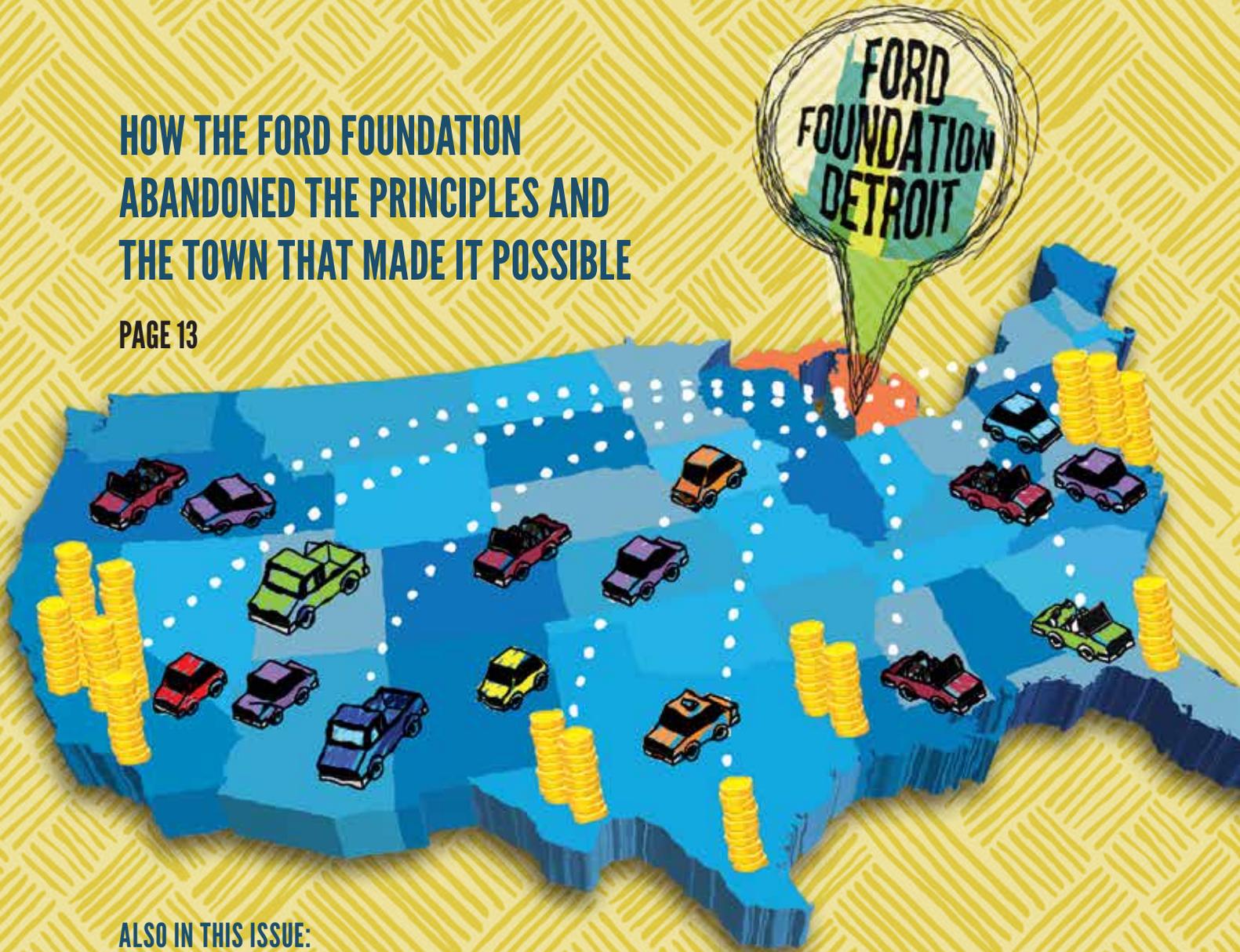




## HOW THE FORD FOUNDATION ABANDONED THE PRINCIPLES AND THE TOWN THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE

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for the YouTube  
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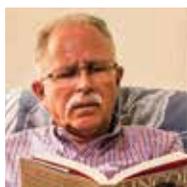
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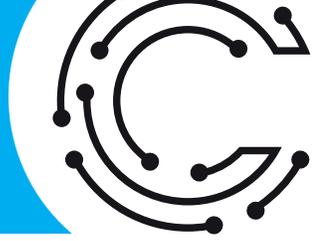
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## THE DARK MONEY THAT FUNDED 'DARK MONEY'

*Liberal groups sponsor a documentary faulting conservative groups that sponsor political advocacy.*

By Scott Walter

Left-wing interests are raving about the documentary “Dark Money.” Airing this month on PBS, “Dark Money” purports to expose the effects of right-wing political spending in the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. The *Los Angeles Times* calls the film a “political thriller.” NPR lauds it for revealing the “assault on the American electoral and judicial process by corporations whose agenda is nothing less than the dismantling of government itself.”

There’s one problem: This attack on conservative-funded political advocacy is itself liberal-funded political advocacy. The proof? The end credits listing the film’s funders.

Top billing goes to the Ford Foundation, the third-largest private political-advocacy philanthropy in the U.S. Its sheer size—\$12.4 billion in assets—isn’t unique on the left. Even before hedge-fund billionaire George Soros injected \$18 billion into his Open Society Foundations, eight of America’s ten largest private foundations (ranked by giving as of 2013) were aligned with the political left.



*The Los Angeles Times calls “Dark Money” a “political thriller.”*

Nominally nonpartisan but actually liberal, foundations and nonprofits spend three or four times as much as their conservative peers on “education” and advocacy, as the Capital Research Center documents in its article, “Political and Policy-Oriented Giving in the Post-Citizens United World.”



Credit: Cindy Shebley. License: <https://goo.gl/hghYKQ>.

*Airing this month on PBS, “Dark Money” purports to expose the effects of right-wing political spending in the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*.*

How partisan are these “nonpartisan” groups? Consider “Dark Money’s” notable funder No. 2, the CrossCurrents Foundation. It’s led by Ken Grossinger, who has been a political strategist for the two most important labor unions in the U.S., the Service Employees International Union and the AFL-CIO, for which he ran legislative operations.

Mr. Grossinger is now a principal in Democracy Partners, a major Democratic political consultancy, where he works “to advance policy and program priorities,” as per his biography at the Alliance for Justice website. He also chairs the board of the alliance, a liberal judicial-policy group that vigorously opposed Brett Kavanaugh’s confirmation to the Supreme Court.

*Scott Walter is president of Capital Research Center.*



Credit: Matt. License: <https://goo.gl/B4pAU4>.

Robert Redford's Sundance Institute, another funder of "Dark Money," does more than hold its eponymous film festival. Numerous liberal donors funnel money into Sundance to support advocacy filmmaking and other media projects.

tions. Robert Redford's Sundance Institute, another funder of "Dark Money," does more than hold its eponymous film festival. Numerous liberal donors funnel money into Sundance to support advocacy filmmaking and other media projects. The layer of separation obscures their political agenda.

The American public often hears stories, including in this film festival, about nefarious right-wing oligarchs using complex financial products and tax-exempt organizations to get their way. But nonobvious money trails are popular on both ends of the spectrum.

The message of "Dark Money" and similar projects is that conservatives' post-*Citizens United* advantage in electoral spending by independent groups is corrupt. Liberals' far larger advantages in foundation funding, on the other hand, are never mentioned. That's kept in the dark. ■

[This article originally appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on October 16, 2018]

Left-of-center foundations are not immune to routing their contributions to advocacy projects through other organiza-

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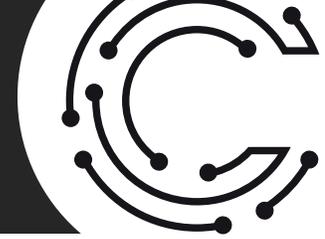
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# DECEPTION & MISDIRECTION



## THE YOUNG TURKS: POLITICAL SPIN FOR MILLENNIALS

By Steve Warner

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**Summary:** *Left-leaning pundits and news anchors love to talk about #FakeNews poisoning civil discourse and swaying voters in elections. What they frequently ignore though, is commentary and reporting from their own side that unapologetically distorts facts, hypocritically criticizes people and organizations, and cravenly caves to the status quo after professing to be honest, transparent, and independent. The Young Turks is one of the biggest such progressive media outlets that escapes attention. It boasts an impressive number of viewers, but its approach to covering current events represents the worst of political commentary.*

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The Young Turks (TYT) may be the most popular progressive programming of which you have never heard. TYT is a network of news, commentary, sports, and popular culture shows targeting left-leaning American millennials on YouTube and a variety of other digital platforms. More than 75 percent of TYT's viewers are under 35 years old<sup>1</sup> and roughly 80 percent are male.<sup>2</sup> If you are not a "Bernie Bro," Social Democrat, or do not otherwise fit their young progressive demographics, you can be excused for your lack of familiarity with TYT.



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*One need only watch a few episodes of virtually any program from The Young Turks to witness political spin, half-truths, and even outright lies.*

Millions of others, however, tune in routinely. In an effort to reach younger viewers who are not watching news on television, TYT co-founder and CEO Cenk Uygur says the network focuses on YouTube because that is where it reaches the largest audience. "It's the new television," Uygur told Digiday in 2014.<sup>3</sup> As of July 18, 2018, TYT had 3.9 million YouTube subscribers and 4.2 billion YouTube views since December 21, 2005.<sup>4</sup> To provide some perspective, CNN had 4.1 million YouTube subscribers and 3.2 billion YouTube views since October 2, 2005.<sup>5</sup>



*The Young Turks (TYT) may be the most popular progressive programming of which you have never heard. If you are not a "Bernie Bro," Social Democrat, or do not otherwise fit their young progressive demographics, you can be excused for your lack of familiarity with TYT.*

Credit: The Young Turks. License: <https://goo.gl/C9yuoJ>

Uygur, his co-founders, and his various co-hosts over the years have consistently held that TYT is the anti-establishment alternative to big media and the progressive alternative to left-of-center networks like MSNBC and CNN. They insist that while TYT has a "point of view," it is fiercely independent of corporate influence and machine politics and always pursues the truth wherever that may lead. "What we add to the debate is honesty," said Uygur in a 2010 interview. "Right now, most of the major media is structured around the all-important concept of access. The political channels need access to the politicians, so they suck up to them . . . This creates a powerful incentive to be fake and not deliver the actual news . . . And this creates an enormous competitive advantage for us . . . To put it more bluntly, people are tired of the bullshit and we don't bullshit them."<sup>6</sup> Except they do. TYT's promises of honesty, transparency, independence, and even progressivism are violated by Uygur and company on a regular basis.

