

June 20, 2012

Tim Cook, CEO
Apple
One Infinite Loop
Cupertino, CA 95014

“...with liberty and justice for all.”

Dear Mr. Cook,

Corporations and their attorneys like to be judged as “persons” under our constitutions and laws. So it is entirely appropriate to judge the character of a U.S. chartered corporation by the measure of *corporate patriotism* – especially if it is operating worldwide. Here is a start.

Do you think it desirable to have you and your president at your annual shareholders meetings stand up on the stage and, in the name of your company (not your diverse board of directors), pledge allegiance to our flag* that is completed by the ringing phrase “with liberty and justice for all?”

About 15 years ago I wrote to the CEOs of the top 100 U.S. corporations urging them to take the occasion of the annual shareholders meeting to pledge, in the name of their U.S. chartered corporate entity, allegiance to the flag. The responses were instructive. Many said they would review the request, some turned it down, while others were ambiguous, misconstruing the request as requesting the Board of Directors instead of the U.S. chartered corporate entity. Federated Department Stores expressly thought it was a good suggestion. Wal-Mart replied that they would “give it every consideration.” Citicorp (now Citigroup) wrote that it is “not our practice to respond.”

In the years since, Americans have wondered about where U.S. companies, who grew to success with American workers and were given bailouts and subsidies from American taxpayers, stood on this cardinal issue of corporate patriotism. Too many American jobs and industries have been sent abroad to dictatorial regimes and oligarchic societies to dispel the impression of abandoning America for greater profits and greater license in these “serf-labor,” anti-independent trade union, nations.

Having due regard to millions of loyal, hard-working American workers, who have lost a great deal, if not everything, in this global economy is long overdue. Their sense of betrayal is palpable. It would be an expression of respect to assert an allegiance to the country of your company’s birth and the laborers who made your company into an economic power.

Please respond to the bracketed question above, as soon as possible, at any of the contact points below. We are going to release all of the responses and non-responses on the Fourth of July.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph Nader

Enclosed: Chicago Tribune Op-Ed (July 20, 2011)
Wall Street Journal Article (June 17, 2012)

* The phrasing is obvious: “The General Motors (or Exxon or Citigroup or DuPont etc.) corporation pledges allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”