

# [***Doc Martens A Vocally Pro-LGBTQ Company Receives Woke Backlash For Shoe Design Featuring Trans Character***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VD-HPY1-DXVP-50GY-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 726 words

**Byline:** Conor Murray, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Though the shoes are not available for sale, some right-wing social media users still voiced their anger.

**Body**

**Topline**

A custom pair of Dr. Martens boots featuring a design depicting a transgender person who received top surgery which is being given away in a contest and is not available for sale has caught the attention of conservatives online, who are criticizing the shoe brand as woke, in the latest right-wing assault against a company over its pro-LGBTQ social stance.

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Dr. Martens has historically supported the LGBTQ community and has sold Pride-themed products. (Photo by Erin Clark/The Boston Globe via Getty Images)

Boston Globe via Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Dr. Martens commonly called Doc Martens posteda giveaway contest on its Instagram account last week, offering entrants a chance to win a custom pair of boots designed by artist Jess Vosseteig featuring a cartoon of a transgender person after receiving top surgery, indicated by visible scars on the person s chest.

The caption states the shoes are inspired by the queer community, and Vosseteig swebsitesays she focuses on queer, feminist and inclusive designs.

Some right-wing social media users, including well-known accounts like Libs of TikTok, criticized the giveaway on their profiles, with some posting anti-transgender messages.

Despite the backlash, the shoes are not for sale and only one pair is being given away via the contest.

Products not available to the public have been the target of woke boycotts before: Most famously, Bud Light faced boycotts after it sent transgender social media star Dylan Mulvaney a custom can with her face on it, despite the can not being sold in stores.

Dr. Martens has long supported the LGBTQ community and hassoldLGBTQ-themed designs before, noting on itswebsiteits history is deeply interwoven with the LGBTQIA+ community and that 30% of the company s employees identify as LGBTQ.

Both the company andqueer customershave noted theimportanceof the shoe to the LGBTQ community, and the company s website states its shoes have been adopted by global queer communities as a symbol for stomping all over the status quo.

**Chief Critics**

Libs of TikTok, a right-wing social media account known for mocking left-wing social media users,posteda screenshot of the Instagram giveaway, criticizing the shoes for featuring transgender men. Ian Miles Cheong, a popular right-wing Twitter user,criticizedcorporations for celebrating trans affirming body mutilation surgeries, blaming the design on wokeness. Tiffany Justice, cofounder of the right-wing Moms for Liberty organization, ridiculed the design and compared top surgery to amputating a limb: What if thousands of kids were removing their right arms? shetweeted.

**Crucial Quote**

The inspiration for my design came from representing queer joy! Vosseteig stated, according to the Dr. Martenswebsite. I wanted to include two stylized people that were part of the queer community. I knew I wanted to incorporate lots of color with rainbows, clouds, and sparkles! I wrote Queer Joy on the back of them to send the message that queer joy will always exist."

**Key Background**

Right-wingboycottsof companies deemed woke for outreach to the LGBTQ community or for celebration of diversity, equity and inclusion ramped up earlier this year, particularly after Bud Light faced boycotts in April for its partnership with Mulvaney and during Pride month, when many brands typically launch LGBTQ-inclusive marketing campaigns. The Bud Light boycott caused adip in salesfor the beer brand, and its parent company, Anheuser-Busch, angered both sides of the political spectrum: the right wing for the marketing campaign, and the left wing for allegedly failing to stand behind Mulvaney following the intense backlash both she and the company received. Other targets of the anti- woke online anger includedTargetand Kohl s for trans-inclusive and Pride-themed product lines, as well as professionalsports leagueslike Major League Baseball and Nascar for posting pro-Pride messages. Though these boycotts have slowed down since Pride month, the cosmetics brandMaybellinewas a recent target in July for casting a bearded LGBTQ influencer for a makeup ad.

**Further Reading**

Definitive Guide To The Anti- Woke Protests: From Bud Light To Target To The U.S. Navy And Everyone Else(Forbes)

What Does Woke Even Mean? How A Decades-Old Racial Justice Term Became Co-Opted By ***Politics***(Forbes)

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