

Walmart, Patagonia and Lyft Make Push to Increase Voter Turnout

By Madeleine Kerr, J.D. Candidate 2021 | October 1, 2018

As the midterm elections draw near, approximately 150 companies, including Walmart, Patagonia and Lyft, have come together to form the [Time to Vote](#) campaign. This initiative is aimed at increasing voter turnout at the midterm elections.

The companies involved in Time to Vote are taking different steps to achieve this goal. Some are focused on ensuring that their own employees go to the polls. For example, Patagonia will shut down its corporate campus and all US retail stores on November 6th to give employees time to vote. Further, Levi Strauss will give all employees at least three hours off to vote.

Other companies are focused on increasing voter awareness and accessibility to vote. For instance, Walmart created a [website](#) with election materials and information. In addition, Lyft is offering discounted [rides](#) anywhere in the United States and free rides to people in underserved communities.

Executives say the Time to Vote initiative is a nonpartisan effort aimed at increasing voter participation. However, it is impossible to ignore the symbolism in America's current political climate. Though the Trump administration might have a business-friendly reputation, as evidenced by this year's tax overhaul, many of the companies involved in Time to Vote have become increasingly [outspoken](#) in their opposition to President Trump's policies.

Patagonia [sued](#) President Trump last December over the diminishment of national monuments. Further, Walmart's chief executive, Doug McMillon [criticized](#) President Trump after he refused to condemn white supremacists following the violent protests in Charlottesville in the summer of 2017. Lyft also made a \$1 million [donation](#) to the ACLU after President Trump announced his initial travel ban.

Regardless of whether the companies have an underlying goal of expressing disdain for President Trump or whether their efforts are truly non-partisan, the companies seem to be responding to their stakeholders' interests. Scott Farrel, communications executive for the international PR firm Golin, [said](#) in August 2017 that, "Millennials want companies to take a stand. A measured risk needs to be taken, and whichever way you want to go, you can't sit in the middle anymore."

Farrel's sentiment appears to be shared by many companies, so it will be interesting to follow the businesses involved in Time to Vote as we approach Election Day.

