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Target's Capitulation To The Anti-Trans Mob and The Pitfalls of Corporate Pride

Establishing the true basis of Pride



Laura Halls · [Follow](#)

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As soon as Pride month rolls around, we are greeted with a huge number of corporations paying lip service to Pride, usually by changing their social media profile pictures so that their logo is shown with the rainbow colors as a supposed expression of support. Correspondingly, we are also given a number of very surface-level messages from politicians, leaders, etc that express apparent support for the LGBT community with little in the way of real action.

Little is really done beyond this by the people who claim to be supportive of the LGBT community, and pretty much all real Pride activism and support comes from the actual LGBT community. Now, this isn't to say that cis het people can't be supportive of Pride. They absolutely can and in fact many are, but it doesn't change the fact that Pride was a grass-roots movement started by LGBT people.

Even with the corporate stuff that we seem to see a lot more of now, this is little more than a glorified marketing attempt to just make them a little bit more money. When you see stores selling Pride-themed products, this is nothing more than them trying to make a quick buck off of something they deem to be popular, they have little commitment to supporting queer rights beyond this.

This is something we've seen more recently in the wake of the far-right violence and threats against companies that express even mild support for the LGBT community. The most recent example is Target removing Pride-themed items from some of their stores after violence from the far-right. It's worth noting that [the designer of these items](#) has also been getting death threats as a result of the right-wing mob.

Target obviously capitulated to this and we saw the same thing recently when Anheuser-Busch [dropped their marketing exec](#) on a leave of absence as a result of the backlash to them sending a single personalized can of Bud Light to Dylan Mulvaney. It should be noted that multiple [Anheuser-Busch facilities were sent bomb threats](#) as a result of this.

For many on the right, this was seen as a victory and it's something they're celebrating and hoping for more of which is why I think it's a bad thing and something they shouldn't have capitulated to. You're never going to win with the right no matter how much you capitulate to their demands on these issues, they're always going to want more until LGBT people are completely gotten rid of. This has always been their goal and they're not going to stop until they get it.

Any time an expression of support is offered to the LGBT community this happens and it's getting more and more radical. Even hospitals that offer support for trans people are sent bomb threats by people on the right. We saw this with [Boston Children's Hospital specifically](#) last year as a result of lies about how they offer gender-affirming care were promoted by the far right.

I think however that it does show just how radical the right has gotten in the

last couple of years. This is a regular occurrence now and it's something that's being promoted and encouraged by mainstream right-wing figures constantly. Michael Knowles notably called for "transgenderism" to be eradicated from public life entirely and the rest of his outlet The Daily Wire has been criticized for its genocidal rhetoric when it comes to trans people.

Returning back to corporate support of Pride, we can really see with the examples of Target and Anheuser-Busch that this has always been a very surface-level support. Queer people have always been the targets of violence and oppression, in many cases even worse than that which is experienced today.

As I said, corporate support for Pride is ultimately little more than a simple marketing tactic, appearing as more inclusive is obviously going to be good marketing for them and this is the simple truth of it. If being at least nominally pro-LGBT leads to them getting major backlash then they will drop the support like a rock and leave it at that.

What I think this really signifies is that we should be wary of corporate support for Pride. It's almost never going to be a symbol of genuine support for queer people and our struggles and instead just a way to make their corporate, capitalist brand seem more human and friendly.

Instead, what we should really be focusing on is creating Pride events that are genuine and truly supportive of queer people. Going back to those early days of Pride it was entirely grass-roots with queer people advocating for themselves and general queer liberation. I'd much rather see an environment where we see queer Pride parades that feature zero support from these corporations than ones that are overflowing with it.

Setting this stuff aside, there are still things that can be done even in the online world such as calling out the lies that are being promoted by the far-right about queer people. This is going to carry infinitely more weight than some corporation changing their profile picture to a rainbow and saying love is love on June 1st.

