



CAPITAL RESEARCH

JULY 2026

The Left's Voter Registration Gift Thrived in 2024

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Letter from the Editor: Is it charitable to help elect candidates?

By Ken Braun

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CRC was established in 1984 to promote a better understanding of charity and philanthropy. We support the principles of individual liberty, a free market economy, and limited constitutional government—the cornerstones of American society, which make possible wise and generous philanthropic giving.

CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER

1513 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
202.483.6900

CapitalResearch.org

Contact@CapitalResearch.org

Internship inquiries are welcome.

Publisher, Scott Walter

Editor-in-Chief, Ken Braun

Photo Editor, Tracey Miller

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About the author

Parker Thayer is an Investigative Researcher at Capital Research Center. A native of Michigan, he is a graduate of Hillsdale College. His writing and research has appeared in *The Daily Wire*, *The Washington Examiner*, *RealClear Politics*, and both state and federal congressional testimony.

 On X/Twitter: [@ParkerThayer](https://twitter.com/ParkerThayer)



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OPEN SOCIETY, CLOSED EYES: THE \$80 MILLION SOROS PIPELINE TO EXTREMISM

BY RYAN MAURO, INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCHER, CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER AND
SCOTT WALTER, CONTRIBUTING RESEARCHER, WRITER AND EDITOR, CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER

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Is it charitable to help elect candidates?

By Ken Braun

Back in July of 1967, the Ford Foundation gave a grant to the Congress of Racial Equity (CORE). The Foundation listed the grant in its annual report for that year, writing “CORE received \$175,000 for activities in Cleveland—a voter registration drive and training of Negroes in community improvement activities in education, jobs, and police relations.”

Not coincidentally, in that same year, Cleveland was in the middle of a mayoral election—an incredibly close election that was taking place in the wake of a series of violent riots in Hough, a predominantly African-American community. (Worth nearly \$1.8 million in 2026 dollars, the \$175,000 Ford donation wasn’t the only grant spent to register voters in Cleveland, but it was the major one.)

The Ford Foundation’s plan reflected the changes in funding priorities of its new president McGeorge Bundy. Bundy, who is perhaps better known as one of the architects of the escalation of the war in Vietnam as the National Security Advisor to both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, had launched an effort to increase the Foundation’s giving to address the racial unrest rippling throughout America’s cities.

Countless books have addressed the (infamous?) Ford Foundation grantmaking in Cleveland leading up to that mayoral election. Why? Because that activity, among other instances, helped spur Congress to enact today’s nonprofit tax law that attempts to draw official lines between philanthropy and politics.

In the wake of the Ford Foundation’s Cleveland election activities, a Congress entirely controlled by Democrats debated and passed the Tax Reform Act of 1969. The staff of the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation explained why:

In several instances called to Congress’ attention, funds were spent in ways clearly designed to favor certain candidates. In some cases, this was done by financing registration campaigns in certain areas. ...

... Congress determined that a tax should be imposed upon expenditures by private foundations for activities that should not be carried on by exempt organizations (such as lobbying, electioneering, and “grass roots” campaigning). ...



Credit: Shutterstock 2515199399.

Supposedly non-partisan voter registration drives are one way that charitable money shapes American elections, despite the 1969 Tax Reform Act designed to limit that influence.

In general, the Congress’ decisions reflect the concept that private foundations are stewards of public trusts and their assets are no longer in the same status as the assets of individuals who may dispose of their own money in any lawful way they see fit.

***Explanation of provisions.*—The Act forbids private foundations to spend money for lobbying, electioneering (unless certain standards are met, this includes voter registration drives), ... and for any purpose other than the exempt purposes of private foundations. Any improper expenditure is subject to tax.**

If you’re a regular reader of *Capital Research Center* or CRC’s online outlet, you’re probably thinking right now that you’ve read article after article that explains how charities are influencing elections.

And they do. But how are they allowed to continue?

In the words of David Callahan, expert in nonprofits and publisher of the influential *Inside Philanthropy*, he asked



A 1967 grant from the Ford Foundation to increase votes in Cleveland's mayoral election inspired the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1969 that limited charitable funding to influence elections. Today, many experts in the field call the law a "joke."

liberal and progressive donors to focus on electing Democrats in 2022:

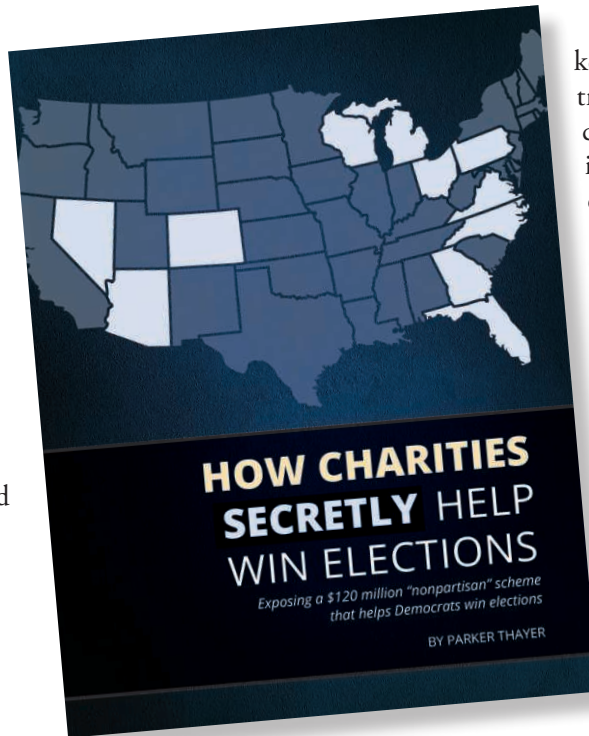
I know: Tax-deductible gifts to 501(c)(3)s supposedly can't be used for electoral work. But that law is a joke. Any donor who does a little homework can find lots of ways to make "charitable" donations that help their political party.

Unfortunately, over time, the nonprofit-industrial complex has shrewdly devised more and more ways to stay within the letter of the law, if not its spirit. We, alongside other watchdog organizations, repeatedly documented how tax-exempt charities have intentionally conducted voter drives that claim to be nonpartisan, but which benefit Democrats. In fact, it's Parker Thayer, who, in a 40-page study, "How Charities Secretly Help Win Elections," exposed a \$120 million nonpartisan scheme that helps Democrats.

That report has been cited by elected officials and staff on the House Ways and Means Committee and other experts who want to know how it is that the guardrails originally built in 1969 have been so demolished.

In this report, we explore something even more sinister. Parker has identified charities that exist primarily to fund a related "action arm," 501(c)(4) organizations that are allowed to lobby legislators or generate grassroots in support of specific legislation for policy outcome. These action arms can also support or oppose candidates or political parties—provided that their election activities only account for 49 percent of their total expenses.

Parker has called these entities "blood bags," inspired by the dystopian film *Mad Max: Fury Road*, where prisoners are



Parker Thayer's report, "How Charities Secretly Help Win Elections" exposed a \$120 million nonpartisan scheme that helps Democrats. It's been cited widely by congressional experts and others

kept alive only to provide blood transfusions. He's identified a collection of groups that engaged in this practice during the 2024 election cycle. And he also documents evidence of these charities receiving grants from what some call "dark money" groups and other 501(c)(4)s.

This one point is a taste of a much larger investigation into how charitable money shapes American elections. In addition to exposing the Left's voter registration efforts, including how federal grants have been directed into get-out-the-vote efforts, the study explores the massive 2030 get-out-the-count (GOTC) Census recruitment initiatives underway by the progressive Left. It also uncovers the major (and predominantly left-wing) funders driving fundamental changes to America's election system—namely the National

Popular Vote effort and the perverse phenomenon of ranked choice voting. Both of these election "reforms" systematically benefit the Left.

We hope you enjoy this sample of some of the articles in CRC's upcoming report "The Charities Influencing Elections: 2024 and Beyond." ■

Sincerely,

Ken Braun
Editor-in-Chief

How tax-exempt dollars shape elections

By Scott Walter

Charities are forbidden by law to intervene in elections. Yet some of Capital Research Center's most important research documents how donors and nonprofits use the charitable sector to influence electoral outcomes. In the last election cycle, they spent more than ever.

Capital Research Center (CRC) was founded in 1984 to promote a better understanding of charity and philanthropy. That mission has always required following the money. Tax filings, grant records, and internal documents often reveal a very different story from the one presented in press releases, annual reports, and public testimony.

The value of that work was on vivid display this spring in Columbus, Ohio, where research by our investigator Parker Thayer helped launch a five-part Daily Wire investigation into Medicaid home health care fraud. Within weeks of publication, Ohio and the federal government froze the licensing of new home care companies, and Ohio restored anti-fraud GPS verification requirements it had made optional. Ohio also suspended payments to 49 home health companies, opened investigations into two, and raided one. The Daily Wire makes clear how much this matters: "The now-suspended firms flagged in our stories collectively billed taxpayers more than \$322 million since 2019."

