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# Target removes some Pride Month products after threats against employees

May 24, 2023 · 3:53 PM ET

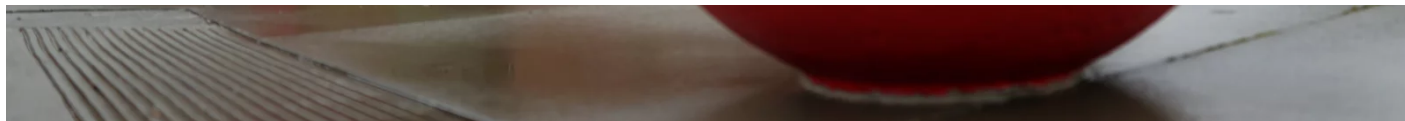
Heard on Morning Edition

By Joe Hernandez

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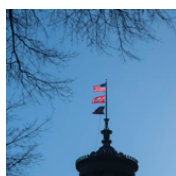
A customer walks into a Target store on Feb. 28 in San Rafael, Calif.

*Justin Sullivan/Getty Images*

Target is removing some merchandise celebrating Pride Month from store shelves after facing a backlash against the products, including threats against the safety of its workers.

The retail giant said in a statement posted on its website Wednesday that it was committed to celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community but was withdrawing some items over threats that were "impacting our team members' sense of safety and well-being" on the job.

"Given these volatile circumstances, we are making adjustments to our plans, including removing items that have been at the center of the most significant confrontational behavior," the company said.



#### POLITICS

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Pride Month takes place in June, though some of the items were already on sale.

Target did not reply to a series of follow-up questions from NPR, such as which items were removed and whether it was increasing security at its stores.

Reuters reported that the company is removing from stores and its website products created by the LGBTQ brand Abprallen, which offers some products featuring spooky, gothic imagery, such as skulls and Satan, in pastels colors.

Conservative activists and media have also bashed Target in recent days for selling "tuck-friendly" women's swimsuits that allow some trans women to hide their genitalia, the Associated Press reported.

Target has only been selling tuck-friendly swimsuits made for adults — and not, contrary to false online rumors, for kids or in kid sizes, the AP also found.

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Those swimsuits are among a group of products under review by Target but that haven't yet been removed, Reuters said.

In addition to public criticisms of the company, video has also emerged on social media of people throwing Pride displays to the floor in a Target store.

"Extremist groups want to divide us and ultimately don't just want rainbow products to disappear, they want us to disappear," Kelley Robinson, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a tweet.

"The LGBTQ+ community has celebrated Pride with Target for the past decade. Target needs to stand with us and double-down on their commitment to us," she added.

Michael Edison Hayden, a senior investigative reporter and spokesperson for the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights organization that tracks hate crimes, told NPR that Target's reversal would only serve to encourage more violent threats.

"If [Target is] going to wade in on this, and they're going to put support out there for the LGBTQ+ population, I think once they enter that fray they have a responsibility to stand by that community," he said. "As soon as you back down like this, you send a

message that intimidation works, and that makes it much scarier than if you had never started to begin with."

Target is the latest company to face criticism and boycott threats over products aimed at supporting the LGBTQ+ community.

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NATIONAL

**After the Club Q shooting, drag queens say they're upping security measures**

Bud Light faced a major social media backlash and saw sales dip after Anheuser-Busch ran an ad campaign featuring popular trans influencer Dylan Mulvaney.

Earlier this month, Target CEO Brian Cornell said in an interview with *Fortune's* Leadership Next podcast that the company wants to support "all families" and that its "focus on diversity and inclusion and equity has fueled much of our growth over the last nine years."