These are the sorts of things that we should be encouraging and working towards because, at the end of the day, queer people are always going to be supportive of other queer people in a way that corporations will never be. At the same time, it is going to be much more impactful. People who are not familiar with queer people are going to be more impacted if someone in their life comes out as queer or is supportive of queer people than if even 1000 corporations pay lip service to Pride.

Top highlight

Looking at things this way I think we really can see some of the major pitfalls that come with corporate expressions of Pride. They never really go anywhere meaningful and even at their most basic level they're not genuine expressions of support. Real expressions of support would be setting out ways in which we can improve the lives of queer people and ending injustices against the queer community. These are things that are always going to come from the queer community and authentic support, not some corporation that doesn't care.

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Written by Laura Halls

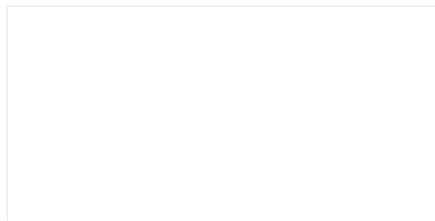
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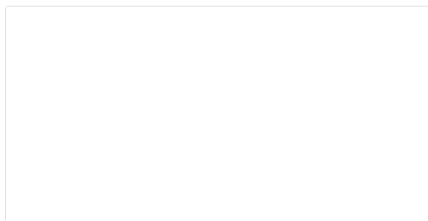
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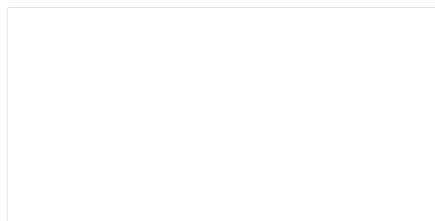
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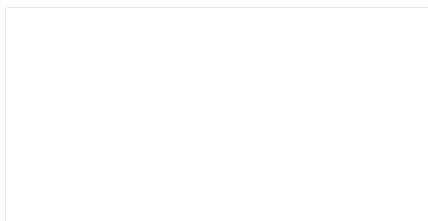
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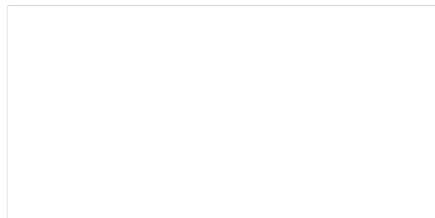
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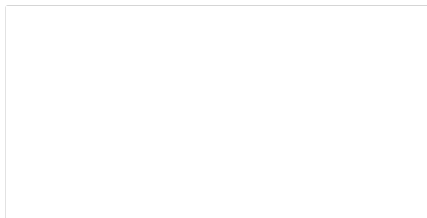
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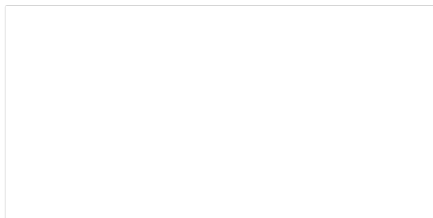
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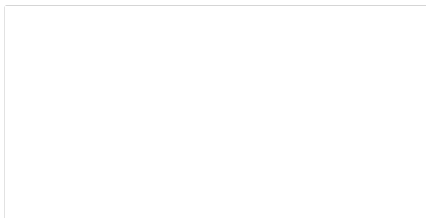
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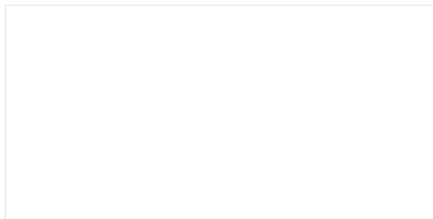
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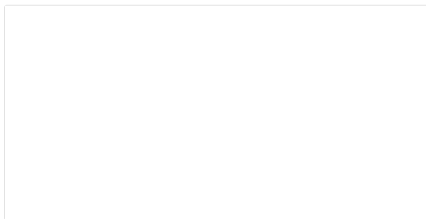
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