



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on April 1, 2022

Apple Deploying Army of Lobbyists to Promote LGBT Legislation

In the wake of the debate over parental rights and grooming in schools, Apple is [leveraging its resources and political capital](#) to combat the pro-family legislation being advanced by Republicans across the country, including in states like Florida.

Apple CEO Tim Cook, who is himself gay, has deployed the company's lobbyists in Florida, Iowa, Texas, and at least six other states.

The iPhone maker's communications, government affairs, and legal offices have criticized some of the bills put forth in these states, strategizing with policymakers and advocacy groups and even filing court briefs in LGBT-related cases.

Apple has also encouraged other large firms to oppose the legislation publicly, arguing that laws like Florida's recent parental rights bill promote discrimination and will be harmful to LGBT youth.

"It's not just states where they have a headquarters," said Jay Brown, the senior vice president of programs, research, and training at the LGBTQ rights organization Human Rights Campaign. "It's states where their customers are, which is all across the country. It is significant in terms of staff time and resources."

This month, Fred Sainz, Apple's senior director of corporate communications, called on leaders at fellow Fortune 500 companies to speak out against an order by Texas' governor that called for child abuse investigations of parents who provide children with sex-change procedures.

"I'm reaching out from Apple because we're hoping you'll join us and lend your company's name to a critical issue," wrote Sainz, who was formerly the vice president of communications and marketing at the HRC, in an email to his corporate affairs counterparts on March 5.

"Apple has joined the effort and will lend its name and logo," Sainz said in the email, obtained by POLITICO. "I'm reaching out because we are hoping you will too." Sixty other organizations signed onto the letter, which was published last month.

In part, Apple is responding to the desires of its workforce. The tech industry is known for having a [high concentration of trans employees](#).

Apple is now taking heat from Republicans over its opposition to recent bills. Some GOP politicians in Iowa say Apple should no longer receive state subsidies because it opposes legislation that bans boys



AP Images



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from competing in girls' sports.

“Apple framed the law as part of a ‘social agenda’ rather than fairness for women’s sports,” Republican Iowa state Senator Zach Nunn told Fox News. “That becomes a concerning issue when we have a major industry who attempts to come in and force public policy based on an agenda they may have in a boardroom out of state.”

Politico notes:

The advocacy is notable considering that Apple has often shied away from the political spotlight. The company doesn't have a political action committee or make campaign donations, maintains a smaller federal lobbying presence than its big tech peers and often does not engage with the news media on policy issues.

But behind the scenes, it is one of the most active corporate advocates for LGBTQ rights, according to four organizers on the ground in states where legislation is moving. The company has tried to leverage its greatest assets — the popularity of its products and the size of its employee base in the U.S. — to crush the legislation.

Apple spokesperson Peter Ajemian confirmed in a statement that the company “regularly lobbies against anti-LGBTQ+ legislation across the states, just as we did in Florida.”

Apple's advocacy largely involves partnering with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). The company said it is part of a national coalition that is active in all 50 states and that its government affairs teams work closely with the HRC discussing strategy and direct lobbying.

Democratic Florida state Sen. Shevrin Jones said he believes that corporations “fell asleep at the wheel” when it came to opposing the Florida law.

“Right now, we're in a moment where corporations are being challenged on where they stand and lobby on social issues,” Jones said. “This is a teachable moment for them to realize that the moment these things come out drafting and get filed, they should step up right then and there.”

Apple has also been increasing its lobbying arm in order to oppose regulations that would oppose its app store. The tech company currently has 26 registered lobbyists in Florida. Only Disney and Tampa Electric Co. have bigger lobbying teams in the state.

In Arizona, Apple has nine registered lobbyists, including Kirk Adams, a former chief of staff to Republican Gov. Doug Ducey and a past speaker of the state House.

“Apple has been an incredible partner for the LGBTQ community,” said Democratic Arizona state Rep. César Chávez, who has opposed pro-family legislation signed into law this week.



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