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Opinion

Allen Mendenhall: Admirable course correction at Regions Bank

[Allen Mendenhall](#) | 09.20.25



Illuminated Regions sign on bank building in downtown Huntsville, Alabama. (iStockPhoto/sshepard)

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There is a measured satisfaction in witnessing corporate America occasionally demonstrate that it can, indeed, listen to reason and respond constructively to legitimate concerns. Such is the case with Regions Bank, which has recently executed a commendable realignment with the values of its core constituency.

Credit must be rendered where credit is manifestly due. In July, this writer found it necessary, [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#), to subject Regions Bank to critical scrutiny regarding specific policies that seemed curiously detached from the values of its conservative customer base – particularly those in the Southeast, and most especially in Alabama, where the institution is headquartered.

The bank's trajectory appeared to reflect that peculiar corporate malady of our time: the reflexive genuflection to fashionable progressive orthodoxies, often at the expense of the communities these institutions ostensibly serve.

My criticism was not an exercise in corporate hostility but rather an appeal to institutional self-awareness. As Edmund Burke understood, true conservatism seeks not to destroy but to preserve and improve. The goal was never to diminish Regions; instead, it was to encourage Regions to become a more authentic reflection of its stated values and geographic identity.

The response was both swift and substantive. Following the publication of these concerns, and concurrent with a shareholder resolution filed by Inspire Investing – an organization that applies values-based investment principles – Regions updated its 2024 Shared Values report. These revisions demonstrate a welcome return to common sense in corporate governance.

The measurable impact of this realignment is perhaps best illustrated by [this reassessment](#) conducted by 1792 Exchange, a nonprofit organization that evaluates corporate America's susceptibility to political bias. At the time of my July piece, this group classified Regions as a "Medium Risk" company. Following

Regions' policy adjustments, however, 1792 Exchange revised its evaluation, now rating Regions as "Lower Risk."

What has Regions done to improve?

In July, the company declared "that it recruits employees and hires vendors 'based on merit' and 'not based on identity characteristics.'" Regions further emphasized that it does not maintain demographic quotas or goals, and that it "does not engage in preferential treatment and outcomes." In other words, Regions claims that it avoids Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

Regions attributes its continued appearance on the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Corporate Equality Index not to active participation, but to the HRC's practice of assigning ratings to companies regardless of their current involvement.

Regions notes that the HRC may still issue ratings "if the business has submitted a survey in previous years and the information is determined to be accurate, or, if the HRC Foundation has obtained sufficient information to provide an individual rating." In these cases, the HRC allegedly "notified the business of the official rating and gave them an opportunity to provide updates or clarification during the 2025 CEI survey cycle prior to the report release."

With its pledge against debanking, Regions joins JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, and other banks that have made the same promise. Daniel Cameron, the CEO of 1792 Exchange, states, "At a time when many Americans are concerned that access to banking could be influenced by ideology, these banks have shown real courage by affirming that every customer deserves equal treatment."[AH1]

This Regions episode highlights a broader principle that American corporations would benefit from recognizing: shareholder capitalism inherently requires attention to the interests of actual consumers.

Regions Bank, rooted in the practical conservatism of the American South, has rediscovered that its strength lies not in chasing ephemeral political fashions but in serving its community with integrity and consistency.

The bank's course correction also demonstrates the efficacy of reasoned criticism coupled with shareholder engagement. Rather than succumbing to the contemporary tendency toward corporate intransigence when challenged, Regions exhibited the intellectual humility that marks mature institutions. This is precisely how democratic capitalism is supposed to function: through dialogue, accountability, and the alignment of corporate governance with consumer values.

Moreover, this development is just one more example of how corporate America's much-discussed turn toward progressive activism may already be in retreat.

When presented with compelling arguments and faced with genuine accountability mechanisms, even large financial institutions can rediscover their better angels – and their fundamental obligations to the communities they serve.

The Regions Bank story offers a template for constructive corporate engagement in an era often characterized by destructive polarization. It demonstrates that criticism based on principle rather than mere opposition can yield positive results. It shows that shareholders, when organized around coherent values rather than mere grievance, can influence corporate behavior constructively. And it proves that corporations, despite their size and bureaucratic inertia, remain capable of thoughtful self-correction.

Ultimately, this was never about attacking Regions Bank. It was about helping the institution become even better. That it chose to listen, learn and adapt speaks well of its leadership and augurs favorably for its future relationship with the communities it serves. After years of corporate virtue signaling, Regions Bank has chosen the more difficult but ultimately more rewarding path.

Such institutional wisdom deserves recognition when encountered. And perhaps, if we are fortunate, it may prove contagious. Regions could go further than it has, of course, but for now let's celebrate the direction in which it has turned.

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