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# Target Put Out Some Cool Pride Gear — Then Pulled It Once The Bigots Came For Them

The apparel drew violent backlash, but backing down to bullies sends a clear message.



By Ian Kumamoto, Guest Writer

May 24, 2023, 05:45 PM EDT



Pride Month merchandise is displayed Wednesday at the front of a Target store in Hackensack, New Jersey. Target is removing certain items from its stores and making other changes to its LGBTQ+ merchandise nationwide ahead of Pride Month after backlash from some customers.

SETH WENIG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Corporations love supporting the LGBTQ community when it's all unicorns and rainbows — in other words, when it could potentially boost sales and the overall perception of the brand. But when push comes to shove (and when you're championing the rights of queer people, it often does), they make disappointing decisions.

For example, Target is removing some Pride and queer-centered apparel from its stores after customers took issue with them and, in some cases, [violently confronted store employees](#). The brand has not specified which stores or in what regions that merchandise was pulled from shelves, but in some Southern states, The Associated Press reported, Pride-themed items were [moved to the back](#) of the store after the backlash.

“Given these volatile circumstances, we are making adjustments to our plans,” the company said in a [statement](#) posted Tuesday on its website. “Including removing items that have been at the center of the most significant confrontational behavior.”

Although it’s understandable to want to protect workers from any type of violence, Target’s actions raise the question of why the company couldn’t just increase security or implement additional mechanisms to keep their employees safe and hold disgruntled homophobes accountable. (I reached out to Target for comment on this and had not received a response by the time of publication.)

By pulling items that are affirming to queer and trans people, they are indirectly sending the message that anti-queer harassment works. It also implies that if it’s done persistently enough — and by enough jerks — corporations will cave.

Although Target did not confirm which items they pulled, there is plenty of speculation based on which products likely caused the most controversy. Among them was a “tuck-friendly” swimsuit designed for trans women, which some people on social media [falsely claimed](#) was being sold in children’s sizes. Carrying swimsuits that are affirming for trans people in a national chain feels like a huge step forward, and removing them because some people don’t like it feels like the exact opposite of what companies should be doing — especially during Pride.

The bottom line is, being an ally means following through, even if it gets more complicated and requires more work than you thought it would. If you’re a corporation that wants to stand with queer and trans people, protect your queer customers. Otherwise, you can leave the virtue signaling at home.

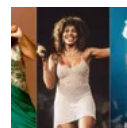
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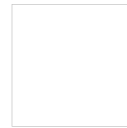
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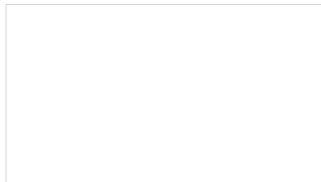
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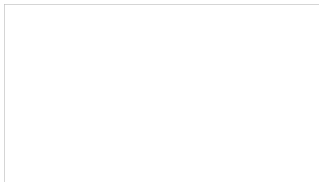
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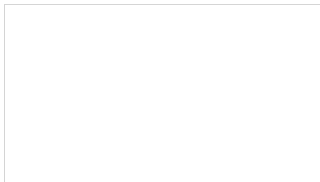
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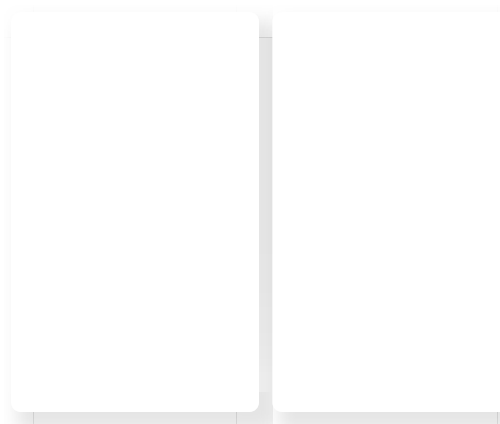