The Ohio scheme was theft in its plainest form: false billings, paid with tax dollars, concealed until someone examined the records. A subtler kind of abuse has occupied our researchers far longer. In past decades, leftist donors and their political consultants have moved hundreds of millions of dollars into "charities" for election work, chiefly voter registration campaigns aimed at turning out votes from demographics chosen for their partisan leanings. The scheme rewards the Left twice. Charities pay no taxes, and donations to them are deductible, so the public privileges partisan work it never voted to fund.

Federal law could hardly be plainer. A Democratic Congress passed the Tax Reform Act of 1969 because of outrage over the Ford Foundation's funding of voter registration aimed at winning Cleveland's mayoral race. The Act established the bargain governing the charitable sector to this day: A charitable group earns its tax exemption by serving the public, and in exchange it doesn't try to win elections.



Credit: Gage Skidmore via Wikimedia Commons.

Capital Research Center's most important research documents how donors and nonprofits use the charitable sector to influence electoral outcomes. In the last election cycle, they spent more than ever," writes president Scott Walter (pictured).

Yet over time, political professionals decided that many activities most valuable to campaigns could best be pursued via charitable institutions.

As Parker documented in his 2023 report, *How Charities Secretly Help Win Elections*, the Everybody Votes Campaign originated in a 2015 strategy memo prepared for the head of the Wyss Foundation and transmitted to John Podesta. The leaked document preserved its prior editing history, which revealed that references to "political outcomes" were replaced with language about "voter participation," while projections of voter gains remained visible.

According to the campaign's own consultants, its 5.1 million registrations generated between 1 million and 2.7 million votes in 2020, and if their target state projections were close to true, their work exceeded Biden's margins of victory in



Walter joined J. Christian Adams, president of the Public Interest Legal Foundation on the Protecting Your Vote podcast in July 2025.

Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, and Pennsylvania. The document mattered because it provided something researchers rarely obtain: a candid look at how political professionals discussed their goals among themselves. Publicly, the effort was described as voter participation. Privately, consultants estimated votes generated in battleground states and measured success accordingly.

The Everybody Votes Campaign was hardly an isolated case. If anything, the memorandum offered a glimpse into a much larger enterprise. CRC's research found that leading voter registration and turnout organizations spent approximately \$638.7 million during the 2024 election cycle. Many of the same donors and advocacy groups active in voter registration have also invested heavily in shaping the Census to partisan advantage, shaping the administration of elections, and pushing so-called "ranked choice voting." With all these issues and groups, there's an understanding that political outcomes can be shaped long before Election Day.

For years, these efforts attracted little attention. That is changing.

Pennsylvania prosecutors filed criminal charges against seven canvassers connected to organizations associated with the Everybody Votes Campaign over allegedly fraudulent voter registration forms. Georgia's ethics commission fined the New Georgia Project, an Everybody Votes grantee, \$300,000 for illegal partisan activity, and the group later dissolved while under congressional examination. A Congress member formally requested IRS review of the Voter Participation Center's tax status. Congressional committees have held hearings examining charitable electioneering and foreign money moving through nonprofits.

I've testified before Congress multiple times on these issues, most recently at a hearing examining foreign funding and election-related activity in the charitable sector. Today's conversation on elections little resembles what existed only a few years ago. Questions that once appeared only in watchdog reports now appear in congressional hearings, regulatory inquiries, major news stories, and criminal investigations.

That shift did not happen on its own. It happened because researchers spent years reading filings, tracing grants, and publishing what they found, until the facts became impossible for officials to ignore. Sunlight remains the best disinfectant, and supplying it is Capital Research Center's work. That work is far from finished. The groups we study remain active, well-funded, and influential, and the monies they command suggest reform will come slowly.

Still, I am optimistic. More Americans now see how these groups operate, who funds them, and what they hope to achieve. When Americans are given the facts, they reach sound conclusions. I see no reason this issue will be any different. ■



Today's conversation on elections little resembles what existed only a few years ago. Questions that once appeared only in watchdog reports now appear in congressional hearings, regulatory inquiries, major news stories, and criminal investigations.

The Left's voter registration grift thrived in 2024

Legitimate political spending decreased during the 2024 election. But spending surged for a fiercely partisan, Democrat-favoring voter registration machine that's hiding within our charitable sector.

By Parker Thayer

Most people would be astonished to learn how much of the “money in politics” that they love to hate lives, at least nominally, outside of politics. Everyone knows about Super PACs and “dark money” groups, but for years now tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organizations have been one of the biggest centers of political power and money in the country. Not through public policy think tanks or civil rights litigation groups like the Heritage Foundation or the ACLU, but through a rapidly growing industry of “nonpartisan” voter registration and get-out-the-vote groups that abuse a combination of loopholes and lax enforcement to leave the policy consulting sidelines behind and get their hands dirty in the world of winning elections.

