

Target CEO: Maybe that Transgender Bathroom Announcement Wasn't Such a Good Idea After All

The *Wall Street Journal* on Wednesday ran a lengthy report in its business section titled "[How Target Botched Its Response to the North Carolina Bathroom Law.](#)"

The story focused on Target's controversial decision in April 2016 to publish a blog post responding to North Carolina's [decision](#) to pass a law requiring transgender people to use bathrooms that corresponded to the gender on their birth certificate.

Target's decision to wade into the "Bathroom Battles" caused a wave of fury and boycotts. According to the WSJ report, Target Chief Executive Brian Cornell admitted to internal sources that the company handled the issue poorly.

"Mr. Cornell, 58 years old, expressed frustration about how the bathroom policy was publicized, and told colleagues he wouldn't have approved the decision to flaunt it, these people said. Target didn't adequately assess the risk, and the ensuing backlash was self-inflicted, he told staff. Now, it was too late to reverse course.

'You can't take it back,' said one of these people, adding that Mr. Cornell 'felt very stuck.'"

A year later, Target's decision does seem like an unforced error. The bathroom wars are absurd on many levels—the enforceability of North Carolina's law always seemed a bit of a head scratcher to me—but they are clearly a polarizing

issue, one in which a mainstream, family-friendly brand might be wise to just steer clear of.