### Honesty

One need only watch a few episodes of virtually any TYT program to witness political spin, half-truths, and even outright lies. In the interest of brevity here are three recent examples:

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*Steve Warner is a freelance writer living in south Florida.*

*August 11, 2018*—On an episode of TYT’s flagship YouTube show, Uygur and panelist John Iadarola parroted a Democratic talking point that deliberately misreads a report published by the Mercatus Center, a free-market oriented economics think tank affiliated with George Mason University. The commentators misrepresent the report’s analysis of the fiscal impact of “Medicare-for-all,” a universal health care bill championed by Democratic Socialist Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont). The two claimed the report proves that Sanders’ scheme will save American’s \$2 trillion over ten years.<sup>7</sup> The report’s author Charles Blahous, however, had said a week earlier that this assertion, first made by Sanders and then repeated by several Democrats running for office in 2018, deceitfully cherry-picks one scenario in the report: for the sake of research Blahous had accepted Sanders’ assumptions regarding reimbursement rates, administrative costs, and drug prices. Blahous had already explained that Sanders’ assumptions are not realistic and the price tag of universal health care would most likely be much higher. “It’s clear that Blahous bent over backward to accept Sanders’ assumptions, only to find they did not add up,” wrote Glenn Kessler on August 7 for The Fact Checker at the *Washington Post*. Kessler concluded by giving the \$2 trillion claim “Three Pinocchios.”<sup>8</sup>

*August 10, 2018*—Also on the main TYT YouTube show just a day earlier, Uygur repeated another falsehood recently embraced by left-wing pundits and candidates, but that had long ago been debunked. Suggesting a precedent for conservative support of giving illegal aliens U.S. citizenship, Uygur asserted that President Ronald Reagan “did amnesty . . . not pathway to citizenship, actual amnesty.” Uygur misled his viewers this time too. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, to which Uygur had referred, was compromise legislation that Reagan supported because it provided a means to end rampant illegal immigration. In exchange for a *pathway* to citizenship for certain illegal aliens, the compromise called for significantly tougher security of U.S. borders and enforcement of immigration laws. As opposed to the blanket amnesty that Uygur suggested, the legislation was very specific about who it applied to and how they could earn citizenship. Only illegal immigrants who could prove they had lived continuously in the U.S. for five years would be eligible. Initially, they would be granted temporary resident status, and after 18

months, they could be upgraded to permanent residency, and after another five years, to citizenship. The immigrants who met these criteria also had to pay application fees, learn to speak English, demonstrate an understanding of American civics, pass a medical exam, and register for military selective service.<sup>9</sup>

So, Uygur completely misrepresented Reagan’s intentions, but he also ignored what happened after passage of the immigration legislation: the enforcement provisions were ignored by future politicians, including both Republican and Democratic presidents, and illegal immigration continued to soar. Had he known this would be the legacy of his compromise, Reagan would never have supported the reform. As far back as 2006, Ed Meese, who served as Reagan’s Attorney General, put the lie to Reagan’s “amnesty.” In response to new calls for giving citizenship to illegals Meese penned “What would President Reagan do?” for Human Events. “For one thing,” wrote Meese, “he would not repeat the mistakes of the past, including those of his own administration.” Continued Meese, “He knew that secure borders are vital, and would now insist on meeting that priority first.”<sup>10</sup>

*July 10, 2018*—In front of a large back-drop proclaiming, “Make America Hate Again,” Uygur and co-host Anna Kasparian discussed the vicious July 4 attack on a 91-year-old Mexican man visiting family in Los Angeles. Rodolfo Rodriguez had been pushed to the ground and severely beaten with a piece of concrete by a woman who screamed at him, “Go back to Mexico.” Rodriguez suffered a broken cheekbone, two broken ribs, and multiple cuts and bruises to his face. “Who does this?” asked Uygur. “I’ll tell you who does this,” answered the angry host himself, “insane racist right-wingers encouraged by the current administration.” He then suggested the attacker was a white Trump supporter and concluded with, “They walk among us. They hate people that don’t look like them . . . fascism is here.”<sup>11</sup>

The problem with Uygur’s commentary is that for days the press had been reporting that the attacker was Laquisha Jones, a 30-year-old black Los Angeles woman who had been arrested multiple times for prostitution, vandalism, and criminal threats. Not exactly Trump’s demographic. Amazingly, just the day before Uygur said to Kasparian on the Aggressive Progressives show, “facts are facts whether



Credit: Public.Resource.Org. License: <https://goo.gl/BFXEi8>.

*Further calling into question TYT’s embrace of honesty is the network’s 2018 hiring of disgraced left-wing newsman Dan Rather.*

they’re inconvenient or they’re not inconvenient. We should never make the same mistake as the right wing: ‘I don’t like those facts, so I’m just going to ignore them and call them fake news.’”<sup>12</sup>

Further calling into question TYT’s embrace of honesty is the network’s 2018 hiring of disgraced left-wing newsman Dan Rather. In 2004, Rather lost his job as anchor and managing editor of the CBS Evening News after he relied on fabricated and forged documents in a presidential election year story alleging incumbent President George W. Bush had shirked his duties while serving in the Texas Air National Guard in the early 1970s. Outrageously, in April 2018, TYT posted a “video guide to protecting yourself against fake news” hosted by Rather. “If you’re really interested in identifying fake news . . .” begins Rather, “If you’re truly invested in the work of being a good informed citizen, may I respectfully offer a brief primer.”<sup>13</sup> Announcing his hiring of Rather, Uygur raved, “Dan’s point of view is not only smart and informed and incredibly experienced, but also authentic.”<sup>14</sup>

## Transparency

TYT’s disdain for the truth is not always as blatant as the lies above. Sometimes it is what Uygur et alia do not say or acknowledge that reveals their true nature. Nowhere is this more evident than in TYT’s handling of opposition to the organization’s name. The term “Young Turks” has been used in the U.S. for many years to describe idealistic youth impatient to bring about radical change, and that is the meaning

that TYT claims to embrace. The original Young Turks, however, were members of a nationalist party that rose to power in the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century, led the government during World War I, and were responsible for the deaths of more than one million of the empire’s minority Armenians. Turkey has consistently held that the deaths were the unfortunate consequence of war, but historians have long considered the killings genocide, and in 2005, the International Association of Genocide Scholars wrote that the Young Turks had engaged in “a systematic genocide of its Armenian citizens—an unarmed Christian minority population . . . through direct killing, starvation, torture, and forced death marches.”<sup>15</sup>

Uygur is of Turkish ancestry and was on record in 1991<sup>16</sup> and in 1999,<sup>17</sup> shortly before founding TYT, defending the Ottoman Empire against the charge of genocide. Undoubtedly, Uygur was familiar with the Young Turks of history. We can only take him at his word that they were not the inspiration for his network’s name. It is quite possible that a 32-year-old progressive in 2002 wanted nothing more than a name suggesting youthful rebellion. Uygur can even be given the benefit of the doubt, that after years of controversy, it was nothing more than coincidence that the co-host he hired, Ana Kasparian, is a proud Armenian-American.

In the interest of transparency, however, the TYT founder should answer for his continual equivocations regarding his position on the Armenian genocide. Frequently articulate and always opinionated on air, Uygur is almost unintelligible on the rare occasions he discusses the subject. He pretended to provide clarity in a 2016 TYT blog post in which he rescinded his past statements on the issue, but stopped short of admitting genocide occurred. He concluded with a curious promise: “I am going to refrain from commenting on the topic of the Armenian genocide.”<sup>18</sup>



*Uygur is of Turkish ancestry and was on record defending the Ottoman Empire against the charge of Armenian genocide.*

Likewise, Uygur’s colleagues should be called out for silencing those who find fault with the organization’s name. During a question and answer portion of a 2016 TYT symposium, for instance, an audience member tried to ask the panelists about the appropriateness of the name. Before the young man could finish his question, TYT’s John Iadarola interrupted him and called for a break. When the sympo-

sium reconvened, the questioner was gone and the panelists moved on to another topic.<sup>19</sup>

Most damning is TYT's double-standard. For many years, network talent have criticized the continued use of the name Redskins by the Washington NFL franchise, and in 2013 Uygur stated unequivocally that the name has "got to go."<sup>20</sup> This is not an unreasonable demand, especially for a progressive news organization, despite a poll by the *Washington Post* finding 90 percent of Native Americans are not offended by the name.<sup>21</sup> No one has polled Armenian Americans, but it might behoove Uygur to consider what percentage might find "The Young Turks" offensive.

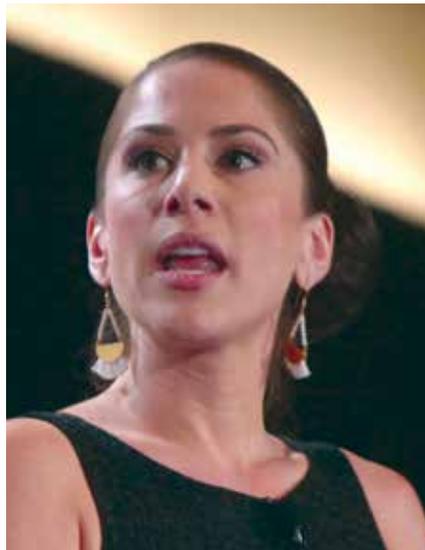
## Independent

The common refrain at TYT is that its journalists are fiercely independent and anti-establishment. Ana Kasparian described the Young Turks as "rebels" who are "very different from what you see in traditional media."<sup>22</sup> These claims are true to a point. Most of TYT's commentary is certainly progressive and frequently even socialist. Additionally, Uygur and team have consistently backed leftist political candidates running against establishment Democrats. TYT was an early supporter of Senator Barack Obama over Senator Hillary Clinton for the Democrat's 2008 presidential nomination and of socialist Senator Bernie Sanders over Clinton in 2016. Recently, TYT supported the candidacy of Democratic Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez over "the congressman from Wall Street" Joe Crowley in the 2018 primary for the 14th Congressional District in New York City.

TYT has also been consistently tough in pointing out the hypocrisy of the Democratic Party, revealing its connections to and donations from large banks, oil companies, "big pharma," and defense contractors, as well as its continual support for the U.S. wars in the Middle East. Throughout the 2016 election, TYT also reported on the corruption within the DNC, especially its sordid efforts to keep Sanders from becoming the Democratic candidate for president.<sup>23</sup> Acerbic comedian and Aggressive Progressives co-host Jimmy Dore summed up TYT's apparent mindset in 2008:

American elections are designed to suppress the vote . . . We live in an oligarchy. Your democracy has already been stolen from you . . . There needs to be a revolution in America. All of our institutions are completely corrupt, especially the news media . . . Both parties are co-opted by the same people and we need a party for the American people.<sup>24</sup>

And then TYT did a one-eighty. When it became clear that Hillary Clinton would win her party's nomination, TYT shed its independence and took the very conventional establishment approach of throwing its full support behind the Democrat it had long attacked. Kasparian lamented that she would have to "choose the lesser of two evils" and Uygur was emphatic in his opposition to a third-party run by Sanders.<sup>25</sup> So, after reporting extensively on the corruption within Clinton's Democratic machine and advocating for Sanders' political philosophy and positions, TYT dropped its insistence on speaking truth to power. Before the Democratic Convention had even been gavelled to a close, Uygur went on air delivering a glowing report on how "hope was the defining trait" of the DNC.<sup>26</sup>



Credit: Gage Skidmore. License: <https://goo.gl/HW356t>.