Recently released batches of tax forms show that this tax-exempt vote machine grew bigger than ever in 2024. Our research, based on a selection of more than 80 of the largest 501(c)(3) voter registration and get-out-the-vote groups, shows that these industry leaders consumed around \$638 million in total expenses during 2024. Adjusted for inflation that's a ten percent increase from 2020, meaning that nonprofit electioneering became an even larger force in American politics during the last election, even as traditional PAC spending experienced a modest decline.

The growth of this tax-exempt vote machine is bad for the charitable sector, bad for American politics, and dangerous to election integrity. It is well past time for the relevant authorities to give the get-out-the-vote industry a closer look.



AMERICA  VOTES



everybody votes





CRC's analysis show that the 501(c)(3)s driving voter registration experience a 30% increase in spending from \$491.5 million in 2020 to \$638.8 million in 2024.

The history of the vote machine

The best explanation of the tax-exempt vote machine comes from the leaked emails of John Podesta. One such email, sent to Podesta in 2015 by the president of Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss's private foundation, contains an *extremely* detailed plan for using 501(c)(3)s to fund and execute a \$100 million plot to register millions of voters.

But not *all* voters. In callously presented tables, the plan sums up “total non-white” votes that might be generated in eight key swing states, while still-visible edits show entire paragraphs about beating Republicans and “reshaping the electorate” being removed and nonpartisan language about “voter participation” being added only as an afterthought. In other words, the plan was to direct 501(c)(3) voter registration at only demographics whose voting tendencies *just so happen* to benefit the Democratic party for the specific purpose of winning elections. It was an obvious scheme, but the IRS has allowed left-leaning organizations to abuse this loophole freely because they pay lip service to nonpartisanship with fig-leaf words like “voter participation” and “civic engagement.”

This plan, as the Capital Research Center was the first to expose, later became the Everybody Votes Campaign, the largest and most partisan voter registration scheme in American history, and it played a pivotal role in helping President Biden win the 2020 election. A leaked memo from Democratic Super PAC Mind the Gap called groups such as the Everybody Votes Campaign and the Voter Participation Center “4 to 10 times more cost effective than the next best alternative” at “netting additional democratic votes” and Democratic mega donors lined up to fund them. Some donors, including the San Francisco Foundation, the Black Dog Private Foundation, and the David E. Reese Family Foundation were even foolhardy enough to write out the name of the Super PAC in the description of their charitable grantmaking, without receiving so much as a second look from the IRS.

All by April

The tax-exempt vote machine was riding high on its 2020 successes as 2024 approached. Off-cycle budgets remained

high, much higher than in the past, since donors had learned that “registering in the off year is just as—or even more—effective than registering during the on year” because it kept the vote machine running smoothly. With election season approaching, Mind the Gap once again advised its donors that 501(c)(3) voter registration would be the key to a Democratic victory in 2024, while some two dozen new organizations had been added to the industry's ranks since 2020.

Another initiative, All by April, was launched by Pierre Omidyar's Democracy Fund specifically to urge donors to distribute their “election-related grants” to 501(c)(3) groups early, by April of 2024, giving the vote machine plenty of time and money to get back into full gear before November. 174 donors signed the pledge, making a combined “\$79 million in new 501(c)(3) grants for election-related work and moving up \$61 million in scheduled grant payments so that grantees would have access to funds earlier in the year.” In total the campaign estimates it mobilized \$155 million, getting generous funding to many electioneering 501(c)(3)s earlier than ever before. All by April even conducted a detailed survey to verify it.

Things were looking very good.

A fly in the “nonpartisan” ointment

Then, just as the All by April money arrived, Democratic strategists and donors foresaw a problem: “nonpartisan” voter registration might not be partisan *enough*. The whisperings and worries coalesced in January, when Aaron Strauss, a prominent left-leaning data expert, sent an urgent memo to numerous Democratic megadonors urging them to pull the plug on voter 501(c)(3) voter registration immediately because demographic trends had shifted and the “nonpartisan” voter registration groups might now actually be helping Republicans.

The memo caused quite a ruckus.

Writing about the memo in April the *Washington Post* reported that Strauss and other Democrats were concerned that nonpartisan voter registration groups wouldn't be able to “avoid signing up likely Republicans” in 2024. The main

reason for this concern was “a marked shift among the roughly 1 in 5 citizens of voting age who are unregistered toward Republicans,” and several polls “[showing] Biden polling below 2020 levels among Black and Latino voters.” Suddenly, the façade of altruistic concern for the voices of “underrepresented communities” and “civic participation” had dropped. “Indeed, if we were to blindly register nonvoters and get them on the rolls, we would be distinctly aiding Trump’s quest for a personal dictatorship,” Strauss wrote. The memo also admits that the Democratic Party and its donors have outsourced its voter mobilization work to the nonprofit sector, saying “For too long, many funders have relegated the work of mobilizing base constituencies, especially voters of color and young people, to nonpartisan programs.”



