

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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August 17, 2022

Mr. Bob Chapek
The Walt Disney Company
500 South Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 91521

Dear Mr. Chapek:

I write today to inquire about your decision to advertise coverage of abortion procedure and travel expenses rather than your paid family leave policy after the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. While I support businesses' efforts to support women through their benefit policies, it is troubling that your company is seemingly pressuring women to take advantage of abortion coverage rather than Disney's paid family leave policy.

On June 24, 2022, the day the *Dobbs* decision was released, your company wrote in a memo to employees "we have processes in place so that an employee who may be unable to access care in one location has affordable coverage for receiving similar levels of care in another location. This travel benefit covers medical situations related to cancer treatments, transplants, rare disease treatment and family planning (including pregnancy-related decisions)."¹ There was no reminder about the paid family leave policies in place or emphasis that the company supported women who choose to carry their pregnancies to term and raise their children.

Women have historically faced discrimination for being pregnant due to the number of days women will be absent from the workforce, not only for the pregnancy and birth of the child, but also the time to care for their children. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act forbids discrimination based on pregnancy related to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, and benefits.² Though illegal, there are many ways in which companies discourage women from carrying pregnancies to term, such as discouraging taking additional time off, making it impossible to get their shifts covered, or taking women off more prominent projects.³

¹ Alex Sherman, *Disney tells employees it will provide 'comprehensive access' for reproductive care*, CNBC (Jun. 24, 2022).

² *Pregnancy Discrimination*, U.S. EQUAL EMP. OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (last visited Jul. 13, 2022).

³ Robin Shulman, *If You're Pregnant and Working, Know Your Rights*, THE N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 18, 2020).

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During this time of historically high 9.1 percent inflation, skyrocketing gas prices, and baby formula shortages, it is imperative that women feel they are supported in their decision to balance their family with their work.⁴ They should not feel coerced into seeking an abortion instead of taking time off to have their child. In order to better understand your company's decision to emphasize abortion coverage over paid family leave, please provide a staff level briefing no later than August 24, 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Cloud", written over a horizontal line.

Michael Cloud
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

cc: The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

⁴ Scott Horsley, *Inflation hit 9.1% in June*, NAT'L PUB. RADIO (Jul. 13, 2022); CBS Miami Team, *US formula shortage persists and will "take a while to fix"*, CBS NEWS MIAMI (Jul. 21, 2022).