



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 1, 2019

Sanders Says Disney Should Use Profits to Pay Workers “Middle Class Wage”

2020 Democratic presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) sent out a tweet on April 29 in response to a Bloomberg News report the same day noting that Walt Disney Co. shares hit record levels after the company’s *Avengers: Endgame* film shattered box-office records. The tweet, which included a link to the Bloomberg report, said: “What would be truly heroic is if Disney used its profits from *Avengers* to pay all of its workers a middle class wage, instead of paying its CEO Bob Iger \$65.6 million — over 1,400 times as much as the average worker at Disney makes.”



Media reports in *The Hill* and the *Washington Post* did not say if Sanders’ comments were influenced by recent statements made by Abigail Disney, granddaughter of Disney co-founder Roy Disney, who was quoted in an April 19 report by *Fast Company*. The Disney heir cited the same compensation figures for Iger mentioned by Sanders, calling that level of pay “insane” and asserting that executive pay at that level has “had a corrosive effect on society.”

Disney made her statements at the first annual Fast Company Impact Council on April 18. She also wrote an op-ed on the subject that was published by the *Post* on April 24, saying, “There’s a point at which there’s just too much going around the top of the system into this class of people who — I’m sorry this is radical — have too much money.”

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The *Post*, which described Sanders as “the democratic socialist from Vermont,” said that Disney didn’t immediately return the newspaper’s request for comment on Sanders’ statement. However, when Abigail’s op-ed was published by the *Post* on April 24, a spokesperson for Disney sent *Vanity Fair* the following statement:

Let’s look at the facts: Disney has made historic investments to expand the earning potential and upward mobility of our workers, implementing a starting hourly wage of \$15 at Disneyland that’s double the federal minimum wage, and committing up to \$150 million for a groundbreaking education initiative that gives our hourly employees the opportunity to obtain a college or vocational degree completely free of charge. Mr. Iger’s compensation is 90 percent performance-based and he has delivered exceptional value for shareholders: Disney’s market capitalization has grown exponentially over the last decade, rising \$75 billion in the last month alone, and the stock price has increased to \$132 a share from \$24 a share when Mr. Iger became C.E.O. in 2005 — all of which directly benefits literally thousands of employees who hold our stock.”

As [The New American](#) observed last March: “Let the free market continue to determine what [corporate CEOs] should be paid, and ignore complaints about fairness from the likes of Bernie [Sanders] and



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[Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez] who know nothing of the matter.” Prior to being elected to public office, both Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez faired poorly earning an income in the free market.

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