Credit: rbfjr / Shutterstock.com

In 2024, Mind the Gap once again advised its donors that 501(c)(3) voter registration, as seen here at New York University, would be the key to a Democratic victory.

Leaders within the vote machine were not pleased. Maria Teresa Kumar, president CEO of Voto Latino, told the *Washington Post* that “Strauss was overestimating the amount that young voters and voters of color are shifting to the right,” and that she was afraid that the memo would “create a disinvestment” in her organization’s work.

As it turns out, she had no reason to be worried.

By the numbers

The 2024 batch of IRS Form 990s shows that Aaron Strauss’s memo was probably ignored, and that groups like the Mind the Gap and All by April were very successful at directing more money into the tax-exempt vote machine.

Using a service called Impala, which aggregates nonprofit financial data for research and fundraising purposes, our researchers gathered financial information for 83 of the leading voter registration and get-out-the-vote groups in 2024. Groups were selected judiciously to avoid counting large organizations for whom voter registration and mobilization was only a small part of their overall work. Only 501(c)(3) organizations were included, and for each group total revenues and expenses from both 2020 and 2024 were recorded (when applicable) in order to estimate the rough size of the nonprofit voter registration and mobilization industry.

Totals were automatically rounded by Impala to the nearest 100,000 or the nearest 100 if the value was below 1 million.

A digital copy of the data can be found at CapitalResearch.org.

The results showed very impressive growth:

- In 2020 the groups raised \$541.7 million and spent \$491.5 million.
- In 2024 the groups raised \$633.3 million and spent \$638.7 million.

Using expenses as the measuring stick to avoid counting organizations receiving large multi-year endowments, the sample of 501(c)(3)s saw a 30% increase in spending from one election cycle to the next. Additionally, our research found that 23 of the top voter registration groups in 2024 didn’t even exist in 2020, while no strictly voter registration and mobilization organizations could be identified that existed in 2020 but not in 2024.

Now, some concessions and explanations must be made regarding this data.

First, there is a non-negligible amount of double-counting in the totals since many of the organizations made large grants to one or more of the other organizations on the list, so the total size of the industry is at least slightly inflated by those grants. For the purposes of comparing the year over year size of the industry, though, this double counting does



Credit: Shutterstock 532192006

Voter Participation Center was caught filtering its digital voter registration ads so that they wouldn't be shown to people interested in things like NASCAR, Duck Dynasty, or golf.

not create as much of a problem since relative size, not total size, is most important.

Second, there was a staggering amount of inflation between 2020 and 2024, 20 percent by most estimates, so the *real* growth in expenses from 2020 to 2024 is about 10 percent—still sizeable, but not as impressive as the 30 percent nominal growth. Ten percent growth is still a remarkable feat since, according to Open Secrets, inflation adjusted total spending on elections through traditional PACs in 2024 was about twenty percent *less* than 2020. At a time when the total money being spent on politics was decreasing dramatically (relative to the last presidential election cycle) the voter registration industry actually seems to have surged.

The Everybody Votes campaign

So, with their funding unhindered by concerns that they would not be partisan enough, what did the left's voter registration groups do with all that money in 2024?

One of the biggest players in the industry, as mentioned earlier, is the Everybody Votes Campaign (EVC), which serves as the name for three organizations; the Voter Registration Project, the Voter Registration Project Education Fund, and Register America, which is a 501(c)(4) not included in the data above. EVC once again received the endorsement of Mind the Gap in 2024 and raised a combined total of just over \$75 million, substantially more than the \$50 million raised in 2020, sending almost all of it out to other left-leaning nonprofits and for-profit canvassing firms. These grantees and canvassing firms landed them in a world of scandal.

For example, in 2024 the Voter Registration Project's 990 shows it paid a canvassing firm called Field+Media Corps \$4.6 million for "voter registration support" in 2024. In October 2025, seven employees of Field+Media Corps were charged by Pennsylvania Attorney General Dave Sunday with numerous crimes, including forgery and tampering with public records related to their work on behalf of the EVC after *thousands* of fraudulent voter registration forms were submitted in bulk in multiple important swing districts just before the 2024 election. Clearly, the \$9.1 million that the Voter Registration Project paid for voter registration "quality control services" to another canvassing firm called The Outreach Team was not well spent.

