

# McDonald's backtracks on DEI policies

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USA TODAY

McDonald's is the latest major company to flip its diversity, equity and inclusion policies amid a growing beef between those who support the efforts and political conservatives alongside the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump.

Citing the Supreme Court's 2023 decision banning affirmative action in college admissions and the "evolving landscape around DEI," the fast-food giant said Monday it would no longer set goals to increase diversity in senior leadership.

It also said it would end a program that encouraged suppliers to increase diversity in their ranks, re-branded its diversity team as the "Global Inclusion Team" and paused external surveys.

Despite the changes, "McDonald's position and our commitment to inclusion is steadfast," read the open letter issued Monday by McDonald's Chairman and CEO Chris Kempczinski and other executives.

Following McDonald's announcement, anti-DEI social media activist Robby Starbuck claimed victory in a post on X, calling it his first "corporate flip" of 2025. He previously pressured a range of companies from Walmart to Ford Motor Co. to make changes and said he contacted McDonald's on Friday to do the same.



**McDonald's joins a growing list of major companies to backtrack on DEI commitments.**

KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

McDonald's, which said the changes had been under consideration for months, joins a growing list of major companies to backtrack on DEI commitments made after the murder of George Floyd in 2020 forced a historic reckoning with race in America.

DEI critics allege that women and people of color are being handed jobs and promotions at the expense of more qualified candidates.

On the campaign trail, Trump, a vocal DEI critic, promoted the idea that white Americans were targets of racism and made reversing President Joe Biden's "woke takeover" of Washington a priority of his second term in office.

Proponents say DEI programs are critical to level the playing field for people of color and women. JPMorgan Chase's Jamie Dimon and other business leaders have repeatedly stressed that diversity is good for business.

Employees of color are underrepresented at every level of power in corporate America, according to USA TODAY data investigations. One analysis in 2023 found that white men account for 7 in 10 executive officers in the nation's largest companies. About 1 in 7 of these companies had executive teams made up only of white men.

In 2020, McDonald's established "aspirational goals" to increase representation of women and underrepresented groups at senior leadership levels.

Last year's independent audit of the company's civil rights policies found that the company made "admirable progress" in increasing representation of women and underrepresented groups in its corporate workforce, but diversity in its company-operated restaurants was "less developed."

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