target





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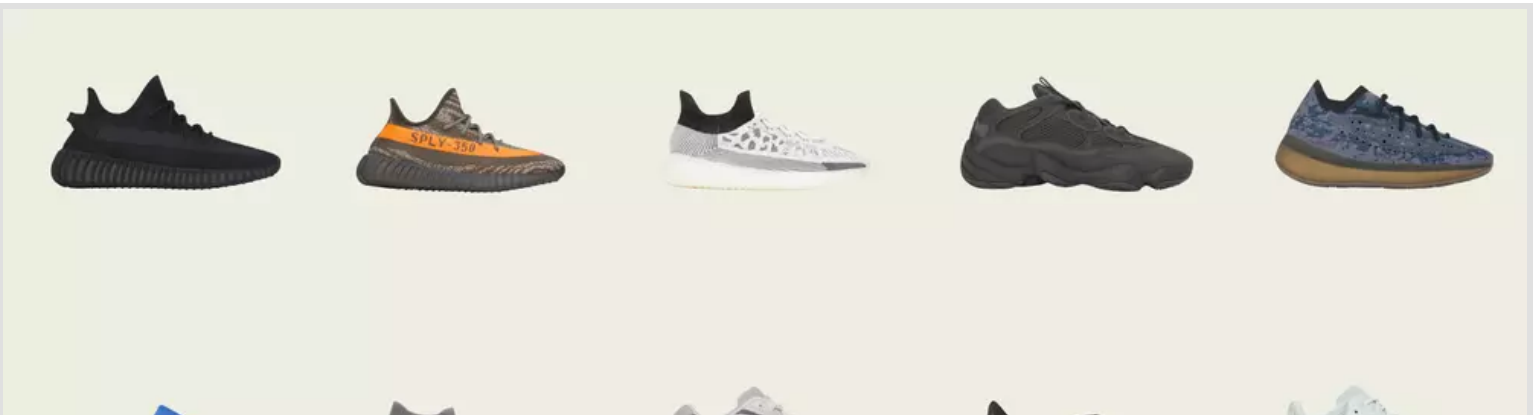




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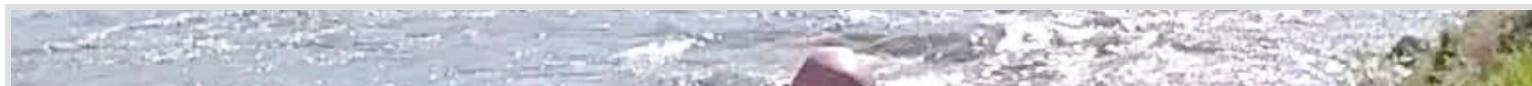
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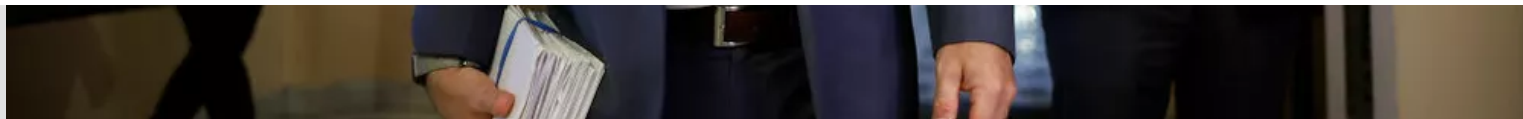