One of the EVC's grantees, New Georgia Project, was also fined \$300,000 for illegal partisan activity by the Georgia ethics commission in January 2025 and was ultimately permanently dissolved. Another grantee, the Voter Formation Project, reported record high revenues and 50,000 voter registrations after spending millions on digital ads in 2024, but the group was *also* suddenly closed in 2025 with no explanation given.

While the EVC is probably the biggest source of money in the vote machine, the Voter Participation Center and State Voices are responsible for a huge portion of the groundwork.

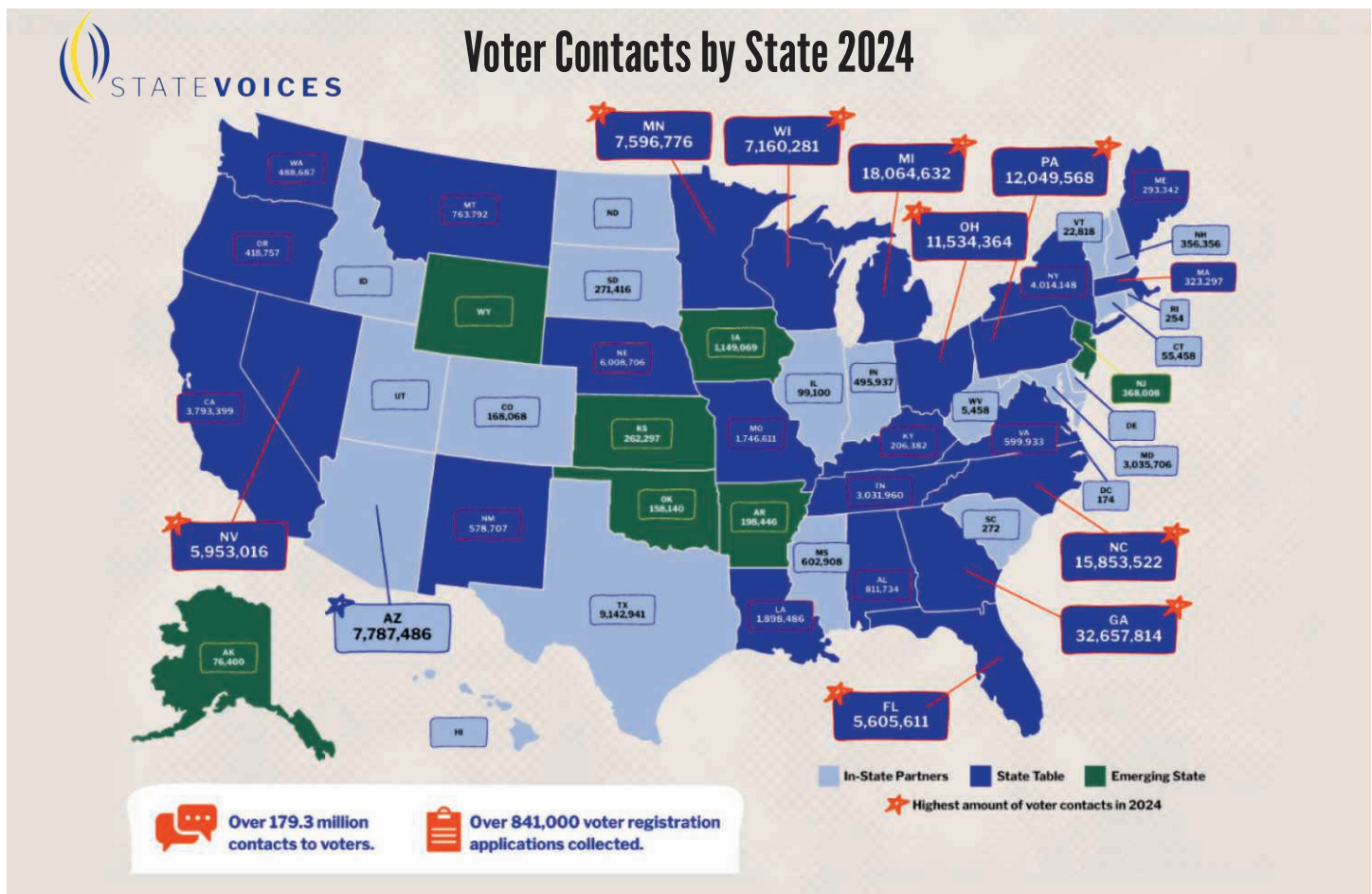
Voter Participation Center

The Voter Participation Center (VPC), for its part, did not have a good year compared to 2020. VPC's yearly expenses were just \$66.5 million, far less than \$100.3 million it spent in 2020, and revenues were similarly disappointing. The VPC made an ambitious use of its diminished budget, though, and found its way into the center of an impressive number of scandals and controversies.

