

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Charles Robbins
CEO, Cisco Systems
170 West Tasman Drive,
San Jose, CA 95134

Dear Charles Robbins:

I am writing on behalf of Accountable.US, a nonpartisan investigative research organization that has been documenting the corporate response to the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the wave of voter suppression efforts that followed at the state level, and efforts in Congress to protect the right to vote. We have found that Cisco Systems can do far better in terms of supporting our nation's most sacred institution – democracy.

Growing threats to our democracy are now a top concern among Americans, as echoed by President Biden's national address last month. Today, the January 6th Committee is expected to roll out more evidence that the insurrection was incited at the highest levels.

Our organization recently launched the American Democracy Scorecard project. The project assigns a score to each Fortune 100 company based upon its political spending, public statements on voting rights, affiliations with special interest groups working to expand or undermine democracy, transparency in political activities, and other efforts such as providing voter information resources to customers or employees.

Based on fourteen criteria, Cisco Systems received a grade of C.

Our full methodology can be found at:
www.americandemocracyscorecard.org/methodology/

As examples of behavior that boosted your company's score, Cisco Systems:

- Did not donate to federal lawmakers who objected to certifying the 2020 presidential election
- Did not donate to state officials who voted for anti-voter legislation during the 2022 election cycle
- Took a major action in support of voting rights or democracy

However, among the behavior that counted against the overall grade, we found Cisco Systems has donated \$34,500 to members of Congress that have obstructed key federal legislation to counter such efforts and strengthen voting rights.

Industry apathy towards the very real and ongoing threat to our democracy is simply short-sighted. Surveys have shown that Americans want corporations to use their power and influence to strengthen it.

A May 2022 Morning Consult survey found “64%+ of consumers say that a business with a public commitment to democracy shows the business cares about its customers, their employees, and has the right values.” That same Morning Consult survey found that nearly half (45%) of consumers say they are more likely to accept a job if their employer or future employer participated in the democratic process. These surveys even came before the January 6th Committee in Congress began releasing their stunning findings on how twice-impeached former President Trump and many of his congressional allies incited the Capitol riot with the intent of negating the will of the American people.

The American Democracy Scorecard will continue to serve as a living, interactive public resource for consumers, prospective employees, and shareholders to see where major companies stand on democracy. It’s clear most want to buy from, work for, or invest in a company that shares their values, not just one that preserves its bottom line.

Our democracy’s survival is quite literally at stake, which means your bottom line might be as well. Down the road, we sincerely hope we can update Cisco Systems’s public profile on the website with a better grade. If you have any questions or concerns about how our organization arrived at these conclusions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Kyle Herrig
President, Accountable.US

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