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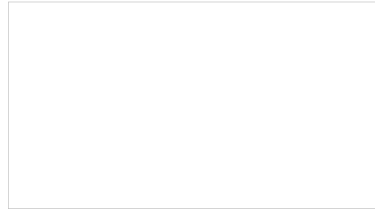
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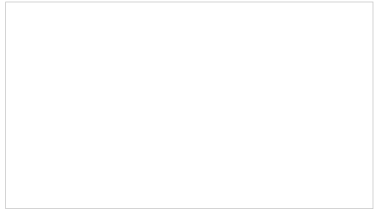
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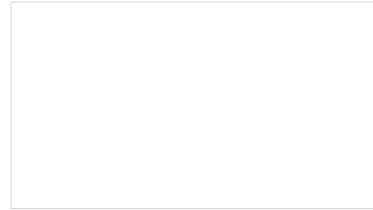
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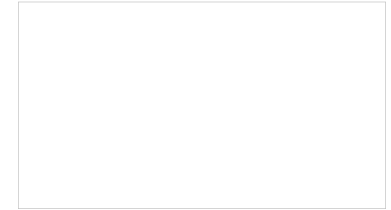
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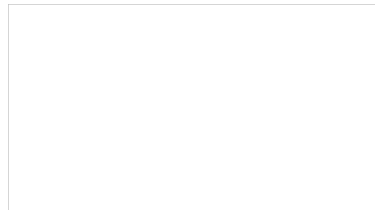
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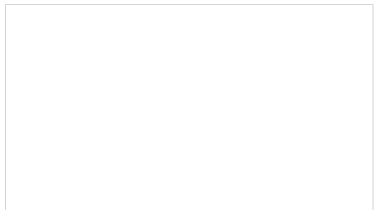
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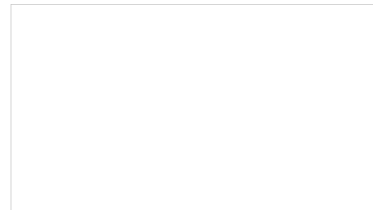
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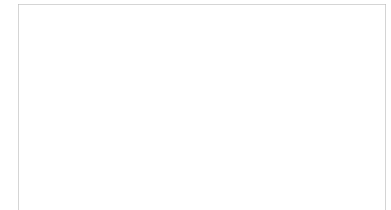
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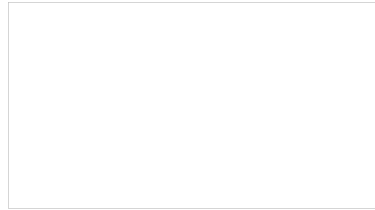
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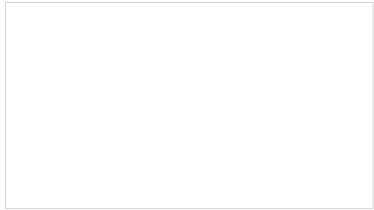
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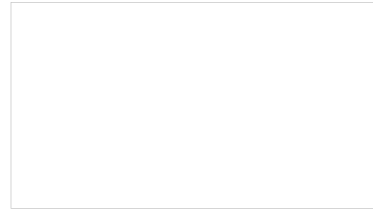
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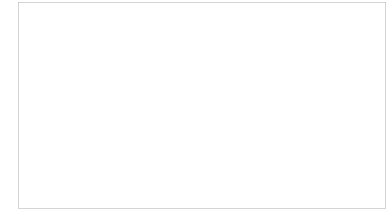
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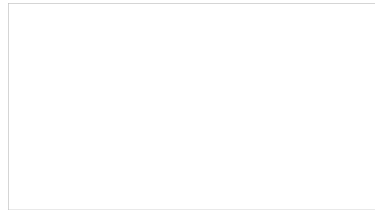
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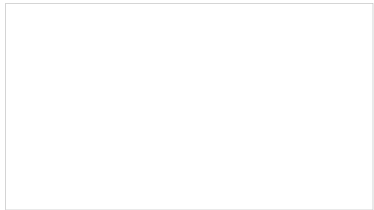
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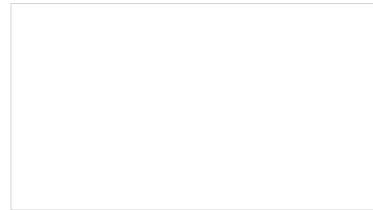
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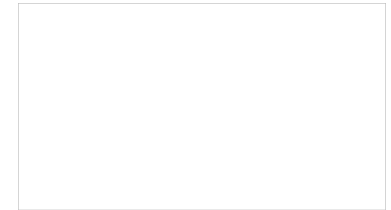
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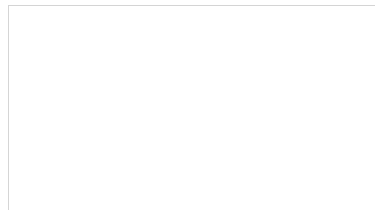
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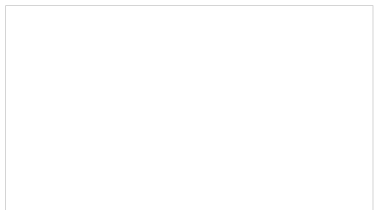
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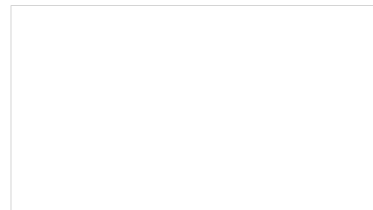
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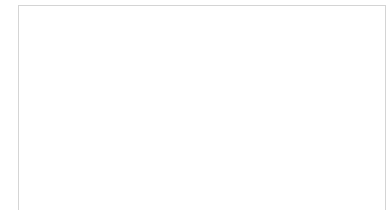
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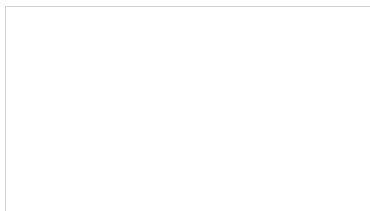
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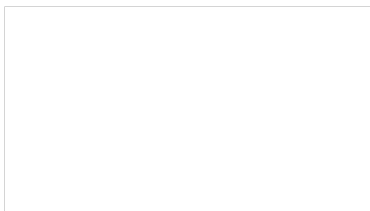
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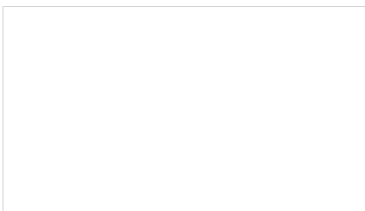
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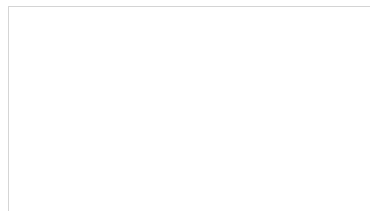


