

When Trademark Goes Off Trail: Patagonia vs. Pattie Gonia

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Popular drag queen and environmental activist Pattie Gonia is being sued for trademark infringement, and the internet is not quiet about it. Wyn Wiley took on the alter ego Pattie Gonia in late 2018 after posting a viral photo of herself hiking an outdoor trail in six-inch high heels. From that point forward, Pattie Gonia gained widespread recognition as a drag queen who bridged environmental activism and LGBTQ+ advocacy, inspiring a passionate group of supporters.

Since her rise to fame, Gonia has used similar marks to those trademarked by the beloved outdoor gear brand, Patagonia. For instance, Gonia has dropped merch with “Pattie Gonia Hiking” and Pattie Gonia stickers using a similar mountain background, coloring, and font to that found on the famous Patagonia logo.

In 2022, Patagonia struck a deal with Gonia after she advertised a fundraising campaign with Hydroflask, where the parties agreed Gonia would not sell products using Patagonia’s logo or the name “Pattie Gonia”. However, Patagonia did not object to Gonia’s use of the mark in climate related activism or other efforts not related to product merchandise.

But in late 2024 she launched her website pattiegoniamerch.com and began selling merchandise with the mark “Pattie Gonia”. Patagonia asked Gonia to abide by the 2022 agreement and cease any continuous sales of Pattie Gonia related apparel. However, in late 2025, Entrepreneur Enterprises (the company acting on behalf of Wyn Wiley) filed a trademark application with the USPTO for the mark “Pattie Gonia”. The application for the wordmark is intended for goods and services such as musical recordings, stickers, clothing, online advertising, and entertainment services.

In early 2026, Patagonia filed a lawsuit against Gonia, alleging trademark infringement, dilution, and unfair competition seeking to recover nominal damages in the amount of \$1.

In late May, Gonia took to social media to break her silence about the trademark lawsuit. In a video, Gonia states, “this is not a brand conflict, this is a corporation trying to erase an activist.” She claims that although Patagonia only seeks \$1 in damages, the complaint also seeks to recover costs and reasonable attorney fees, which she claims will surpass \$1,000,000.

Gonia’s supporters quickly took to Patagonia’s social media accounts demanding that the lawsuit be dropped. However, Patagonia has stood its ground, stating in a recent social media post, “We wish this lawsuit had not been necessary, and we want to acknowledge any hurt it has caused, especially in the LGBTQ+ community.” In the post, Patagonia outlined specific terms that would allow Patagonia to drop the suit. Namely, the company requests that Gonia withdraw all trademark applications, stop using Patagonia logos, and stop selling and promoting apparel and other products as Pattie Gonia. Still, Gonia supporters are in an uproar. One Gonia supporter commented in response to Patagonia’s social media post stating, “Apparel branded Pattie Gonia has no impact on your brand—doesn’t make sense to ask for that. Do better, please!” That comment received over 18,000 likes.

The major question presented in this dispute is whether consumers are likely to associate Pattie Gonia’s merchandise with Patagonia’s merchandise. A plaintiff, like Patagonia, must demonstrate sufficient similarity between their mark and the alleged infringing mark, but need not demonstrate actual confusion among consumers to prevail on an infringement claim. In evaluating Patagonia’s infringement claim, the court will consider many factors, including the similarity between the Patagonia mark and the Pattie Gonia mark as well as Gonia’s intent in selecting the mark.

Gonia has stated on her social media that her title was not inspired by the Patagonia brand, but rather she based her name on the South American region of Patagonia. While this may be favorable to Gonia in the likelihood of confusion analysis, it deprives her of a parody defense as she is not claiming any association with Patagonia’s longstanding brand.

This legal battle may reveal where trademark rights end and expressive activism begins. While the internet remains outraged, the line between consumer protection and protections surrounding self-expression and advocacy will be drawn in court.