In March, the VPC's misleading mailers caused so much confusion that the Mississippi and Alabama secretaries of state each had to issue statements clarifying that they were not official government communications.

In September, the VPC was caught filtering its digital voter registration ads so that they wouldn't be shown to people interested in things like NASCAR, Duck Dynasty, or golf. This scandal resulted in a demand from Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (R-NY) that the IRS investigate the VPC's tax status compliance.

In October, the VPC's misleading mailers *again* caused so much confusion in Mississippi that the Secretary of State issued a statement.



According to this graphic from State Voices, probably the leading organizing and training hub for the Left’s vast network of smaller get-out-the-vote groups, its network made more than 179 million voter contacts and registered 840,000 voters during 2024.

In November, the VPC was sent a cease and desist by the Attorney General of Maryland over intimidating mailers that they sent threatening to tell the recipient’s neighbors if the recipient didn’t vote that year.

The VPC also continued its controversial relationship with a consulting firm called the “Pivot Group,” paying the firm nearly \$15 million for mailing services despite the fact that the Pivot Group has long described itself as “committed to electing Democrats up and down the ballot.”

State Voices

State Voices is probably the leading organizing and training hub for the Left’s vast network of smaller get-out-the-vote groups. They provide technical training, data tools, and other assistance through their “state tables” which often work with and fund a dozen or more local groups.

State Voices raised nearly \$20 million in 2024 and spent nearly \$25 million, a significant decrease from 2020. But

that shrinkage might be partially explained by “state tables” within the State Voices network spinning off and obtaining independent tax status, meaning their revenues and expenses would no longer appear on the State Voices books. Despite diminished revenues and expenses, State Voices still reported that its network made more than 179 million voter contacts and registered 840,000 voters during 2024. In 2020, the group reported only 124 million voter contacts but 2.1 million voter registrations, so voter registration numbers were cut dramatically while voter contact numbers improved. Perhaps Aaron Strauss’s memo *did* make an impact?

State Voices is an extremely useful organization for understanding the scale and activity of the tax-exempt vote machine because they train and fund so many organizations across so many states that are below them in the food chain. In their 2024 annual report State Voices provided a map of their voter contact numbers broken down state-by-state. Looking at the states highlighted with red stars, indicating where the most voter contacts were performed, a clear pattern emerges:

Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada combined form a near-perfect list of the most important swing states in 2024. Additionally, in Nebraska, where both a paid family leave ballot measure and at least one electoral college swing vote hung in the balance, State Voices reported a staggering 6 million voter contacts, which is more than three contacts per resident and six contacts for every person that voted in 2024. In Georgia, perhaps the most hotly contested swing state, the network's 32.6 million contacts were likewise equivalent to roughly three per resident and six per voter.

Enough is enough

These numbers staggering numbers show that the tax-exempt voter registration and get-out-the-vote industry grew even larger in 2024 while most political spending shrank. Clearly, large left-leaning donors are growing fonder of, and more comfortable with, using the tax-exempt sector to do the dirty work of their partisan political allies. This is bad for several reasons.

First, it means that the charitable sector is becoming increasingly politicized and straying away from its purpose. Second, it gives foreign bad actors an easy method to manipulate our elections because, unlike PACs, 501(c)(3) organizations are allowed to accept unlimited funding from foreign sources. And third, it encourages tribal identity politics and encourages politicians to create division between demographics by specifically pandering to one or the other in order to keep abusing the register-by-demographic loophole that the IRS has benevolently neglected to close with even the slightest enforcement action.

There are several possible solutions. Any amount of IRS enforcement, a congressional hearing or investigation, or even a simple piece of legislation that amends the tax code so that voter registration and get-out-the-vote work are no longer tax deductible would all be huge steps in the right direction. It's time to stop this partisan vote machine pretending to be a charity.

The 501(c)(3) “blood bags”

While the tax-exempt vote machine grew larger than ever before, a concerning parallel development was also emerging. During 2024 multiple 501(c)(3) groups emerged from out of nowhere with massive budgets making enormous grants to an affiliated 501(c)(4) and doing nothing else. Inspired by the dystopian film *Mad Max*, wherein prisoners are kept alive for the sole purpose of providing blood transfusions, we have dubbed this arrangement the 501(c)(3) “blood bag” because these nonprofits seem to have been intended as parasitized feeder-organs for their partisan affiliates from the very beginning.

The practice of using a 501(c)(3) to fund the IRS-required charitable 51 percent of a 501(c)(4)'s activities is nothing new. Usually a 501(c)(3) will contribute a large grant to its affiliate 501(c)(4), earmarked for the charitable portion of the 501(c)(4)'s work, of course, but it will spend most of its money on supplies, salaries, grants to other 501(c)(3)s, and performing its own tax-exempt function.