*The most egregious anti-progressive performance at TYT, however, was Anna Kasparian's on-air rant against conservative women after the 2016 presidential election. "I have no respect for women who voted for Trump," she stated flatly.*

This reversal could not have been much more of a surprise to TYT's audience—especially the die-hard Sanders supporters. In June 2018, TYT conducted a YouTube poll of its viewers regarding their intentions on election day. Uygur posted on Twitter that he was "shocked" that 83 percent said they would never vote for Hillary Clinton.<sup>27</sup> Over 500 Twitter users posted responses, most of them questioning Uygur's progressivism and concluding with the hashtag "#NeverHillary." One aggrieved progressive would later write that Uygur "sold out and still lost" and that the TYT model is, "Report, investigate, foment righteous indignation, and then promptly do nothing but fall in line."<sup>28</sup>

TYT's sources of funding also call into question its claim of independence. In 2014, the network received \$4 million from Roemer, Robinson, Melville & Co., a private equity firm led by former Republican Governor of Louisiana Buddy Roemer.<sup>29</sup> Then, in 2017, TYT

raised \$20 million in venture capital from WndrCo, owned by Jeffrey Katzenberg, a prominent supporter of Democrats and a multi-million-dollar super PAC financier,<sup>30</sup> and from Greycroft, a firm led by billionaire Alan Patricof, a DNC



*After reporting on the corruption within Clinton's Democratic machine and advocating for Bernie Sanders, TYT dropped its insistence on speaking truth to power and threw its support behind Hillary Clinton.*

donor, chairman of Entrepreneurs for Clinton in support of Bill Clinton's presidential run in 1992,<sup>31</sup> and a national finance chairman of Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign.<sup>32</sup>

Suggesting a further embrace of the establishment, in January 2018, TYT hired 30-year media veteran Deanna Brown as the network's first president. Very much a mainstream media figure, Brown had formerly served as CEO of Federated Media, president of Scripps Networks Interactive, Vice President and General Manager at Yahoo, and Vice President of programming at AOL.<sup>33</sup>

## Progressive

TYT's audience is roughly 80 percent men between the ages of 18 and 34.<sup>34</sup> In their attempts to appeal to these millennials, TYT's talent, which from the network's early days has been largely white and male, is frequently sophomoric and decidedly non-progressive. Sexual innuendo and banter, in particular, have gotten Uygur and his comrades in trouble with the Left. In December 2017, Uygur and his TYT co-founder David Koller were kicked out of Justice Democrats, an organization they helped launch earlier that year, after *The Wrap* publicized "disturbingly sexist and racist" blog posts the two had written in the early 2000s on a pre-TYT website simply called Young Turk.<sup>35</sup> "The words and conduct in Mr. Uygur's and Mr. Koller's posts degrade what it means to be a Justice Democrat," executive director Saikat Chakrabarti said. "We do not feel that Mr. Uygur is fit to lead or participate in an organization that truly believes women's issues and the issues of black and brown people are all of our issues."<sup>36</sup>

Uygur offered a qualified public apology. "The stuff I wrote back then was really insensitive and ignorant," he confessed to *The Wrap*. "And I deeply regret having written that stuff when I was a different guy." The TYT CEO then explained that he was "still a conservative" at the time. A deeper dive into Uygur's Young Turk posts, however, suggests otherwise. While it is true that in his early posts Uygur referred to him-

self as a Republican, much of his writing would not qualify as strictly conservative, especially his defense of homosexuality and abortion<sup>37</sup> and his paean to President Bill Clinton's attorney general, "The Goddess Reno."<sup>38</sup>

While Justice Democrats focused exclusively on writings from the early 2000s, Uygur and team have provided plenty of other opportunities for progressive concern since. TYT, for instance, has run many "Top 10" segments, in which Uygur either presents his own list of "Hottest Women" or comments on the lists of others, including Maxim's Top Ten Hottest Women, AskMen's Top 10 List, Houston Press's Hottest Female Sex Offenders, and E! Top 10 Sexiest Women. Uygur's praise for various models and celebrities on his own lists has included the mundane "smoking hot," the goofy "her upstairs is quite luxurious," and the downright demeaning "tits on a stick." His criticisms of women who did not make his lists have included fat-shaming comments such as: "she has an issue with the thighs" and "she has blown up."<sup>39</sup>

In 2016, Uygur led a three-man panel on "how to pick up chicks," in which Uygur described his conquest of a 19-year-old beauty pageant winner when he was 28, and his colleague Hasan Piker bragged about being a "total misogynist." In another video, "Bro Tips," Piker coached young men on how to get women in bars to have sex with them. After some initial repartee with your target, advised Piker, "It's time to separate her from her herd, meaning her crowd of girlfriends that are going to do their best to c\*\*kblock you because they're fat and lonely"<sup>40</sup> In a segment devoted to



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*Cenk Uygur, his co-founders, and his various co-hosts have consistently held that TYT is the anti-establishment alternative to big media and the progressive alternative to left-of-center networks like MSNBC and CNN.*

“checking out women,” Uygur cackled as Wesley Clark, Jr. boasted, “I’m not wealthy at all, and I never had a problem scoring p\*\*\*y in my life.”<sup>41</sup> Further tarnishing TYT’s progressive image is an unsettled 2017 racial discrimination complaint against the network and a 2017 sexual assault allegation against one of the network’s reporters.

The most egregious anti-progressive performance at TYT, however, was Anna Kasparian’s on-air rant against conservative women after the 2016 presidential election. “I have no respect for women who voted for Trump,” she stated flatly. “I don’t think you’re a single-issue voter,” she continued, “I just think you’re dumb . . . I think you’re f\*\*king dumb . . . you’re an idiot.” Concluding, Kasparian told 41 percent of women voters, upwards of 30 million of her fellow American women, that they had voted “against your best interests.”<sup>42</sup>

## Wolf-PAC

Uygur and team have further eschewed both progressivism and transparency in their bid to “get money out of politics.” In 2010, Uygur founded Wolf-PAC, an independent expenditure-only political action committee. Wolf-PAC is partly funded by TYT, and Uygur frequently solicits donations on his TYT shows. David Koller currently serves as treasurer of the organization and the address listed for Wolf-PAC is the same address as TYT’s. Wolf-PAC’s mission is to mount pressure on state legislatures to vote for a constitutional convention for the purpose of proposing a 28th Amendment limiting campaign donations to \$100 and establishing public financing for all elections.<sup>43</sup> This type of committee is also known as a Super PAC, the very type of organization that Uygur and other leftists despise because, under current law, these PACs may receive unlimited contributions from individuals and corporations.

CC \_\_\_\_\_  
*Cenk Uygur and his team have further eschewed both progressivism and transparency in their bid to “get money out of politics.”*

Critics have pointed out that Uygur could have simply established a regular political organization or non-profit to achieve his goal. He did not need to create a Super PAC. Uygur has responded that if candidates can use PAC money

“to fight for their issues or, I would argue, to buy off politicians, we can use money on the one issue we care about, which is getting money out of politics.”<sup>44</sup>

Also raising eyebrows, is Wolf-PAC’s inordinate spending on salaries, travel, and operating expenses, while contributing very little by contrast to political campaigns. According to filings with the Federal Elections Commission, during the 2016 and 2018 election cycles Wolf-PAC devoted nearly 80 percent of its disbursements to salaries and administrative costs. Quipped Jonah Bennett in the Daily Caller, “Cenk Uygur is so intent on keeping money out of politics his own PAC spends virtually all its donor money on personnel and operating expenses.”<sup>45</sup>

## The Younger Young Turk

As a college student at the University of Pennsylvania in the early 1990s, Uygur was apparently still a genuine conservative. In *The Daily Pennsylvanian* he wrote a persuasive criticism of his school’s affirmative action policies concluding with, “What if we just accepted the best students independent of their ethnicity?”<sup>46</sup> Uygur also penned an apology for the pro-life position, which included a touching personal story about his grandmother and the difficult choice she made to give birth to Uygur’s father. Uygur’s essay included the following assessment of pro-life motivation:

People who argue to stop abortions do not really have a secret agenda to take away the rights of women. They truly believe that the life process starts at conception rather than a vague and continually changing definition of viability outside the womb that the court has arbitrarily set. They truly believe the fetus is alive, and that removing it would be the equivalent of killing a living person. That is a heart-felt view on what they see as a life-and-death situation. It is not something to be derided as an attempt to subjugate women.<sup>47</sup>

It is curious that the same man now runs a network that is unapologetically pro-abortion and whose colleague accuses pro-lifers of being motivated by a desire to “punish women.”<sup>48</sup> Equally strange is Uygur’s utter disdain for those with whom he disagrees: “Donald Trump and the entirety of the Republican Party don’t like brown people . . . they’re racists who want to protect a white nationalist state.”<sup>49</sup>

Not exactly the honesty that Uygur promised to bring to the debate. ■

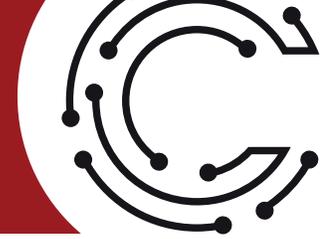
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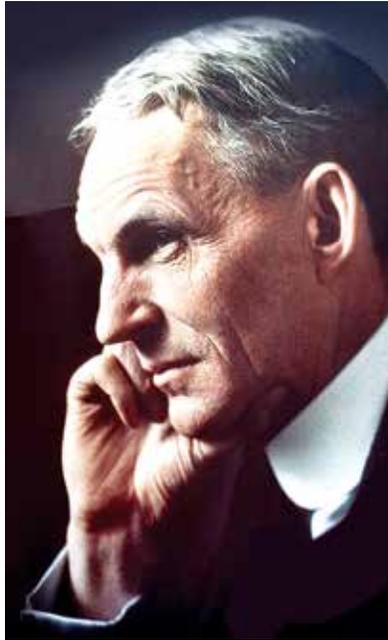
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## HOW THE FORD FOUNDATION ABANDONED THE PRINCIPLES AND THE TOWN THAT MADE IT POSSIBLE

By Ken Braun

**Summary:** *The second largest philanthropic foundation in America emerged in the Motor City. The Ford Foundation was the legacy of one of America's most famous entrepreneurs—Henry Ford. After giving rise to a booming industry, Ford decided to make provisions for his home city by establishing a charitable foundation and building a hospital. But future generations of trustees ignored his vision for the foundation he endowed. The city that was once the crown jewel of American Industry declared bankruptcy and is rusting away as the Ford Foundation spreads its wealth among progressives whose pet projects only promise to exacerbate the problems plaguing Detroit and Michigan.*



Credit: Ford Motor Company. License: <https://i.imgur.com/gAKJzc>

The Ford Foundation, born in 1936 from the fortune made in Detroit by one of the true geniuses of free enterprise, Henry Ford, is today America's second largest philanthropic foundation, with assets of \$12.4 billion. Over most of the last 82 years, the trustees snubbed both the city (Detroit) and the principles (free enterprise) that made their charitable work possible.