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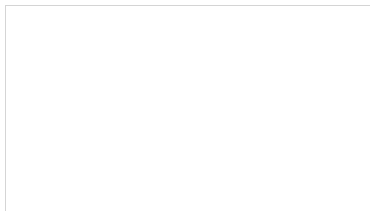


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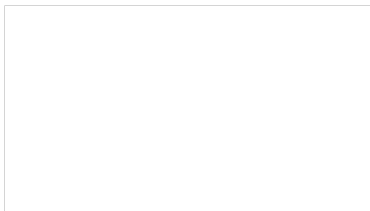


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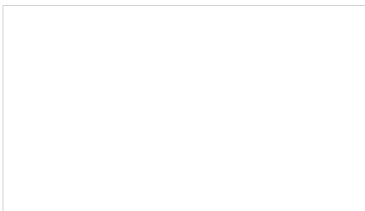
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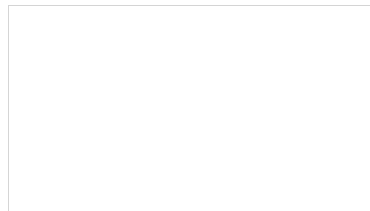
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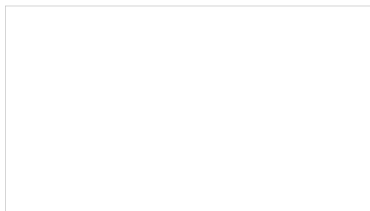
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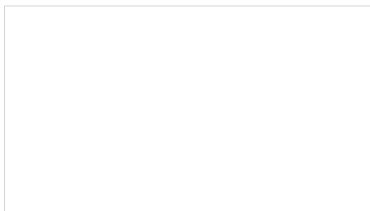
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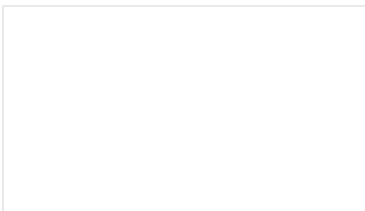
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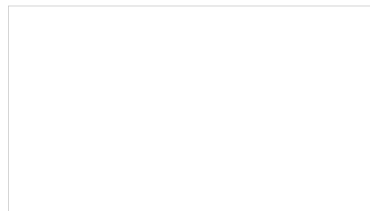
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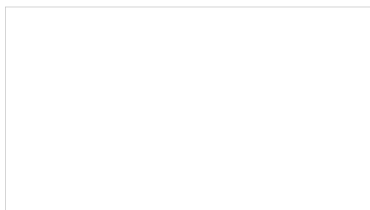
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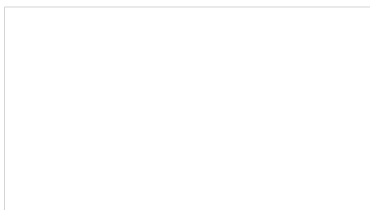
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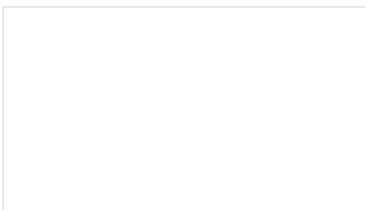
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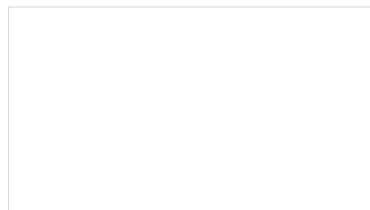
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