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SEIU

Major US Civil Rights and Racial Justice Organizations Demand Corporations Implement Racial Equity and Civil Rights Audits

NEW YORK — Leaders of major racial justice movements and organizations across the United States are calling on some of the world’s largest corporations—Amazon, Apple, Verizon, and Uber, among others—to follow through on the commitments they made to conduct racial equity and civil rights audits. Color Of Change, Community Change, Majority Action, the Service Employees International Union, Open MIC, Power Switch Action, and UltraViolet Action sent joint letters to the corporate secretaries of 20 companies to communicate expectations and criteria for thorough and transparent audits.

“We saw [majority or near-majority support](#) overall for racial equity and civil rights audit proposals voted on this past shareholder season,” said **James Rucker**, co-founder of Majority Action. “Investors expect corporations to address and prioritize the risks of systemic racism and the threat it poses to their investments.”

Racial justice leaders are calling on corporations to conduct comprehensive racial equity audits that incorporate three best practices.

Companies should:

- Select an independent person or firm with civil rights and racial justice expertise and adequate resources to complete the audit.
- Ensure the audit comprehensively examines how corporate policies, practices, and products can either ameliorate or exacerbate racial inequalities. Audit processes should include proactively identifying and engaging in outreach to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) stakeholders who are disproportionately impacted by racial inequity at corporations, as well as provide pathways for stakeholders to engage.
- Publicly release audit findings, recommendations, and progress reports under clear timelines, with action plans for the issues raised in audits.

“Racial equity audits exist to drive changes in policy, not rhetoric. Committing to racial equity means committing to the changes that bringing about true racial equity inevitably requires. It requires identifying and changing specific business practices—from hiring and management to product development and marketing—that harm Black people and other people of color disproportionately,” says **Rashad Robinson**, President of Color Of Change. “Corporations that use racial equity audits to delay, derail, or dodge their responsibility to enact real change are no friend to Black communities.”

"Our country's largest corporations—especially the ones that have told us they stand on the side of racial justice—have a responsibility to be transparent to investors and the public," said **Dorian Warren**, Co-President of Community Change. "They need to build trust with us. Undergoing accountable, third-party racial equity audits are an important step in that direction."

The best practices laid out in the letters mandate that racial equity audits cannot succeed without identifying key stakeholder groups through consultations with shareholders, civil rights advocates, and organizations connected to impacted communities. Leaders have called on companies and auditors to make a clear commitment that any stakeholder who engages in the audit will be protected from retaliation, intimidation, or disciplinary action, and that anonymization should be prioritized. To ensure legitimate processes and actionable outcomes that are accountable to BIPOC stakeholders, leaders also view what happens after the audit as critically important, and call for audit findings, recommendations and plans of action to be made publicly available.

"Working people are demanding an honest accounting of whether corporations are upholding structural racism in, and beyond, their doors," said **Renaye Manley**, Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives at SEIU. "Their livelihoods are at stake—not only their retirement savings, but also the conditions of their communities. Corporations must complete these racial equity audits using best practices to truly fulfill their commitment to advance racial equity."

“Business-as-usual” corporate behaviors that contribute to systemic racial disparities exacerbate risks and negative impacts to long-term investors and stakeholders alike,” said **Eli Kasargod-Staub**, Executive Director of Majority Action. “We seek to ensure that the racial equity and civil rights audits that companies pledge to conduct actually contribute to comprehensively reducing these impacts.”

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Majority Action is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering shareholders of all sizes to hold corporations and their leadership accountable to high standards of long-term value creation, corporate governance, and social responsibility. www.majorityaction.us

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