



Statement from the Ben & Jerry's Foundation Board of Trustees – 12.15.2025

Recent public claims regarding alleged “governance deficiencies” at the Ben & Jerry’s Foundation are misleading, unfounded, and deliberately distract from the real issue at hand: a multi-billion-dollar corporation’s attempt to strip an independent foundation of its legally protected independence.

Despite repeated assertions to the contrary, this dispute is not about an audit. The Foundation has never been provided with the scope of the forensic audit, nor has it received the final audit report. Instead, we have been forced to learn through media accounts that the so-called findings reportedly include the absence of a conflict-of-interest policy and a disclosure form, both of which have since been implemented and are publicly available on the Foundation’s website.

Critically, the Foundation undergoes an independent third-party financial audit every year. Those audits have *never* identified any issues with financial controls, misuse of funds, or fiscal mismanagement. The suggestion that the Foundation suffers from governance failures serious enough to justify corporate intervention is simply false.

What *is* happening is a coordinated effort by Magnum to manufacture a narrative of dysfunction to justify unprecedented demands for control over an independent board and mission-driven institution. This includes withholding required funding and seeking authority over board appointments, steps that have nothing to do with good governance and everything to do with dominance and control.

The Ben & Jerry’s Foundation was intentionally structured to operate independently, free from corporate influence, so that it could remain accountable to the communities it serves not to corporate executives or shareholders. That independence is not optional, and it is not subject to revision when it becomes inconvenient for a multi-billion corporation.

At stake is a fundamental question: whether a multinational corporation can override a legally protected, community-rooted philanthropic model under the guise of “governance enhancements.” The Foundation Board will continue to defend its independence, integrity, and mission against these efforts. The communities we support deserve nothing less.

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