*The Ford Foundation, born in 1936 from the fortune made in Detroit by one of the true geniuses of free enterprise, Henry Ford, is today, America's second largest philanthropic foundation.*



*“The foundation exists and thrives on the fruits of our economic system . . . The dividends of competitive enterprise make it all possible.”—Henry Ford II*

In 2006, the trustees began to make amends for neglecting Detroit for decades, but there has been no letup in the Ford Foundation's financing of advocacy against entrepreneurial

capitalism. An analysis of its 2015 grants shows at least \$50 million went to left-wing political and economic policy organizations.

The bias against free enterprise is so pronounced that Ford Foundation donations to public policy causes are often indistinguishable from those of left-wing billionaire George Soros's Open Society Foundations. The two organizations have even traded employees; some grant makers and program officers have worked for both organizations.

Despite their best intentions, the Ford family is at fault for allowing this to happen. In the 1950s, Ford Motor Company CEO Henry Ford II, grandson of the founder, voluntarily signed away a majority of the Ford Foundation board seats to non-family members. He would go to his grave regretting what he had done. By 1977, the foundation had abandoned Detroit and free enterprise, and Henry II—the last of the family to sit on the then-14-member board—resigned his seat as well.

On December 11, 1976, he sent a surprise resignation letter to his fellow board members. A subsequent *New York Times* front page headline from January 1977 read: “Henry Ford 2d Quits Foundation, Urges Appreciation for Capitalism.”

“The foundation exists and thrives on the fruits of our economic system,” wrote Ford in the letter. “The dividends of competitive enterprise make it all possible.”

*Ken Braun has been a policy researcher and writer for several free market think tanks, and a political columnist for one of Michigan's largest-circulation newspaper chains. He grew up in metro-Detroit, graduated from Michigan State University and is a lifelong Michigan resident.*

He continued:

“In effect, the foundation is a creature of capitalism—a statement that, I’m sure, would be shocking to many professional staff in the field of philanthropy. It is hard to discern recognition of this fact in anything the foundation does. It is even more difficult to find an understanding of this in many of the institutions, particularly the universities, that are the beneficiaries of the foundation’s grant programs.”

The family’s frustration with “their” foundation’s betrayal of Detroit boiled over a few years prior.



Credit: Yoichi Okamoto. License: <https://goo.gl/iGHUyN>.

(McGeorge Bundy in the foreground with President Lyndon B. Johnson and Arthur Dean) Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy repeatedly rejected Henry II’s brother, Benson, when he went pleading for aid for the Henry Ford Hospital.

## Getting Help for Detroit Was Like “Pulling Teeth”

The July 1967 Detroit riots created a sense of urgency in Henry II. Among other efforts, he invested in and spearheaded the development of the Renaissance Center, the cluster of riverfront towers that are now the Detroit skyline’s most dominant feature. (This effort was undertaken personally by Henry II and not a part of the Foundation’s work.) Yet, when the city declared the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history on July 18, 2013, it was *still* suffering from unhealed riot wounds inflicted 46 summers earlier. The honorable efforts of Henry “the Deuce” and others like him over almost five decades hadn’t done enough to restore the city’s broken civic and political institutions.

The Ford Foundation acquitted itself less honorably.

One of the inner-city institutions put under financial duress by the riots was the Henry Ford Hospital.

According to *The Fords: An American Epic*, a family history authored by Peter Collier and David Horowitz, Ford Foundation President McGeorge Bundy repeatedly rejected Henry II’s brother, Benson, when he went pleading for aid for the hospital. Bundy had come to the Foundation after serving as National Security Advisor (and a Vietnam War hawk) for President Lyndon Baines Johnson. The only remaining family member on the Ford Foundation board at that point was Henry II, and when Henry picked up the task after Benson had given up, Bundy doubled down on rejecting the family’s request.

The hospital’s true champion became Henry II’s then-wife, Cristina, who rallied both her husband and the family to the cause, shaming the foundation in the process.

“Do you forget that the old man left three billion dollars to the foundation?” asked Cristina of Bundy, according to the account in *The Fords*. “He gave it to you instead of his own children!”

She pointed out to another board member the bad optics of the Foundation building itself a \$45 million headquarters in New York City, yet finding no charity for a hospital in the devastated Motor City.

Eventually a \$100 million grant was provided, but Bundy said it was a “terminal” gift, effectively telling the family and the hospital to buzz off.

It was like “pulling teeth,” a frustrated Henry II told a *New York Times* interviewer years later.

“He should have had to pull teeth to get it,” sniped another trustee. “Did any other hospital get that much money?”

## Kicking Detroit in the Teeth

If extracting \$100 million almost five decades ago was tough dental work, then the Ford Foundation was metaphorically kicking its hometown benefactors right in the teeth by 2005. Grants addressed to organizations within the city that year totaled just \$698,000. In early 2006, the president of the firm that managed the Henry Ford Museum revealed the last grant they had seen from the Ford Foundation had been way back in 1973.

For comparison, all recipients with addresses in Oakland, California, a city smaller than Detroit, racked up nearly \$5.4 million in Ford Foundation grants for 2005, while those within the entire state of Michigan (Detroit included) received just \$2.2 million.

More telling, still, was the support for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), a think tank in Washington, D.C., that reliably recommends more government spending and intervention as answers to every policy challenge and social ill. This left-wing D.C. organization *alone* received more than \$1.7 million in Ford Foundation support for 2005, well more than double the grants to *all* recipients in Detroit. (CBPP is also a favored recipient of funding from the Soros-backed Open Society Foundations.)

That wasn't an ideological outlier, but one of countless expensive examples of the priorities of the Ford Foundation trustees. Also in 2005, they elected to give \$3.5 million to the National Women's Law Center, a left-wing public interest law firm in D.C. The NWLC website recently featured a call to action encouraging visitors to lobby against the confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court.

By 2005, the generation born and raised in Southeast Michigan in the 1960s mostly recognized the Henry Ford Museum, its affiliated historical showplace Greenfield Village, and the Henry Ford Hospital system as the primary gifts left to the region by the first Ford generation. Very few knew of the Ford Foundation, let alone what it had been doing with the largest chunk of the Ford family's charitable legacy.

## Spending Henry's Money on a Slow Trolley

Mike Cox, Michigan's Attorney General from 2003–2011, was one of those kids born in the '60s. By 2006, he had had enough of the Ford Foundation's snubbing of Detroit. Pointing out that the Foundation had originally been organized to assist the region where it was from, his office embarked upon a very public investigation into whether a foundation incorporated in Michigan had an obligation to give a reasonable fraction of its aid within the state.

A year after Cox's agitation, the Ford Foundation ponied up \$25 million for an economic development project. And then in 2013, trustees pledged \$125 million over 15 years toward the so-called "grand bargain" that led the city out of bankruptcy.

But, renewed interest in the Motor City from the Ford Foundation quickly bore the hallmark of the foundation's fetish with failed central planning schemes and taxpayer-funded boondoggles.



Credit: Brandon Bartoszek. License: <https://goo.gl/jc6bNE>

*The Henry Ford Hospital's true champion became Henry II's then-wife, Cristina, who rallied both her husband and the family to the cause, shaming the foundation in the process.*

The headline from a May 2010 Ford Foundation news release declared: "Helping America's metropolitan regions build prosperity and expand opportunity."

Ford will make strategic investments in key metropolitan areas to expand the most promising initiatives and develop models for other regions throughout the nation," read the release. "Examples of such early investments include support for: Transformative public transportation projects that connect residents to jobs and other opportunities, including the M1 rail in Detroit . . .

The Foundation's \$4 million M1 donation went toward the \$187 million needed to create what has become Detroit's QLine. Various other private organizations and government entities contributed the rest.

In early May 2017, soon after the 3.3-mile long streetcar began operating, an irreverent rabble of runners began looking at it not as public transportation, but instead as a wounded deer in need of a wolf pack to finish it off. The *Atlantic Monthly's CityLab* reported on the "Race the QLine 5k," in which *all* the runners outran the anachronistic streetcar.

Somehow, the Ford Foundation called this embarrassment an investment in "transformative public transportation."

QLine trips were free until the end of its inaugural summer. When riders were eventually charged a modest fee—just \$1.50 for a three-hour pass—ridership swiftly plummeted



# A LOOK BACK AT 2017



**SPECIAL REPORT**  
The Party of the One Percent?

**JANUARY**



**CPAC PANEL**  
2016 Elections

**FEBRUARY**



**CLIMATE DOLLARS**  
Report and Website

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**TEAM JIHAD**  
Release of Vadum's Book and Co-hosted Panel

**JUNE**



**ALLEN'S MENSA SPEECH** on *Revolt of the Deplorables*

**JULY**



**DANGEROUS DOCUMENTARIES**  
Part 1: Civil War



**DANGEROUS DOCUMENTARIES**  
Part 2: Soviet Islam



**NO SAFE SPACES**  
Provided funding for film; July 31 Congressional Hearing



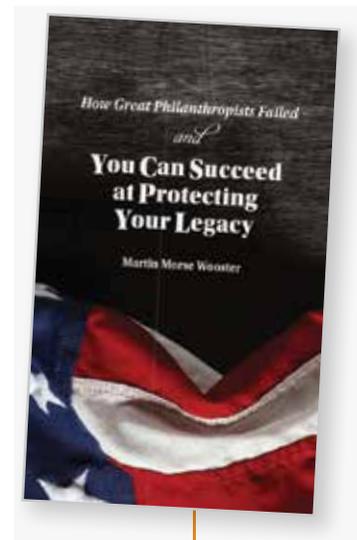
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Soft Launch

**AUGUST**

**SEPTEMBER**



PUBLICATION OF  
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AND  
SCOTT WALTER SPEECH  
The Philanthropy  
Roundtable

**OCTOBER**

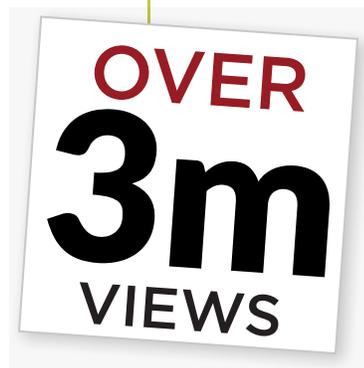


RELEASE OF  
Hartmann/Watson on  
*Citizen United* Spending

**DECEMBER**

DANGEROUS  
DOCUMENTARIES  
Part 3: Antifa

TOTAL VIDEO VIEWS  
Reached over 3 million  
total views of our videos



Outstanding new projects and initiatives since 2016. In last year's report, we highlighted important websites, produced and funded films and videos, and we continue to produce trademark high-quality research—featured online, in print, and on TV. We added more than 70 media hits in major outlets.

far below projections, making the whole project financially unsustainable. By August 2018, after a mere 16 months of QLine operations, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan announced he already wanted to rip up and reroute the tracks (which are laid on a major city thoroughfare) so as to speed it up.

