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Alliance Defending Freedom Secures Corporate Free Speech Victory with IBM Policy Change

Our Friends · Friday, June 13th, 2025

Alliance Defending Freedom has achieved a significant milestone in its ongoing **advocacy for free speech** in corporate America, with technology giant IBM adopting a viewpoint-neutral stance in its advertising policies. This victory caps a season of successful engagements between the legal organization and major corporations, resulting in substantial policy changes that protect religious and political expression.

Strategic Shareholder Advocacy Yields Results

The **recent policy shift at IBM** came after Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys worked through the shareholder resolution process alongside The Heritage Foundation. The technology company, valued at \$228 billion, has committed to distancing itself from censorship activities previously associated with the Global Alliance for Responsible Media (GARM) and taking steps to prevent viewpoint-discriminatory advertising decisions.

“No corporation should be involved in or allow for censorship at any level,” said Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Counsel and Senior Vice President for Corporate Engagement Jeremy Tedesco. “IBM is doing the right thing by engaging its shareholders and taking steps to prevent future viewpoint-based discrimination.”

The resolution process began when The Heritage Foundation filed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion shareholder proposal at IBM. Though the proposal was initially set to appear on the proxy ballot at IBM’s annual meeting, the company agreed to change its advertising policy in exchange for the proposal’s withdrawal. IBM’s **new policy** explicitly states that “IBM’s media-buying and content policies are... viewpoint neutral with respect to political or religious status or views.”

Part of a Broader Campaign for Corporate Freedom

This victory with IBM represents just one of 20 policy and behavior changes that Alliance Defending Freedom’s coalition of shareholder advocates has secured at major corporations this year. Other companies that have made similar adjustments to their advertising policies include PepsiCo, Mastercard, and Johnson & Johnson, all of which have cut ties with GARM, an organization that claimed to promote “digital safety” but was criticized for censoring conservative and religious voices.

Additional corporate policy shifts facilitated by Alliance Defending Freedom include Comcast's changes to ad-selling policies, which now protect religious and political views in advertisements at NBC Universal and Peacock. JPMorgan Chase has also enacted policy changes to prevent discriminatory banking practices, while progress continues at other major companies like Walmart, Verizon, and Morgan Stanley.

These victories stem from a strategic campaign in which Alliance Defending Freedom and its coalition partners filed 71 shareholder proposals at major corporations, leading to over 70 meetings with company representatives. The legal organization's approach demonstrates how shareholder advocacy can effectively [advance free speech principles](#) in corporate settings.

"We applaud IBM's willingness to engage with its shareholders and make meaningful changes as a result," said Heritage Foundation Treasurer and Vice President of Finance and Accounting John Backiel, highlighting the collaborative nature of these successful advocacy efforts.

[Alliance Defending Freedom](#), founded in 1994, continues its work as an alliance-building, non-profit legal organization committed to protecting religious freedom, free speech, parental rights, and the sanctity of life. Through strategic legal advocacy and shareholder engagement, the organization extends its mission beyond traditional courtroom settings into corporate boardrooms, ensuring that freedom of expression remains protected across all sectors of American society.

The IBM policy change represents a significant development in corporate governance that supports viewpoint diversity while demonstrating how principled advocacy can lead to meaningful corporate reform. As companies face increasing pressure regarding advertising policies and content moderation, [Alliance Defending Freedom's ongoing work](#) provides a blueprint for protecting fundamental freedoms in the marketplace of ideas.

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