



Gay pride and the miracle of capitalism

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June 26, 2017

June is Gay Pride Month, with cities across the country celebrating their LGBT citizens with grand parades, concerts and street festivals. The rapid growth of this annual event is truly remarkable considering that it traces its roots back to protests following the police raid on New York City's Stonewall Inn in 1969. Less than 50 years later, what was once an act of resistance is now a mainstream celebration sponsored by dozens of major corporations — strong proof of capitalism's ability to adapt to and even drive social change.

Sadly, some LGBT activists strongly disagree. A group called No Justice No Pride has disrupted Pride parades in at least eight cities in protest of the celebration's increasing corporatization. In Washington, D.C., the group successfully held up the parade for more than an hour, blocking the streets with a sit-in and signs condemning companies like Wells Fargo.

Certainly no corporation is perfect, but the increasing trend of big business throwing tens of thousands of dollars in support of the LGBT community should be celebrated. Be it a market ploy or not, their voice has had a measurable impact on public policy for the advancement of gay rights in recent years.

Log Cabin Republicans President Greg T. Angelo explains in the New York Post:

According to the Human Rights Campaign's 2017 Corporate Equality Index, a record 515 major companies earned a perfect score for implementing policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, extending medical benefits to LGBT employees' spouses and partners and offering transgender-inclusive health-insurance coverage, among a number of other factors....

Big Business' support of the LGBT community extends far beyond the bounds of its own employees.

Fully 379 American businesses submitted an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to rule in favor of marriage equality in 2015.

Without corporate support of the LGBT community, there's little doubt that gay rights would not have advanced so rapidly in recent years. Instead of chastising corporations for their imperfections, gay rights proponents should see them as critical allies in the continuing fight for equality.

At the root of the No Justice No Pride protests seems to be a hatred for capitalism itself, with the demonstration supported by far-left and even socialist groups. However, it's not just capitalism's

corporate institutions that should be celebrated for advancing gay rights, but capitalism itself. As Cato Institute Executive Vice President David Boaz points out in Reason, capitalism's engine of prosperity gave gays the choice to embrace their lifestyle without fear:

Capitalism led to industrialization, which led to urbanization, which offered the anonymity of the city to anyone who chafed under the strictures of the family and the village, as well as the chance to find people who shared one's interests.

Look around the world, and it's clear that the countries with the most freedom for gay people are those with a high degree of economic freedom. Countries that are actually socialist rank at the bottom of every measurement of political freedom, civil liberties, personal freedom, and LGBT rights.

Blanket condemnation of capitalism and corporations may be popular among some factions of gay activists. However, actions speak louder than words. While they drink Budweiser, stay at Marriott hotels, and upload photos to Facebook at the Pride parade, they have nothing but markets to thank.