There's a powerful symbolic irony. Millions of dollars from the fortune of a Detroit entrepreneur and transportation revolutionary—a carmaker no less—was brought home to be sunk into a ponderous mass transit boondoggle that was hyped as “transformative,” yet obsolete before it ever got moving.

## Money for Detroit . . . But More for the Left

Nevertheless, it's true Ford Foundation grants to causes in the city of Detroit have increased in recent years. Total donations made to Michigan amounted to \$24.9 million for 2015, with \$21.7 million of that going to organizations within the Motor City. There was also a resumption of support for the foundation that manages the Henry Ford Museum.

Relative to the \$698,000 sent to Detroit in 2005, \$21.7 million is certainly an improvement.

But an institution communicates its missional priorities through its spending. When compared to the Ford Foundation's other “philanthropic” investments, the city of Detroit barely registers as an area of concern.

For comparison, grantees in just the city of Oakland, California's eighth largest city, received \$16.4 million in 2015. Oakland—a peculiarly favored destination for Ford Foundation giving—had a 2017 population of 425,000, while Michigan's Oakland County (in the Detroit suburbs) had more than 1.2 million.

*Millions of dollars from the fortune of a Detroit transportation revolutionary was sunk into a ponderous transit boondoggle hyped as “transformative,” yet obsolete before it ever got moving.*

Then there was the Foundation's support for left-wing political advocacy, left wing economic policies, environmentalist activism, and activist labor union causes. That was \$50.2 million for 2015—twice that of all grants sent to the state of Michigan.

What's more, this is a conservative estimate of the leftist spending, filtered narrowly on economic and partisan political causes. It *excludes* many millions in Ford Foundation grants for organizations involved exclusively with what can be characterized as left-wing *social policy* programs geared towards abortion access, LGBT issues, criminal justice reform, legal protection for undocumented workers, and immigration policy reform.

For example, the Ford Foundation's \$1.8 million in support for pro-abortion causes in 2015, and the \$5.2 million transferred to the left-wing Tides Center and Tides Foundation, are both examples of funding that has *not* been included in the \$50.2 million tabulation.

It also excludes 2015 grants to colleges and universities for projects that correspond with left-wing political and policy agendas. An example of what doesn't make the list: \$300,000 given to the Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City for media training designed to “enhance the multifaith progressive movement for social Justice [sic].”

Examples of the sort of causes that are included in the \$50.2 million estimate are as follows:

- \$1,850,000 for the **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**. The policy priorities include defending ObamaCare and sustained criticism of the 2017 tax reform law.
- \$2,820,000 for the **Center for American Progress**. Progress is defined as defending ObamaCare and opposing federal tax cuts.
- \$2,605,000 for the **Center for Community Change**. One desired change is reflected by an essay on the website entitled: “Why progressives need to mobilize against Trump's Supreme Court pick.”
- \$2,400,000 for the **National Employment Law Project**. Among other projects, they advocate for a \$15 minimum wage.
- \$1,675,000 for **Faith in Action** (formerly known as the PICO National Network). The actions include a September 4, 2018, news release encouraging voters to save ObamaCare by lobbying U.S. Senators to oppose Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- \$2,302,729 for the **Leadership Conference Education Fund**. Leadership calls for a \$15 minimum wage and a white paper advocating Medicaid expansion.

The six organizations listed above and six others like them received a total of \$24.3 million from the Ford Foundation for 2015, meaning just a dozen left-wing advocacy groups received almost as much as the Foundation gave to all organizations within the state of Michigan during the same year.

Additionally, each of the six listed above and many others which received that \$50.2 million are current or past causes supported by the Soros-backed Open Society Foundations. According to the Ford Foundation's online biographies of its 69 U.S.-based grant makers, at least four were employed previously by the Open Society Foundations:

- Subarna Mathes, a strategy and evaluation officer, is a former “learning and impact program officer embedded within the Open Society Foundations’ Fiscal Governance Program.”
- Lori McGlinchey is a senior program officer where her “grant making supports civil society organizations and networks working at the intersection of social justice and technology.” Before coming to the Ford Foundation to do that, she “oversaw the Open Society Foundations’ U.S. Internet policy, journalism, and government accountability grant making.”
- Vera Mshana “leads the [Ford] foundation’s work on encouraging greater government transparency” and “promoting more participatory and progressive tax and budget systems . . .” Before that, she “was a program officer in the Open Society Foundations’ Fiscal Governance Program.”
- Luna Yasui is a senior program officer for civic engagement and government. Before coming to the Ford Foundation, she “worked at the Open Society Foundations, where she managed a portfolio focused on advancing gender justice, LGBT rights, and low-wage worker rights.”

## Spending Money on Groups That Want to Spend More Money

Nearly \$2.4 million of that \$50.2 million in left-wing advocacy was directed at Michigan. As Henry Ford II complained 45 years ago, this was a giving agenda that didn't show an appreciation for competitive enterprise:

- \$180,000 for the **Michigan League for Public Policy**. The MLPP is a reliable supporter of larger government and more state spending, advocating



*The last thing Michigan employers and employees need is to pay for a more expensive and intrusive state government, but those are the types of programs funded by today's Ford Foundation.*

recently for a higher minimum wage and against a broad-based tax cut signed by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder.

- \$1,400,000 for **State Voices**. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., this advocacy organization partners with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and others with a left-wing policy agenda. It received two Ford Foundation grants in 2015 that were earmarked to be spent in Michigan on state budget projects, political redistricting, and other work favoring the agendas of Democrats and proponents of higher state spending.
- \$350,000 for **Progress Michigan Education**. Progress Michigan is a partisan communications pit bull advocating for left-wing policy and political outcomes, not necessarily related to education. Recent news releases have included several criticisms of the Republican nominee for governor over his policies regarding state-mandated overtime expansion and the energy industry. These releases also include denunciations of the Republican-led Michigan Legislature for failing to defend ObamaCare and passing state budgets that spend too little.
- \$425,000 for the **Restaurant Opportunities Center United**. Despite not registering as a labor union, this organization behaves similarly. Its policy agendas include advocating for a higher minimum wage for restaurant workers and launching public relations offensives against the National Restaurant Association.

The last thing Michigan employers and employees need is to pay for a more expensive and intrusive state government.

Most of the nation considers the 2008 financial crisis the start of a serious recession, but Michigan got a big head start on the hard times. The state's unemployment rate in January 2001 was 4.4 percent, roughly equal to the national average. By January 2008, before the financial crisis began in earnest for the rest of America, Michigan had already lost more than 330,000 jobs and had a 7.1 percent unemployment rate.



Credit: Elgin County Archives. License: <https://goo.gl/Yygd57>.

*(Henry Ford II [right] with Marvin T. Runyon) “I made a big mistake on the Ford Foundation,” said Henry II on a 1980’s audio in the possession of the Henry Ford Museum. “I was young, inexperienced, and stupid. I just muffed it. It got out of control and stayed out of control. And now it’s gone, of course.”*

And then came the automotive industry bankruptcies and the full force of the financial crisis. By January 2010, the Michigan unemployment rate had zoomed to 13.9 percent, and total job losses since 2001 had exceeded 760,000.

It’s difficult to exaggerate the economic magnitude of this: West Virginia—the 38th largest U.S. state by population—doesn’t even have 760,000 jobs.

Even today, with the unemployment rate back down to 4.3 percent and a sense of economic optimism returning, Michigan still has 250,000 fewer jobs than it did nearly 18 years ago.

Meanwhile, the nation as a whole has 13.5 million more jobs than it did back in January 2001. Even with the most

generous of policy welcome mats laid out for entrepreneurs, Michigan’s economic scars from “the lost decade” will require a generation to fully heal.

Increasing the price of hiring people (a higher minimum wage) leads to fewer jobs, and more government spending crowds out private sector spending. Michigan needs none of this nonsense. There may be states where the Ford Foundation’s left-wing economic policies could do more damage. . . but not many.

### What If?

The front page of the *Detroit News* for November 22, 1963, carried both tragedy and comedy. The obvious tragedy was as big as the font it was written in: “KENNEDY DEAD.”

The comedy was along the left side in smaller print: “Ford Buys Lions.”

That would be the Detroit Lions. William Clay Ford, Sr., grandson of the Ford Motor Company founder and younger brother of Henry Ford II, would own the National Football League’s most uncompetitive enterprise until his death almost 51 years later. It would be 28 years before they won him his one and only playoff game. Millions of local fans born after 1963 learned to tell non-Michiganers “We don’t watch professional football on Sundays . . . we watch the Lions.”

If the owner of the team was as disgusted with its performance as his brother was with the Ford Foundation, he rarely, if ever, showed it. Yet ask a typical Michigander today to name a failure of the Ford family and the Lions will easily top the list, perhaps even stand alone on the list. Few would or could name the Ford Foundation and how it disappointed the last of the Fords who had any control over it.

The history on the Foundation website reports differently: “Henry Ford II remained a key figure in the foundation, serving as president and as chair and member of the board of trustees and overseeing its transformation from a local Detroit foundation to a national and international organization.”

To imply Henry Ford II willfully turned the Ford Foundation into what it has become is—to put it charitably—very misleading. To be more honest about it would be to say he died in 1987 regretting the outcome they credit him with creating.

“I made a big mistake on the Ford Foundation,” said Henry II on a 1980’s audio in the possession of the Henry Ford Museum. He continued, “I was young, inexperienced, and stupid. I just muffed it. It got out of control and stayed out of control. And now it’s gone, of course.”

In 1978, shortly after resigning from the Foundation's board, he told a *New York Times* reporter that he'd have made a radically different decision if given the chance at a do-over:

What I would have loved to have done is split the foundation into three parts—give one-third of it to the Henry Ford Hospital, one-third of it to [what are today known as the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village], and the other third would have stayed as part of the Foundation. But [it would have been] one-third as big and therefore wouldn't have gotten into so many different kinds of things . . .

His words and deeds conclusively demonstrate Henry II wanted the majority of his grandfather's fortune spent in the region where it was created and on the principles that made it possible.

The “what if?” discussions are almost too painful to contemplate.

Prior to being surpassed in net assets by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Ford Foundation was, for a long time, the wealthiest in America. Today, it remains the second largest and gives away more than half a billion dollars annually.

