

# [***Starbucks Workers Strike Over Pride Decorations Here s What We Know About The Union s Clash With The Company***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FY-YPH1-DXVP-5187-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

June 13, 2023 Tuesday

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**Length:** 977 words

**Byline:** Conor Murray, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Starbucks called these allegations false information in a statement.

**Body**

**Topline**

Some Starbucks workers affiliated with the Starbucks Workers United union pledged to go onstrikeFriday, more than a week after a clash with the company on social media in which the union accused corporate leaders of caving to anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and banning stores from decorating for Pride, which the company has forcefully denied, clarifying that retail stores can choose whether to decorate.

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A Starbucks union claims stores have been banned from putting up Pride decorations.

Alexi Rosenfeld/Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Workers from more than 150 Starbucks locations, including the Seattle flagship store, willstrikeover the next week in protest of what the union says is the company s hypocritical treatment of LGBTQIA+ workers.

The company previously said it is deeply concerned by false information, especially as it relates to our inclusive store environments, that has spread on social media and reaffirmed its year-round support for the LGBTQIA2+ community, Mark Brown, senior vice president for talent a inclusion, wrote in a letter to North American corporate and retail leaders last week.

Starbucks Workers United rejected the company s claim that decorations have not been banned, citing a company directive to local retail leaders to find ways to celebrate Pride, which itallegesempowered stores to ban decorations.

The union first alleged that the corporation banned Pride decorations in stores in the middle of Pride month in atweetthread posted last week.

The unionallegesaffected stores include union locations in which the company says it cannot make unilateral changes without bargaining.

Starbucks spokesperson Andrew Trull denied any policy regarding Pride decorations in stores had changed, calling the allegations false information in a statement to**Forbes**.

Starbucks Workers United told**Forbes**that workers in 21 states have been told they cannot put up Pride decorations, including in Oklahoma, where workers were allegedly told not to decorate for safety amid bombthreatsmade against Target, which has also come under fire for its Pride merchandise.

The unionaccusedStarbucks of taking a cue from Target, whichpulledsome items from its Pride collection in response to right-wing outrage.

Starbucks has long been known as anLGBTQ-friendlycompany: It s maintained a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign sCorporate Equality Index, which considers treatment of and benefits for LGBTQ employees, since 2015, and hassponsoredPride festivals and donated to LGBTQ causes.

**Crucial Quote**

There has been no change to any guidance on this matter. Our retail leaders continue to work with store teams to find ways to authentically celebrate year-round with their communities. This includes how stores decorate for heritage months, including U.S. Pride month in June keeping in our mind our safety standards, Brown wrote in the letter.

**Chief Critics**

Some employees have anonymously taken to social media to share experiences of Starbucks instructing their stores to remove Pride decorations. The Oklahoma City Starbucks Workers UnitedtweetedOklahoma City union stores were instructed to remove Pride flags from their stores. Starbucks Workers United posted aTikTokvideo allegedly depicting employees removing Pride decorations from a Wisconsinlocation. The union alsotweeteda collage of posts and comments allegedly made by Starbucks employees who were instructed not to decorate for Pride.

**Contra**

Conservative commentator Charlie Kirk appeared to credit the right-wing backlash against companies who celebrate Pride month in atweetto his 2.3 million followers. Good! Keep the pressure on, folks, Kirk tweeted. Popular conservative Twitter account End Wokeness, which tweets frequently about woke companies to its 1.2 million followers, also credited the conservative backlash: This is what happens when you actually start fighting the culture war. Social commentary YouTube channel The Quartering, which has 1.5 million subscribers,consideredStarbucks the wokest of the woke in a YouTube video on Tuesday and credited its alleged pulling of Pride merch to people having had enough of rainbow capitalism.

**Tangent**

Starbucks attracted controversy several weeks ago over an advertisement it aired in India, in which a father attempts to reconnect with his transgender daughter. The ad was called sweet andgroundbreakingby some supporters, but it wascriticizedas woke by conservative commentators, including Ben Shapiro.

**Key Background**

A long and growinglistof companies have faced the wrath of right-wing social media users in recent weeks. Bud Light infamously faced boycotts and a dip in sales after it sent transgender TikTok star Dylan Mulvaney a customized can with her face on it, though the can was not for sale or available to the public. Some have compared Starbucks allegedly pulling Pride decorations to Target, which faced a boycott after some angered conservatives spread misinformation online that a tuck-friendly swimsuit for transgender women was sold for children, when it was only sold in adult sizes. Though this was debunked, outrage still grew over Target s Pride collection, particularly because of designs made by British designer Abprallen who has previously designed clothes using Satanic imagery. The company announced it would remove some items from its Pride line, sparking outrage from LGBTQ groups and supporters, including Gov. Gavin Newsom (D-Calif.), whoaccusedTarget of selling out the LGBTQ+ community to extremists.

**Further Reading**

Starbucks Union Workers Are Striking After Accusing Firm Of Banning Pride Decorations(Forbes)

Garth Brooks, Cracker Barrel Are The Latest Targets Of LGBTQ Culture Wars: Here Are All The Others From Bud Light To Target(Forbes)

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

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2023

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