# Harley-Davidson curtails diversity initiatives following conservative campaign



**Harley-Davidson Curtails Diversity Initiatives Following Conservative Campaign**

Milwaukee, WI – Renowned motorcycle manufacturer Harley-Davidson has announced the cessation of its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, following a concerted campaign by conservative activist Robby Starbuck. The announcement marks Harley-Davidson as the latest among major American brands retracting DEI policies amidst external pressures.

In an official statement posted on its social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Harley-Davidson expressed its discontent with the recent wave of social media negativity directed at the company. “We are saddened by the negativity on social media over the last few weeks, designed to divide the Harley-Davidson community,” the statement read.

The company confirmed it had not operated a DEI function since April 2024. “We do not have hiring quotas and we no longer have supplier diversity spend goals," it stated.

Notably, the company revealed plans to review all its sponsorships and affiliations with outside organisations, including LGBTQ+ Pride festivals and the Human Rights Campaign, a prominent LGBTQ+ advocacy group. Harley-Davidson indicated that its future focus would be exclusively on promoting motorcycling as a sport. Historically, the company has been a long-time corporate member of the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

Robby Starbuck initiated the campaign against Harley-Davidson a month prior, accusing the company of embracing "woke" ideologies. His posts, amplified by influential figures such as Elon Musk, highlighted several initiatives the company had undertaken, including sponsoring a bootcamp for LGBTQ entrepreneurs, donating to United Way, and striving to diversify its workforce.

In a video that has since amassed nearly 3 million views on X, Starbuck pointed to Harley-Davidson’s DEI training and support for LGBTQ+ events as evidence of the brand going "totally woke." He criticised the company's objectives for a diverse supplier network as a coded message for reducing the number of white suppliers.

Responding indirectly to Starbuck’s campaign, Harley-Davidson insisted it remained “committed to listening to all members of our community” but reiterated its stance against socially driven content in its employee training programmes.

Harley-Davidson isn't alone in retracting DEI-related strategies recently. Tractor Supply and John Deere have similarly rolled back their DEI initiatives in response to Starbuck’s campaigns. Tractor Supply announced the elimination of roles focused on DEI and scrapped its carbon emission reduction goals, while John Deere ceased sponsoring social or cultural awareness events and initiated an audit of all training materials.

Starbuck celebrated these outcomes, dubbing them a “win for our movement” on social media and hinting at future targets.

Despite the controversy, some within the Harley-Davidson community remain unfazed. George Gatto, a Harley store owner in Pittsburgh, reported receiving aggressive comments over the boycott but dismissed Starbuck’s efforts as political grandstanding. “My business is non-political. You are welcome to come here if you’re a Democrat, a Republican, or independent, we don’t even look at that,” Gatto commented to Bloomberg. “It’s about riding motorcycles and having fun.”

This retraction by Harley-Davidson follows a broader trend observed over the past year, where companies such as Anheuser-Busch retracted DEI promotions following public backlash.