It's obvious that taking so much of that private fortune away from Detroit and Michigan for so many decades did those economies no favors. It's also a bitter irony at best—and blatant hypocrisy at worst—that those running the Foundation have been using it as a cash cow to support big government spending policies that would impose a heavier burden on the private sectors that remain in the region.

It's impossible to imagine many billions of dollars in additional Ford money coming back home over the last sixty years—building up and maintaining fantastic hospitals, schools, cultural institutions, and much else—and not see a much healthier Great Lakes State.

There are lots of villains—individuals, attitudes, institutions, and policies—that receive and richly deserve the blame for Detroit decline. The Ford Foundation is usually absent from that dishonorable roll call, but no less deserving of shame.

Similarly, those of us who share Henry II's appreciation for free enterprise and free society solutions can imagine a much better world if so much of that money had been spent promoting his principles, rather than opposing them.

Would Michigan by now have an education system that gave parents the ability to choose the individualized schooling that best suits each of their children?



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*It's also a bitter irony at best—and blatant hypocrisy at worst—that those running the Foundation have been using it as a cash cow to support big government spending policies.*

Might we have by now a low cost, high quality healthcare system driven by consumers in charge of their own money, rather than big government and near-monopoly insurance bureaucracies in bed with big government?

Might the successful promotion of free enterprise policies produce an economy that built on the success of entrepreneurs, giving rise to several foundations with fortunes in excess of the one Henry Ford left behind, each virtuously reinforcing the capitalism and hometowns that made them possible?

In that 1978 interview with the *New York Times*, a frustrated Henry II offered one more idea, saying it would be “O.K. by me” if the Ford Foundation would just quickly “spend its way out of existence.”

Regretfully, yet another example of why it is too bad the “Deuce” didn't get his way. ■

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*Read previous articles from the Foundation Watch series online at [CapitalResearch.org/category/foundation-watch/](http://CapitalResearch.org/category/foundation-watch/).*

*A project of CRC's Dangerous Documentaries*

**ADAM CAROLLA**

**DENNIS PRAGER**

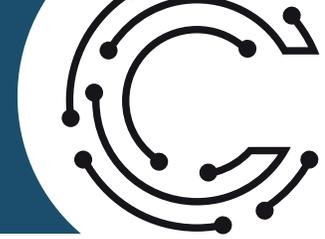


*No Safe Spaces*, a film starring Adam Carolla and Dennis Prager and a project of CRC's own Dangerous Documentaries, will expose the safe space culture that is undermining American universities. *No Safe Spaces* will expose the sad state of free speech, the unwillingness of students to be challenged by new ideas, and "the grievance culture" of "safe spaces" that are undermining the intellectual foundations of American higher education.

Carolla—a well-known stand-up comedian, podcaster, and radio personality—and Prager—a syndicated radio talk show host who has been on the air for more than four decades—will travel to college campuses across the country interviewing students, professors, and commentators from both sides of the political spectrum.

*No Safe Spaces* is set to release in Fall 2018. It will be directed by Justin Folk and produced by Mark Joseph. Scott Walter and Jake Klein are executive producers.

**NOsafespaces.com**



## LITIGIOUS LABOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE?

### *Profiling the National Treasury Employees Union*

By Hayden Ludwig

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**Summary:** Banking millions of dollars in pay raises and bonuses for its members? Check. Corrupt officials charged with fraud and embezzlement? Check. Donations to the Democratic Party? Check. The National Treasury Employees Union has it all. But some say that the union played a key role in the IRS's scheme to target Tea Party groups ahead of Barack Obama's 2012 reelection campaign.

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The National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) represents tens of thousands of employees in the Treasury Department, most notably those who work in the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). As far as labor unions go, it's par for the course; like many unions, the NTEU has had its share of corrupt officials charged with embezzlement, fraud, and even bank robbery. It's a regular supporter of the Democratic Party, and its leaders had connections with the Obama administration.

But some think that there's a darker side to the NTEU's connection with the former president—suggesting that the union may be the key to unravelling the 2010 plot to target Tea Party groups headed by Lois Lerner, then-head of the IRS Exempt Organizations division.

### History of the NTEU

The National Treasury Employees Union began in 1938 with the unwieldy name of the National Association of Employees of Collectors of the Internal Revenue—less a labor union than a professional association with limited aims at securing better salaries and working conditions. Originally limited to the Wisconsin employees who founded it, the association expanded membership to include all IRS employees around the time of the reorganization of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in 1952.



Credit: Keith Ellison. License: <https://goo.gl/35F2xq>.

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*The National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) represents tens of thousands of employees in the Treasury Department, most notably those who work in the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).*

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In the mid-1960s, there was a short-lived effort to organize the association into a full-fledged labor union as a part of the much-larger American Federation of Government Employees. The effort was defeated, however, as the association moved toward establishing itself as an independent labor union encompassing all Treasury Department employees by the early 1970s, when NTEU adopted its current name.

Besides the Treasury Department, NTEU represents federal employees in 32 other departments and agencies, most notably the Federal Election Commission, Federal Communications Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Membership in the union has varied greatly over the years. In 2000, the Department of Labor reported a low of 71,186;

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*Hayden Ludwig is a research analyst at the Capital Research Center.*

by 2010, membership had risen to 86,654, only to fall in 2017 to 79,725. It also reported expenditures varying from a low of \$34.6 million in 2008, to a high of \$65.6 million in 2011, with assets doubling from \$20.4 million in 2008 to \$44 million in 2017.

## Litigious Labor

The NTEU has a well-established reputation for suing parts of the federal government in order to obtain settlements and benefits for its members.

In 1973, the union successfully sued President Richard Nixon for denying “a 5.14 percent pay increase . . . contrary to the Federal Pay Comparability Act.” The suit (settled in 1975, after Nixon had resigned) resulted in \$533 million in backpay to federal employees. Ten years later, the union again sued the government over salaries—a suit which was settled (nearly two decades later) in December 2002 with \$173.5 million in backpay to some 212,000 “former special rate federal employees” (employees in positions the government has historically struggled to keep filled, such as medical and law enforcement personnel).

CC —————  
*The National Treasury Employees Union has a well-established reputation for suing parts of the federal government in order to obtain settlements and benefits for its members.*

In June 2006, NTEU defeated its major competitor, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), for the right to represent roughly 30,000 employees of the Department of Homeland Security’s Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), an election certified by the Federal Labor Relations Authority in early 2007. A decade later, the union settled a lawsuit against CBP for \$184 million in overtime and other salary appropriations not paid to employees.

Sometimes NTEU has been successful at simply pressuring the government into paying out millions of dollars. In 2013, IRS Acting Commissioner Danny Werfel canceled \$98 million in bonuses to IRS employees, citing budget cuts. “Given the unprecedented budget situation and consistent with government-wide policy,” he said in a statement, “I do not believe there should be performance awards this year for

IRS employees, managers, or executives.” The announcement came on the heels of scrutiny from House Republicans following the discovery that the IRS had improperly targeted conservative and Tea Party nonprofits prior to the 2012 presidential election.

Naturally, then-NTEU president Colleen Kelley disagreed. “It is NTEU’s position that the awards are legally required as part of the collective bargaining agreement between NTEU and the IRS,” she said in her own statement. In February 2014 (and at NTEU’s urging), Werfel’s successor, John Koskinen, partially reinstated the 1.75 percent pay bonuses (amounting to \$62.5 million) to IRS employees.

## Funding Democrats

Considering 95 percent (\$1.4 million) of the roughly \$2 million that federal employees gave to presidential campaigns in 2016 went to Hillary Clinton—including 94 percent of donations from IRS workers—it isn’t surprising that the NTEU is a regular supporter of the Democratic Party. According to data from the Federal Election Commission, the NTEU PAC has donated to the Democratic National Committee (DNC), Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), Hillary Victory Fund, and a host of Democratic candidates for the U.S. House and Senate.

In 2012, the NTEU gave just under \$584,000 to federal candidates, 94 percent of which went to Democrats and only 4 percent to Republicans. It also endorsed Barack Obama’s reelection campaign. In 2016, it spent nearly \$525,000 on federal elections continuing overwhelming support to Democrats over Republicans.

NTEU’s pattern of donating to Democrats is closely mirrored by IRS employees, who donated roughly \$110,000 to Barack Obama’s presidential campaigns in 2008 and 2012; in contrast, they gave \$25,000 to 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney and a meagre \$6,000 to Senator John McCain’s presidential run. According to the Center for Public Integrity, two-thirds of the \$840,000 IRS employees have given to federal candidates and committees between 1989 and 2012 went to Democrats and left-wing PACs.

## Promoting IRS Corruption?

Like many national labor unions, the NTEU has had its share of corruption. Between 2001 and 2013, ten union officials were charged with crimes ranging from embezzling union funds, wire fraud, making false statements concern-



Credit: Jim Tourtellante. License: <https://goo.gl/cjbbks>.

(CBP Acting Commissioner Kevin McAleenan and Tony Reardon [right]) The NTEU is currently headed by Tony Reardon, accused of promoting a “Jimmy Hoffa-level of abuse and corruption” in the union.

ing allowances and disbursements on federal labor union reports, obstruction of justice, mail fraud, and even bank robbery in the case of one president of a Michigan chapter. Nine pleaded guilty.

The NTEU is currently headed by Tony Reardon, a long-time NTEU officer who succeeded national president Colleen Kelley in 2015 after obtaining her endorsement. Reardon has been accused of promoting a “Jimmy Hoffa-level of abuse and corruption” in the union, according to IRS attorney and union member Jane Kim. Kim, who brought her case to the Daily Caller in 2016 after reportedly being ignored by federal officials, accused NTEU of “divid[ing] agency employees into a caste-like system” where those “who did the union’s bidding got special treatment, while everyone else was emotionally abused and ransacked with legal complaints if they spoke out.”

They just go around and tape-record and spying [sic] on the other employees so the union can set them up with false allegations and false charges and have them investigated.” Kim said. “They get all the favors, they don’t work, they get all the cash bonuses, they get all the promotions over the hard-working people.

Kelley, who served as president of NTEU for 16 years, strongly supported Democrats, applauding Obama’s reelection victory in 2012. The President even placed her on the

Federal Salary Council, a body which recommends pay raises for federal employees. But some conservatives have accused Kelley—a former IRS agent—of helping to coordinate the IRS’s efforts to unfairly target Tea Party groups in 2010.

In early May 2013, the Treasury Department inspector general revealed that the IRS’s Exempt Organizations division, headed by Lois Lerner, used inappropriate criteria to identify and slow the approval of conservative nonprofits applying for tax-exempt status, styming their ability to operate and fundraise ahead of the 2012 election—thereby aiding Obama and Congressional Democrats seeking reelection. The agency looked for groups with certain keywords in their names, such as “patriot,” “tea party,” and “9/12” (a reference to a right-of-center march that took place on September 12, 2009). Lerner later attempted to deflect scrutiny from the IRS’s Washington headquarters, blaming the effort instead on staffers at the agency’s office in Cincinnati, Ohio.

