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Elizabeth Hess/Left Is Right: Target hits the mark with transgender policy

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By ELIZABETH HESS

Ask any tired/bored/anxious mother if she could pick one store to aimlessly wander around when she has 30 minutes to herself, and most of them will say Target. There is something comforting about the layout/smell/merchandise in every Target store.

In April 2016, Target announced that "transgender customers and employees were free to use the restroom that corresponded to their gender identity." The announcement came a month after North Carolina enacted House Bill 2, a law known as the "bathroom bill," which required "public single-sex restrooms only be used by people of the corresponding biological sex."

When I heard that Target came out with this policy, I realized I had never given it a second thought where transgender people went to the bathroom before then. I admit it is hard to get into the mind of someone who feels they were born the wrong gender. Conversely, it is harder to get into the mind of someone who wants to oppress someone's race/lifestyle/gender for ANY reason.

Target's policy allows any customer at any time and for whatever reason to use bathrooms or fitting rooms of the opposite sex in its stores based on their personal "gender identity." Target CEO Brian Cornell likened mandating where a transgender person uses the bathroom to "1960s-era race-related civil rights."

In February 2017, Breitbart.com reported that Target's stock had "crashed" because of the chain's stance on transgender bathrooms. Breitbart only got part of the story right: Target shares did plunge in February 2017, but it wasn't due to its bathroom policy.

Part of what has been dragging Target down has been all-online retailers like Amazon. Not just Target is down — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. (2.0 percent), Kroger Co. (1.2 percent), Macy's Inc. (1.7 percent) and Dollar General Corp. (4.2 percent) also fell.

As a parent of a pre-adolescent male child, I have to decide — do I bring him into the woman's room with me, and make him uncomfortable, or send him by himself into the men's room, which makes ME uncomfortable?

I nervously watch as I send my child into a men's public restroom, but when I see a transgender person enter a women's bathroom? I don't give it a second thought.

When the NCAA announced it was moving championships out of North Carolina, it listed several factors. One of them was the North Carolina law that provides legal protections for government officials to refuse services to the LGBT community. I know the NCAA has since allowed North Carolina back onto the championship schedule, but I am thrilled they took an initial stand.

I admit I also didn't give the aspect of transgenders in the military much thought, until Donald Trump tweeted about it back in July. He said that the U.S. government "will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. military."

Is he kidding? A man who enjoyed five educational deferments and one medical deferment for "bone spurs" is going to judge someone who is strong enough — and willing — to defend the United States?

If someone is willing to go through rigorous training, be away from the family and potentially be sent to life-threatening situations, I don't care how they gender-identify. All that matters is they identify as "an American."

Late last month, the Justice Department announced it was putting its attempt to ban transgender military recruits on hold until officials can review a Pentagon study on the issue.

Target has a company creed that I wish the president of the United States would adopt:

"Inclusivity is a core belief at Target. It's something we celebrate. We stand for equality and equity, and strive to make our guests and team members feel accepted."

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