



# NEWS



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## **COMPTROLLERS DINAPOLI & STRINGER CALL ON CORPORATIONS TO PROTECT LGBT RIGHTS AROUND WORLD**

### **Investors Ask Coca Cola, McDonald's and Others to Ensure Equal Rights Policies Overseas; Russian Website Must Pull Hate Crime Posts**

New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli and New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer released a [joint letter](#) today on behalf of the state and city pension funds to 20 major U.S. corporations urging them to uphold LGBT rights around the globe.

"The momentum of the LGBT civil rights movement here in the U.S. is inspiring, but LGBT men and women face a rising tide of discrimination and violence in some parts of the world," DiNapoli said. "These companies have a strong track record upholding LGBT equality domestically and we want to ensure their employees are protected from discrimination no matter where in the world they're located. As reports of hate crimes and discrimination rise, robust enforcement of the anti-discrimination policies that protect workers and safeguard our companies from reputational and financial harm is more important than ever."

"Corporations should protect the rights of their LGBT workers, no matter where they live and work," Comptroller Stringer said. "We want our portfolio companies to protect our investment for the long haul, and that means ensuring that their strong non-discrimination policies are enforced consistently across the globe. On this issue, I am confident that companies will find that taking a stand for what is right is also a way to protect the bottom line."

The joint letter was sent to companies that have strong equal opportunity employment policies and asked them to describe what steps they are taking to ensure and enforce the workplace rights of their LGBT employees in nations where LGBT rights are increasingly under attack. Anti-gay legislation in Russia and certain countries in Africa compels companies that have championed LGBT rights here in the U.S. to ensure their policies are upheld wherever they do business. DiNapoli and Stringer manage combined investments of \$13 billion in the corporations.

The Comptrollers' letter was sent to Accenture, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Coca-Cola, Corning, Dow Chemical, General Electric, GlaxoSmithKline, Goldman Sachs, IBM, Intel, Johnson & Johnson, JPMorgan Chase, Marriott, McDonald's, Morgan Stanley, Pepsico, Pfizer, Procter & Gamble, 3M and Yum! Brands.

In a separate [letter to Mail.RU](#), a Russian internet firm, DiNapoli and Stringer called on the company to respond to reports that videos and other posts depicting violence against the Russian gay community continue to appear on VKontakte (VK.com). The letter notes that one group in particular, calling itself "Occupy Pedophilia," has used VK.com to lure gay men and teens to apartments in a number of Russian cities where they are then subjected to violent assault and torture. Videos of the assaults have been posted on VK.com despite the website's written policy prohibiting such postings. Mail.RU holds a majority (52 percent) interest in VK.com.

The State and City pension funds hold a combined \$9.2 million in Mail.RU.

“VK.com’s apparent willingness to host videos of such vile acts and hate crimes against Russia’s LGBT community is drawing increased criticism,” DiNapoli said. “VK.com’s failure to block these abhorrent videos is unacceptable, and puts Mail.RU, as a controlling owner of the website, and our investment, at risk.”

“VK.com must take down these horrific videos and stand up against hate and intolerance,” Comptroller Stringer said. “It is simply unacceptable for a corporation to fail to police its own site according to its own policies. Our investment, and Mail.RU’s reputation, are at risk for reasons completely within the company’s control, which is unacceptable.”

“While we have made great progress in advancing LGBT rights in New York State and across America, this community still faces incredible hardships and discrimination all over the globe. I stand with Comptrollers Thomas DiNapoli and Scott Stringer and the NYCERS board in calling on those companies our city invests in to be good global citizens, and to enforce their non-discrimination policies evenly across the world. These companies must take the lead in ensuring that LGBT individuals are treated fairly and equitably, no matter where they live,” said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., a New York City Employees’ Retirement System Trustee.

An example of the letter sent to the 20 firms is available here:

[http://www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/june14/coca-cola\\_062714.pdf](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/june14/coca-cola_062714.pdf)

The letter sent to Mail.RU is available here:

[http://www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/june14/mail\\_ru\\_group\\_ltd\\_062714.pdf](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/press/releases/june14/mail_ru_group_ltd_062714.pdf)

### **About the New York State Common Retirement Fund**

The \$176.2 billion New York State Common Retirement Fund is the third largest public pension plan in the United States with more than one million members, retirees and beneficiaries from state and local governments. The Fund has a diversified portfolio of public and private equities, fixed income, real estate and alternative instruments.

### **About the New York City Pension Funds**

Comptroller Stringer serves as the investment advisor to, custodian and trustee of the \$150 billion New York City Pension Funds. The New York City Pension Funds are composed of the New York City Employees’ Retirement System, Teachers’ Retirement System, New York City Police Pension Fund, New York City Fire Department Pension Fund, and the Board of Education Retirement System.

In addition to Comptroller Stringer, the New York City Pension Funds’ trustees are: New York City Employees’ Retirement System: Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Representative, Carolyn Wolpert (Chair); New York City Public Advocate Letitia James; Borough Presidents: Gale Brewer (Manhattan), Melinda Katz (Queens), Eric Adams (Brooklyn), James Oddo (Staten Island), and Ruben Diaz, Jr. (Bronx); Lillian Roberts, Executive Director, District Council 37, AFSCME; John Samuelsen, President Transport Workers Union Local 100; Gregory Floyd, President, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 237.

Teachers’ Retirement System: Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Appointee, Carolyn Wolpert; Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm, New York City Department of Education; and Sandra March, Melvyn Aaronson (Chair) and Thomas Brown, all of the United Federation of Teachers. New York City Police Pension Fund: Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Representative, Carolyn Wolpert; New York City Finance Commissioner Jacques Jiha;

New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton (Chair); Patrick Lynch, Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association; Michael Palladino, Detectives Endowment Association; Edward D. Mullins, Sergeants

Benevolent Association; Louis Turco, Lieutenants Benevolent Association; and, Roy T. Richter, Captains Endowment Association.

New York City Fire Department Pension Fund: Mayor Bill de Blasio's Representative, Carolyn Wolpert; New York City Fire Commissioner Salvatore Cassano (Chair); New York City Finance Commissioner Jacques Jiha; Stephen Cassidy, President, James Slevin, Vice President, Robert Straub, Treasurer, and John Kelly, Brooklyn Representative and Chair, Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York; John Farina, Captains' Rep.; James Lemonda, Chiefs' Rep., and James J. McGowan, Lieutenants' Rep., Uniformed Fire Officers Association; and, Sean O'Connor, Marine Engineers Association.

Board of Education Retirement System: Milady Aez, Mayoral, Fred Baptiste, Brooklyn, T. Elzora Cleveland, Mayoral, Deborah Dillingham, Queens, Joseph D'Amico, Employee Member, Carmen Fariña, Mayoral-Chancellor, Norm Fruchter, Mayoral, Vanessa Leung, Mayoral, Kamillah Payne-Hanks, Staten Island, Lori Podvesker, Mayoral, Robert Powell, Bronx, Robert Reffkin, Mayoral, Milagros Rodriguez, Employee Member, Roberto Soto-Carrión, Roberto, Mayoral, Laura Zingmond, Manhattan, Miguelina Zorilla-Aristy, Miguelina, Mayoral.

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