According to the inspector general’s report, the IRS began the scheme on April 1, 2010. The White House visitor’s log, however, showed the President met with Kelley on March 31—the day before. Jeffrey Lord, who first wrote about the discovery in the *American Spectator* on May 20, 2013, noted that Kelley had met with the President multiple times before. Kelley met with Obama and the First Lady on December 3, 2009.

Six days later the White House released Executive Order 13522, an order designed “to establish a cooperative and productive form of labor-management relations throughout the executive branch” by empowering “employees and their union representatives to have pre-decisional involvement in all workplace matters to the fullest extent practicable.”



*The IRS looked for groups with certain keywords in their names, such as “patriot,” “tea party,” and other right-of-center references.*

Besides strengthening the position of labor unions in the federal government, the order also established the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations, a body whose leadership was required to include “the President of the National Treasury Employees Union”: Colleen Kelley.

The council was disbanded by Trump in October 2017, and its role in the IRS Tea Party targeting scandal is unclear. But, as Lord wrote, “the directive was a serious grant of authority



Credit: AFGE. License: <https://goo.gl/rnC7Yu>

AFGE President John Gage and NTEU President Colleen Kelley, who served as president of NTEU for 16 years, strongly supported Democrats, applauding Obama’s reelection victory in 2012.

within the IRS to the powerful anti-Tea Party” NTEU. That the Obama administration favored the NTEU is reinforced by the President’s nomination of Robert Tobias to the IRS Oversight Board in June 2016—a former 16-year president of the NTEU who had been appointed to the board by President Bill Clinton in 2000.

In light of Kelley’s close proximity to Obama, one obvious question remains: Was the President aware of the IRS scheme to target the Tea Party?

In the wake of the unfolding scandal, White House spokesman Jay Carney insisted that President Obama was unaware of the agency’s activity. White House counsel Kathleen Ruemmler “made the decision or judgment that it was not necessary or appropriate to inform the President of this,” Carney told reporters on May 20, 2013. Obama himself called the targeting “outrageous” and insisted the culprits “be held fully accountable.”

Shortly after the story broke, CNS News, a right-leaning website, reached out multiple times to Carney to ask if Obama and Kelley had discussed Tea Party groups during their March 31, 2010, meeting. CNS also contacted the NTEU with similar questions. Neither Carney nor the union responded.

Then-House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) told journalists that “it’s pretty inconceivable to me that the President wouldn’t know” about the IRS’s activity, while the conservative website Human Events chortled that apparently “everyone at the White House knew about the IRS scandal, except the President.”

*U.S. News & World Report*, however, argued that the meeting between Obama and Kelley was “not a smoking gun,” and pointed out that the meeting took place in the South Auditorium of the White House, “not exactly a prime location for a private meeting.”

It’s likely we’ll never know the extent of President Obama’s knowledge of, or complicity in the scheme. Kelley herself quickly went mum, telling the *Washington Post* in an email: “NTEU is working to get the facts but does not have any specifics at this time. Moreover, IRS employees are not permitted to discuss taxpayer cases. We cannot comment further at this time.”

But the union *did* provide answers concerning the March 31, 2010, meeting at the White House in a May 20, 2013, email to the Daily Caller:

On March 31, 2010, NTEU president Colleen M. Kelley attended the White House Forum on Workplace Flexibility at the Old Executive Office Building. The forum was attended by approximately 200 attendees including business leaders, workers, policy experts and labor representatives discussing telework and worklife [*sic*] balance issues. Attendees were broken into five groups to discuss workplace issues.

“The president made opening remarks,” the spokesperson continued. “President Kelley did not have any direct contact with the president or the first lady.”

## De-Unionizing the IRS?

While the NTEU is hardly the biggest spender among labor unions—in 2016, AFSCME gave \$1.6 million to Democrats and the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) spent \$1.3 million—Congressional Republicans have made rolling back its influence over the IRS a goal.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Janus v. AFSCME* that public sector workers cannot be obligated to join a labor union, dealing a serious blow to public sector labor unions. Although the NTEU was already prohibited by law



*The conservative online media outlet, Human Events, chortled that apparently “everyone at the White House knew about the IRS scandal, except the President.”*

from forcing federal employees to join its ranks, the *Janus* decision signaled a major defeat for Big Labor. Following on the heels of the Court’s decision, Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Arizona) introduced the “Preventing Unionization of Revenue Service Employees (PURSE) Act” (H.R. 6268) in July. The bill (still in committee as of this writing) would take the government’s *de facto* right to work status even further by excluding “employees of the Internal Revenue Service from provisions of federal personnel law allowing federal employees to organize, bargain collectively, and participate in labor organizations.”

“Millions of [taxpayers’] dollars have been wasted by IRS employees who have spent their work days on union activities,” wrote Gosar’s office, “rather than their official duties.” How much money—\$22 million in salary and benefits in 2016 alone, amounting to 482,000 hours on “official time,” according to the website GovExec.com.

“Official time” is a legal practice established in 1978 enabling federal workers to conduct union representational activity such as membership solicitation during regular work hours, usually limited by individual agencies through collective bargaining agreements. Collecting dues and advocating the election of candidates for public office is strictly prohibited.

Americans for Tax Reform, headed by tax hawk Grover Norquist, endorsed the bill, writing:

Currently, other federal agencies such as the FBI, GAO [Government Accountability Office] and the NSA [National Security Agency], are prohibited from unionizing and entering into collective bargaining agreements. There is no reason why the IRS should not be prohibited from doing the same.

... with over 70,000 union-covered IRS employees, and 95% of union contributions going to Democrat candidates, it is clear that there is a massive infiltration of partisan politics in our supposedly nonpartisan agencies.

This isn’t the first time House Republicans have criticized the IRS for doing the NTEU’s business on the clock. In September 2014, House Ways and Means Committee



*The Treasury Department inspector general revealed that the IRS’s Exempt Organizations division, headed by Lois Lerner, used inappropriate criteria to identify and slow the approval of conservative nonprofits applying for tax-exempt status.*

Credit: US House of Representatives Committee of Oversight & Government Reform. License: <https://goo.gl/Ato7KQ>

chair Charles Boustany (R-Louisiana) criticized the agency for one employee in Washington, D.C., then earning a GS-14 salary (ranging from roughly \$106,000 to \$138,000 annually) without performing any IRS duties. The employee, according to Boustany, was effectively a taxpayer-funded activist for NTEU—spending all of his or her time representing the union “at a time when the IRS claims it is unable to perform required duties as a result of it being understaffed and underfunded.”

Curiously, Boustany was aided in his efforts by an email to the Ways and Means Committee from then-IRS Exempt Organizations director Lois Lerner, who reportedly “lament[ed] her powerlessness to terminate the employee.” Lerner was apparently frustrated that she could not fire the employee, writing that “we can’t do anything.” However, despite suggestions by colleagues that the employee be fired, Lerner merely “lowered the

employee’s performance rating in order to avoid conflict with NTEU.”

In April 2015, the Committee released a scathing report criticizing the IRS’s “abysmal” customer service” and misallocation of resources, castigating the agency for calling Congressional budget cuts “a tax cut for tax cheats” while simultaneously continuing to allow employees to “spend hundreds of thousands of hours conducting union activities while at work.” In fiscal year 2014, according to the report, IRS employees spent an incredible 491,948 working hours performing union activities, with an astounding 36 agents devoting 50 percent or more of their time to NTEU work.

The NTEU, unsurprisingly, wasn’t pleased. Union president Tony Reardon called the PURSE Act “just another effort to deny working men and women basic rights in the workplace,” arguing that “what the IRS really needs is more staff and resources to better serve the American public.”

## Limiting “Official Time”

On May 25, 2018, President Donald Trump signed an executive order “ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in taxpayer-funded union time use” aimed at limiting abuse of official time. “Federal employees should

spend the clear majority of their duty hours working for the public,” according to the order, which stipulated that federal employees “may not engage in lobbying activities during paid time” and capping official time at 25 percent of the employee’s work hours. Employees who fail performance standards should be easier to fire, particularly during periods of budget cuts when agencies must choose between laying off union-backed tenured staff or more recent hires, forcing bureaucracies to take job performance into account. The order was followed by two others intended to accomplish similar goals.

In June, the orders were attacked in a letter signed by 24 House Democrats, who accused them of “mark[ing] the end to meaningful contract bargaining in the federal government.” The letter was followed by a series of lawsuits by more than a dozen unions—headed by the AFL-CIO, AFGE, National Federation of Federal Employees, AFSCME, and NTEU—challenging the executive orders in a District of Columbia federal court on the grounds that they “impinge upon the constitutional rights of federal employees.”

On August 24, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson (an Obama appointee briefly considered for Antonin Scalia’s Supreme Court seat) ruled against parts of the order mitigating official time as a violation of the government’s separation of powers under the U.S. Constitution, which NTEU hailed as an “historic victory.”

“Congress undertook to guarantee federal employees the statutory right to engage in good-faith collective bargaining,” Jackson wrote, a right which “safeguards the public

interest . . . And because many of the executive order provisions that the unions challenge here have that effect, this court concludes that the President has overstepped his bounds.” As of September, it remains unclear whether the White House will push back against the ruling.

## NTEU in the Future

So where does that leave the NTEU today?

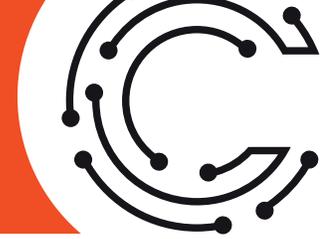
We may never know for sure what role the union played in covering up or assisting in the scheme to unfairly scrutinize Tea Party groups. But the Trump administration has taken steps which will hopefully roll back the NTEU’s power over the IRS, beginning with the dissolution of the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations in 2017. If nothing else, having a conservative president occupying the Oval Office should do wonders to limit the power the NTEU enjoyed in the Obama administration.

In the era following the Supreme Court’s *Janus* decision, NTEU seems likely to face greater scrutiny and less bargaining power as the power and membership in public sector labor unions ebbs. What that means for NTEU’s salary and bonus negotiating power is an open question. But promoting freedom of choice and the right to work is a blessing for federal employees and taxpayers alike. ■

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*President Trump’s executive order said, “federal employees should spend the clear majority of their duty hours working for the public.”*

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*Read previous articles from the Labor Watch series online at [CapitalResearch.org/category/labor-watch/](https://www.CapitalResearch.org/category/labor-watch/).*



## MARK JANUS FOR CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER

By Christine Ravold

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**Summary:** In June 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that government employees cannot be compelled to pay agency fees to government worker unions. This historic decision in the case of *Janus v. AFSCME* essentially made the U.S. government a “right to work” employer by overturning *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, which previously stated that government workers could be forced to pay for union membership. CRC sits down with Mark Janus, the Illinois child support specialist who stood up for the First Amendment rights of government workers across the country.

