long tenure with the company, she was pushed out the door for opposing draconian government COVID lockdowns – specifically school closures.^{xiii} For this commonsense pro-child stance, Sey was subjected to ridicule, ad hominem attacks and harassment from management, HR and the DEI team. I, for one, hope she sues the company and

takes you to the cleaners. Oh, and by the way, she turned out to be right in wanting schools to remain open. You all were wrong.

It's quite clear that Bergh prefers to run an authoritarian shop in which dissenting voices are not welcome.

Sey's experience is likely not unique. That's because at nearly all levels of the firm, Levi's actively discriminates based on race and gender. The company's hiring and promotion practices actively discriminate against white people and men.^{xiv} This is not only immoral; it is unconstitutional and a violation of the board's fiduciary responsibility to shareholders. Again, I hope some employees stifled by this hostility and passed over for promotion based on their skin tone and sexual anatomy sue the company.

Put perhaps no employees with a spine even exist within the walls of Levi's. The company went so far as to hold "racial trauma" sessions for staffers following the acquittal of Kyle Rittenhouse.^{xv} Besides the fact that this was such an obvious case of self-defense, what does this say about the composition of the team that Bergh has assembled?

Chip Bergh seems to think everyone who disagrees with him in any way is an irreparable racist or bigot. He should teach a master class in projection.

Our proposal calls on the company to conduct a true racial equity audit that is honest about its unconstitutional internal hiring and promotion policies. Perhaps if it cleaned house, the company's external actions would start to, once again, look like a business rather than a liberal super PAC.

Please join me in voting yes on Proposal #5. Thank you.

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ⁱ <https://fortune.com/2020/09/01/levis-ceo-chip-bergh-gun-control-get-out-the-vote-gotv-retail/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/our-values-action-chip-bergh/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.levistrauss.com/2020/09/21/climate-change-a-burning-global-emergency/>

^{iv} <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/200-major-u-s-companies-oppose-anti-lgbtq-state-legislation>

^v <https://www.hrc.org/resources/business-coalition-for-equality>

^{vi} <https://wamu.org/story/21/04/12/mlbs-move-out-of-georgia-is-the-latest-in-a-line-of-political-boycotts/>

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- vii <https://wamu.org/story/21/04/12/mlbs-move-out-of-georgia-is-the-latest-in-a-line-of-political-boycotts/>
- viii <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2021/06/21/80-of-americans-support-voter-id-rules-but-fewer-worried-about-fraud-poll-finds/?sh=a036c811e0b3>
- ix <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alisondurkee/2021/06/21/80-of-americans-support-voter-id-rules-but-fewer-worried-about-fraud-poll-finds/?sh=a036c811e0b3>
- x <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/voices/2021/04/08/voter-id-laws-and-racism-democrats-just-muddling-debate-column/7113493002/>
- xi <https://www.hrc.org/resources/business-coalition-for-equality>
- xii <https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/200-major-u-s-companies-oppose-anti-lgbtq-state-legislation>
- xiii <https://bariweiss.substack.com/p/yesterday-i-was-levis-brand-president?s=r>
- xiv <https://nationalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BTB2022.pdf>
- xv <https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/levi-strauss-offers-employees-session-with-racial-trauma-specialist-following-rittenhouse-verdict>