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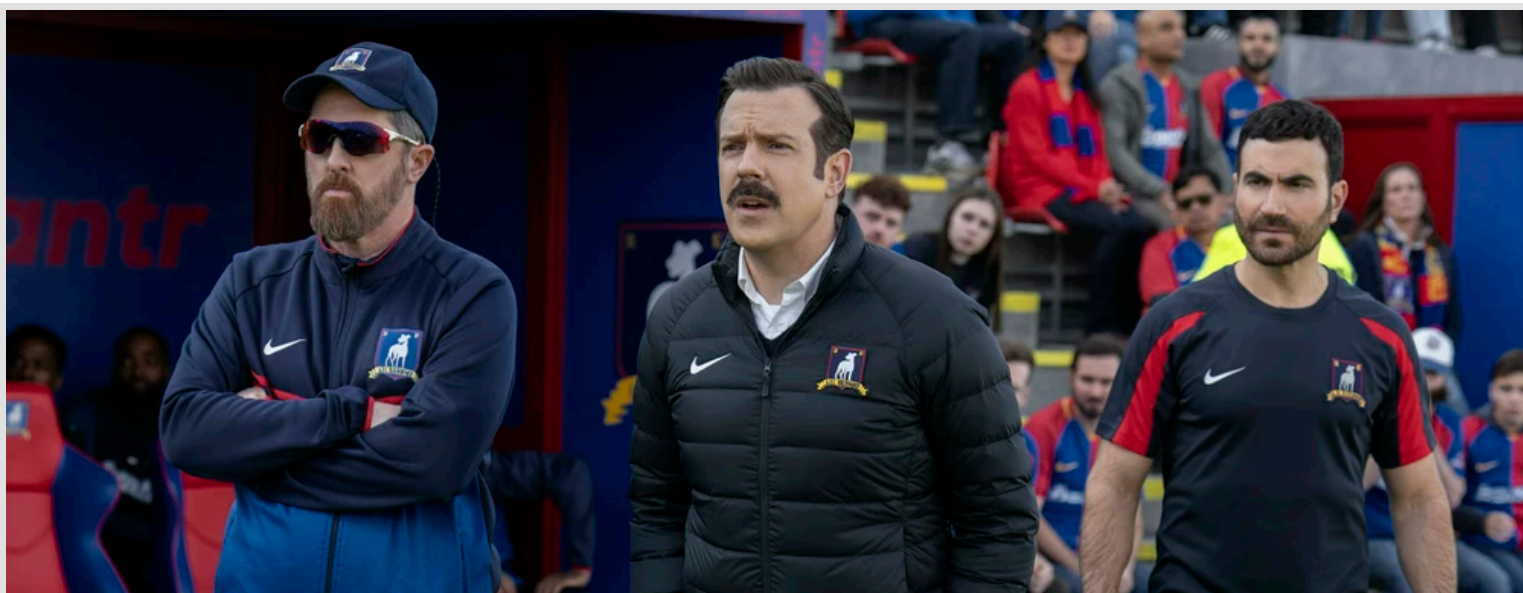
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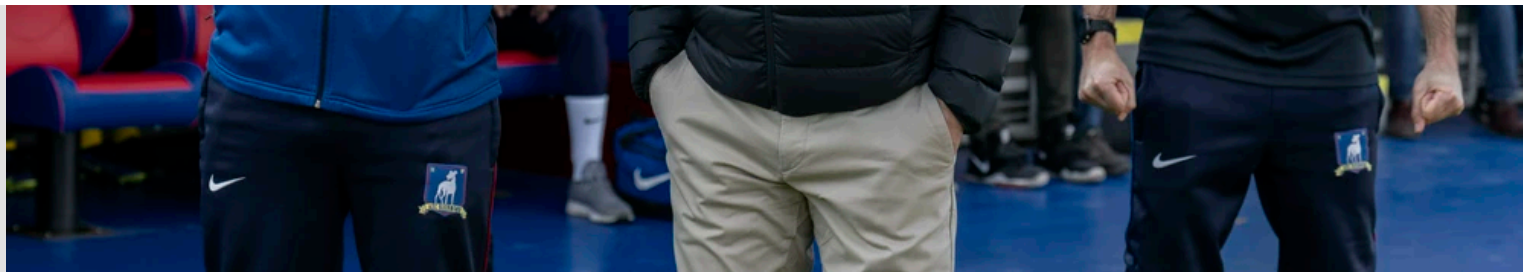


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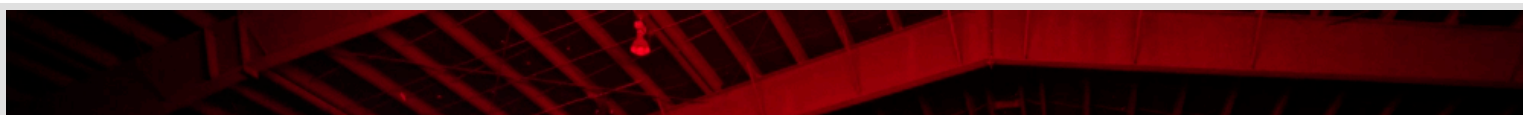




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