



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20554

Brendan Carr
Chairman

March 27, 2025

Mr. Robert A. Iger
Chief Executive Officer
The Walt Disney Company

RE: Investigation into Disney/ABC's DEI Programs

Dear Mr. Iger,

I am writing to inform you that I have asked the FCC's Enforcement Bureau to open an investigation into Disney and ABC. In particular, I want to ensure that Disney and ABC have not been violating FCC equal employment opportunity regulations by promoting invidious forms of DEI discrimination. While I have seen reports that Disney recently walked back some of its DEI programs, significant concerns remain.

For one, I want to ensure that Disney ends any and all discriminatory initiatives in substance, not just name. For another, I want to determine whether Disney's actions—whether ongoing or recently ended—complied at all times with applicable FCC regulations.

As you know, Disney started out a century ago as an iconic American company. For decades, Disney focused on churning out box office and programming successes. But then something changed. Disney has now been embroiled in rounds of controversy surrounding its DEI policies.

Numerous reports indicate that Disney's leadership went all in on invidious forms of DEI discrimination a few years ago and apparently did so in a manner that infected many aspects of your company's decisions.

As you may know, the Communications Act and Commission rules prohibit regulated entities like Disney's ABC from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, or gender.¹ Indeed, the FCC's longstanding equal employment opportunity or EEO rules set forth specific requirements to which Disney's regulated operations must adhere.²

Nonetheless, I am concerned that ABC and its parent company have been or may still be promoting invidious forms of DEI in a manner that does not comply with FCC regulations.

¹ See, e.g., 47 U.S.C. § 151.

² See, e.g., 47 CFR §§ 25.601, 90.168, 73.2080(a), 76.73.

In recent years, Disney made DEI a key priority for the company’s businesses and embedded explicit race- and gender-based criteria across its operations.³ Indeed, public reports—including ones based on whistleblower documents—paint a disturbing picture of Disney’s DEI practices. In at least one account, a Disney employee described the company’s decision to launch what would amount to racially-segregated affinity groups and spaces.⁴ The company also publicly launched a “Reimagine Tomorrow” initiative,⁵ it would appear, as a mechanism for advancing its DEI mission. It also implemented mandatory “Inclusion Standards”⁶ across ABC, requiring, for example, that “50 percent of regular and recurring characters” be drawn from “underrepresented groups.”⁷ These standards may have forced racial and identity quotas into every level of production—demanding that “50% or more” of writers, directors, crew, and vendors be selected based on group identity.⁸ It appears that executive bonuses may also have been tied to DEI “performance,”⁹ and ABC has utilized race-based hiring databases and restricted fellowships to select demographic groups.¹⁰

Although your company recently made some changes to how it brands certain efforts, it is not clear that the underlying policies have changed in a fundamental manner—nor that past practices complied with relevant FCC regulations.

³ See, e.g., Joe Otterson, ABC Unveils New Inclusion Standards for Underrepresented Groups, *Variety* (Sept. 30, 2020), <https://variety.com/2020/tv/news/abc-inclusion-standards-underrepresented-groups-1234788397/>; *Content Representation Dashboard – FY23*, Disney (Feb. 2024), <https://impact.disney.com/app/uploads/2024/02/FY23-Diversity-Dashboard-Content.pdf>; *Workforce Representation Data – FY24*, Disney (Dec. 2024), <https://impact.disney.com/app/uploads/2024/12/FY24-Diversity-Dashboard-Workforce.pdf>; 99% of Disney Shareholders Reject Anti-DEI Proposal, *Sustainability Magazine* (Mar. 21, 2024), <https://sustainabilitymag.com/articles/99-of-disney-shareholders-reject-anti-dei-proposal>; Supplier Diversity, Disney, <https://supplierdiversity.disney.com> (last visited Mar. 27, 2025).

⁴ Christopher Rufo, The Wokest Place on Earth, *City Journal* (May 7, 2021), <https://www.city-journal.org/article/the-wokest-place-on-earth>.

⁵ See Disney Launches Digital Destination to Amplify Underrepresented Voices, *Life at Disney* (Oct. 13, 2021), <https://sites.disney.com/lifeatdisney/culture-and-values/2021/10/13/disney-launches-digital-destination-to-amplify-underrepresented-voices/>; @reimagine tomorrow, Instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/reimagine tomorrow/> (last visited Mar. 27, 2025); Let’s Reimagine Tomorrow Together, Disney Connect, <https://disneyconnect.com/dpep/lets-reimagine-tomorrow-together/> (last visited Mar. 27, 2025).

⁶ See Lesley Goldberg, ABC Unveils Ambitious Set of Inclusion Standards (Exclusive), *Hollywood Rep.* (Sept. 30, 2020), <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/abc-unveils-ambitious-set-of-inclusion-standards-exclusive-4069409/>.

⁷ Jonathan Berr, ABC TV Unveils Diversity Goals, *Forbes* (Sept. 30, 2020), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jonathanberr/2020/09/30/abc-tv-unveils-diversity-goals/>.

⁸ See Lesley Goldberg, Dana Walden Says ABC Passed on Pilots for Not Being Inclusive Enough, *Hollywood Rep.* (May 20, 2021), <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/dana-walden-says-abc-passed-on-pilots-for-not-being-inclusive-enough-4165849/>; see also Goldberg, *Hollywood Rep.* (Sept. 30, 2020).

⁹ *The Walt Disney Co., Definitive Proxy Statement (Schedule 14A)* (Jan. 21, 2022), <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1744489/000119312522012592/d249883ddef14a.htm> (“FY 2021: The Compensation Committee incorporated diversity and inclusion (e.g. representation, retention and content), which has the highest weighting among non-financial metrics, into the fiscal 2021 bonus plan.”); Disney DEI Changes Reflected in SEC Filings, *That Park Place* (Aug. 29, 2023), <https://thatparkplace.com/disney-dei-changes/>.

¹⁰ See Inclusion, Disney, <https://inclusion.twdc.com> (last visited Mar. 27, 2025); Creative Talent Development & Inclusion, Disney, <https://sites.disney.com/ctdi> (last visited Mar. 27, 2025).

As I have made clear, promoting invidious forms of discrimination cannot be squared with any reasonable interpretation of federal law. Doing so only deprives Americans of their rights to fair and equal treatment under the law.

President Trump took quick and decisive action on this. In his first week in office, President Trump issued an Executive Order that will end the radical and wasteful DEI programs that have spread across the federal government. And at my direction, the FCC has already taken action to end its own promotion of DEI. I have been pleased to see that some regulated companies are already taking steps toward rooting out discriminatory DEI policies.

As Chairman of the FCC, it is important to me that the entities the Commission regulates fully adhere to the FCC's rules and regulations. In order to aid the FCC's investigation into these matters, the Commission's Enforcement Bureau will be engaging with your company to obtain an accounting of Disney and ABC's DEI programs, policies, and practices. The Enforcement Bureau will follow up with more specifics.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,



Brendan Carr
Chairman