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### When did you first start questioning your union membership or the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) leadership?

**Janus:** I questioned the lack of choice I had from the beginning of my employment with the State of Illinois. From 2007 to 2018, I worked as a child support specialist for state government in Illinois. I quickly realized that fees were being deducted from my paychecks and being paid to AFSCME.

I had no choice in the matter and no power to stop my hard-earned money from going to a political organization.

My concerns became even more acute as the state of affairs in Illinois continued to decline. Here we were facing a huge unfunded tax liability, a corrupt government that was completely unproductive, and union leaders were doing nothing to stop our state’s tailspin. Rather than be a part of rational and fiscally sound solutions to our state’s financial mess, AFSCME’s leadership was suggesting state workers strike!

### Why bring the suit against AFSCME?

**Janus:** I was represented by AFSCME in my job title as a child support specialist. AFSCME represents approximately 35,000 Illinois government workers. Nationally, they are a power house of government sector unionism. Here I was paying these forced “agency fees” to a union I didn’t feel was



Photo courtesy of the Liberty Justice Center.

*Mark Janus was paying forced “agency fees” to AFSCME, a national power house of government sector unionism. But he didn’t feel AFSCME was representing him or his fellow workers, so he took action.*

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representing me, or my fellow workers. Nor did it appear they were listening to us.

I was told by a co-worker, who was a full share member, of a local meeting held at the beginning of the contract negotiations. Almost all the members in attendance told the leadership not to ask for any major increases in wages or benefits. The rank-and-file members knew the state was in a precarious financial position. How could they ask for raises when the state had such major deficits and couldn’t pay their bills?

But of course, AFSCME ignored members’ wishes. The union asked for about \$3 billion in wage and benefit increases. Why pay fees to an organization that doesn’t even listen to the people they represent?

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*Christine Ravold is the communications officer for the Capital Research Center.*



Credit: AP Archive/YouTube screenshot. License: <https://goo.gl/jkFFH67>.

Once the Janus case began working through the federal courts, quite a few of his coworkers expressed their support. They also disagreed with the union's position in many areas and were fed up with paying "fees" to belong to an organization they often opposed.

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### How did you know the time was right to raise this issue?

**Janus:** Bruce Rauner had filed a case against AFSCME and other unions when he became governor of Illinois. I was also seeing a push by AFSCME to increase wages and benefits by about \$3 billion. With our tenuous pension and budget situation, I just felt I had to do something. I could see the overall situation was not getting better for Illinois.

Add the financial climate of the state on top of the complete powerlessness I felt. I knew it was not right for the state of Illinois and AFSCME to be collecting fees from me to support an organization I did not agree with. My frustration grew as I watched the dollars come off my paycheck week after week, year after year.

### How did you feel after Rebecca Friedrichs' case failed to overturn *Abood*?

**Janus:** I was disappointed. I was in Washington, D.C., and heard the oral arguments of her case. I had the great fortune to sit with Rebecca's husband Charles in the gallery. Prior to the proceedings, we had a lengthy and fruitful discussion on numerous topics while waiting in line for the oral arguments. We became good friends because of that chance meeting in the cold and gray early morning hours.

After hearing the arguments in Rebecca's case, I felt optimistic there would be a positive outcome to her case. I thought *Abood* would be overturned and my case would become moot. But, you can never be assured of a victory in the U.S. Supreme Court, no matter what the pundits may say.

When I heard the news of Justice Scalia passing I was surprised like so many others. I was disappointed not only for the family of Justice Scalia, but also for Rebecca. She worked hard to bring this case along with the other nine plaintiffs.

Rebecca's loss also energized me. I knew my case would be important and a second chance to take on the important issue of worker freedom.

### How did your co-workers respond when they learned about your case?

**Janus:** Once my case began working through the federal courts, I kept my involvement pretty quiet. I wasn't sure of the response I would get. Of course I knew there were the members who would not like it. However, over time, as the case gained attention and I began traveling to speak about the case, the "word" got out. Surprisingly, I had quite a few coworkers express their support. They were happy to see something be done. Like me, they didn't agree with the union's position in many areas and were fed up with having to pay these "fees" to belong to an organization they didn't agree with.

The full share union members essentially ignored me. There was very little comment. When I would pass a union member in the hall and say "Good Morning," they would just pass me as if I didn't exist. Still, I was happy in my job as a child support specialist and my day-to-day work was not affected.



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*"My frustration grew as I watched the dollars come off my paycheck week after week, year after year."*—Mark Janus

### What is so political about paying agency fees? After all, even workers who opt out of membership receive the same set of services from their union.

**Janus:** Agency fees are "political" due to the very fact that they were mandated by legislation. The union asked for and received the sole representation for many workers in Illinois and elsewhere. And how did they get that legislation introduced and passed? By contributing to the political campaigns of politicians who they knew would do their bidding and be beholden to the unions because of the campaign contributions unions make to get these politicians elected.

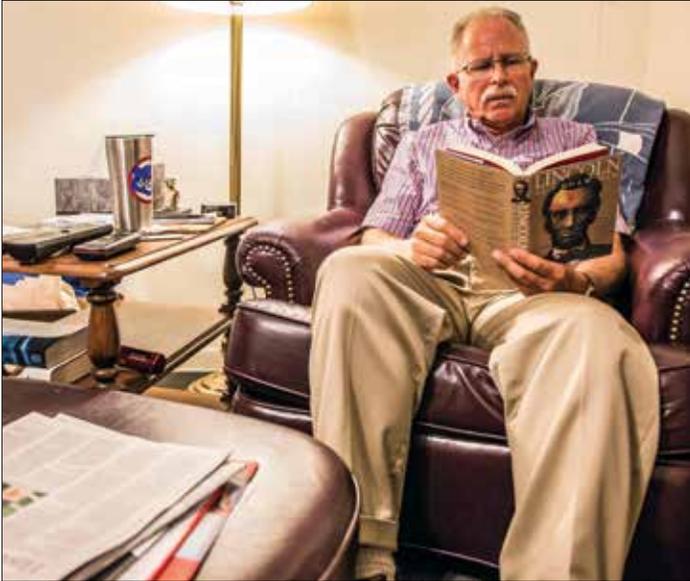


Photo courtesy of the Liberty Justice Center.

*After the decision was handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court, Janus had conversations with Pat Hughes and Diana Rickert at Liberty Justice Center. They decided that coming on board as a senior fellow at LJC would be an excellent way to continue to be a part of the effort to educate the public about forced “agency fees.”*

Moreover, these forced dues and agency fees grant government unions so much unchecked political power they are able to demand employee-compensation packages so lavish they have literally pushed several states to near bankruptcy—including Illinois.

**Do you think the unions will die out altogether, or will this ruling force unions to treat workers more like customers?**

**Janus:** Public sector unions must adapt to playing in a competitive marketplace where government workers finally have a choice. They will survive if they can prove their value to members and potential members. I would hope that government unions will pay more attention to their membership and be more responsive.

**What was it like to be in the Supreme Court as your story was being told and oral arguments were being delivered?**

**Janus:** Overwhelming. To hear your name called by the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court made the hair stand up on the back of my neck. It was a thrill and humbling almost simultaneously. As the attorneys argued the case and the justices asked their questions, the reality really set in as to the magnitude of this case. Here were arguments

being made that would affect workers all over the country. This has national implications. Simply amazing.

**Of course, the high point was the ultimate decision by the Supreme Court after over three years of litigation. But were there any low points? Was there any point where you wondered why you filed suit back in June 2015?**

**Janus:** I would say the low point of the case was the social media. Of course, I knew the union would be fighting against it, but to see my name in op-ed pieces, being referred to as pariah, the “pawn” of big business, right-wing extremist, etc. I was just a guy trying to fight for my First Amendment rights to make my own decision. We freely make decisions every day. But here was a union telling me I had to pay a “fee” to work in government or I’d lose my job. That just wasn’t right.

I would also say the waiting was difficult. Real life litigation is nothing like an episode on TV that plays out in an hour. This went on for three years.

**Your case affirmed public-sector workers’ rights to free speech, but some argue that by weakening the union, if you would have stayed a state employee you would have endangered your own job. What do you say to this? If your job had been outsourced or privatized, would this case still be worth it?**

**Janus:** I don’t subscribe to the rhetoric that my job was endangered if I had stayed as a state employee. I did my job and I performed well.

“I would say the low point of the case was the social media.”  
—Mark Janus

Unfortunately, unions protect good workers and low performers. I saw people being moved from job to job within state government because the union protected them when they simply couldn’t do their job. That isn’t fair to other hardworking state employees.

The item that most people forget is that state employees are also taxpayers. As taxpayers, many of us were a bit disgusted by the protection the union provided for bad employees.

In the end, this case was worth the effort and the sacrifice. Frankly, I never feared for my job because I was raised to always do my best.

**What made you quit working for the state of Illinois? What will you be doing in your next role?**

**Janus:** After the decision and as I returned to work, the flood of misinformation being propagated by the government unions was surprising, but not unexpected. Stories

were being reported that government workers were facing obstacles exercising their newly reaffirmed constitutional right to stop paying agency fees or withdraw their union membership.

There were stories of people resigning, but the union said you could not withdraw except in a certain time “window.” But when asked what that “window” was, the union couldn’t tell you. At the Liberty Justice Center and our Stand With Workers website, there were inquiries and requests for help. There was one story of a union posting resigned members’ names on their Facebook page to shame them.

Once I saw the difficulties people were having, I knew it was my responsibility to help them. What could I do to let people know they now have rights under the *Janus* decision?

I had conversations with Pat Hughes and Diana Rickert at the Liberty Justice Center, and we decided that coming on

board as a senior fellow at LJC would be an excellent way to be part of the post-*Janus* effort. Now I’m advocating for workers and letting them know they have a choice and a voice in their decision to resign from a government union or stop paying agency fees. I’ve called people who are having difficulties to let them know it can be done. I did it, so can they. Sometimes these people just need to hear from someone like them. Someone who has stood up for their rights. Someone they can relate to.

I’m also traveling around the country speaking to groups to let them know about the struggle they may face and to provide facts about the *Janus* decision. The Liberty Justice Center is here to help workers exercise their constitutional rights. ■

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**WATCH AT: [DangerousDocumentaries.com/film/America-Under-Siege-Antifa/](http://DangerousDocumentaries.com/film/America-Under-Siege-Antifa/)**



The communist movement known as Antifa (short for Anti-Fascist Action) has sparked violence across the nation. In the wake of their battling white supremacist in Charlottesville, Antifa has begun to gain mainstream popularity. But unbeknownst to much of the public, the vast majority of Antifa violence isn't targeted at genuine fascists, but mainstream conservatives and civilians. With help from those who have encountered Antifa, Trevor Loudon guides us through the history and ideas behind the Antifa movement, starting with Leon Trotsky and going all the way through the events in Berkeley, CA and Charlottesville, VA.

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