The 501(c)(3) “blood bags” are totally different. Rather than performing their tax-exempt function themselves, they quietly spent upwards of 95 percent of their budgets on grants to their 501(c)(4) affiliates, outsourcing their charitable functions entirely to groups that routinely donated to Super PACs.

America Votes Education Fund

In 2023, the America Votes Education Fund, the legally affiliated 501(c)(3) wing of America Votes, didn't exist. In 2024, it spent \$20.7 million. Of that, \$532 was allocated for office expenses, \$274 for fundraising expenses, and \$20,748,002 granted to America Votes. Perhaps they used that \$532 to buy a checkbook, some “AV Education Fund” letterhead, and a plaque for an empty office door while the tax-exempt work it was nominally created to do was outsourced entirely to the bullpen of partisan operatives down the hall?



Rather than performing a tax-exempt function themselves, a handful of 501(c)(3)s quietly spent upwards of 95 percent of their budgets on grants to their 501(c)(4) affiliates, outsourcing their charitable functions entirely to groups that routinely donated to Super PACs.

Outside of that, the America Votes Education Fund has done nothing of its own. Its three board members, Greg Speed, Heidi Schloesser, and Brandon Boswell, serve as the president, COO, and treasurer of America Votes; it reported zero accounting or legal fees; it had zero paid employees or volunteers. The only reason for its “charitable” existence is taking in tax-deductible donations and delivering them to the group next door, whose statement on the 2024 election brags: “Our program also contributed to Democrats’ Senate wins in Nevada, Michigan, Wisconsin, and likely Arizona, as well as major state-level victories in North Carolina, including the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General races.”

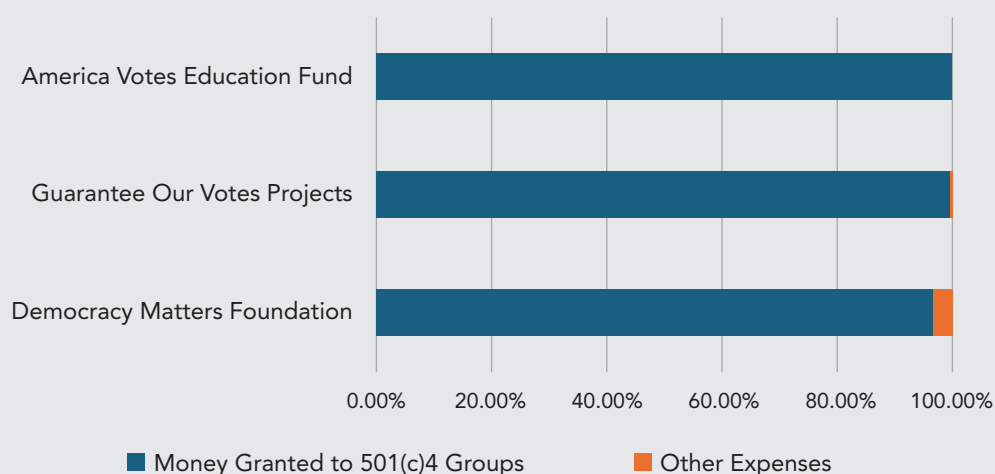
Even more troubling, almost all of America Votes Education Fund’s revenue came from a \$19.25 million grant from Future Forward USA Action, a 501(c)(4) that the *New York Times* called the “dark-money group of the main super PAC backing Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Kamala Harris.” It seems likely that Future Forward USA Action counted this contribution to America Votes Education Fund towards its own 51 percent charitable activity threshold that the IRS requires them to meet, but the money was simply passed along to another 501(c)(4) whose own “charitable” activities are limited to supposedly nonpartisan get-out-the-vote operations run by the exact same operatives who admittedly “contributed to Democrats’ Senate wins” in 2024.

Other large donors to the group include the Arabella Advisors-led New Venture Fund, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, the Linda and Lenny Bell Foundation, and the Wallace H. Coulter Trust; all of which are 501(c)(3)s. Each should probably be asked if they knew that every cent of their money was going to be rerouted to a group that openly boasts that it works to elect Democrats.

Guarantee Our Votes Project

The Guarantee Our Votes Project, a 501(c)(3) affiliate of the Democratic Governors Association, stretched the limits of 501(c)(3) status even further.

Percent of “Blood Bag” Expenses Granted to (c)(4)s



The group spent \$13,919,873 in 2024, with \$39,873, or 0.2 percent, spent on legal, accounting, and office expenses. The other 99.8 percent was spent on grants to America Works USA (\$13.85 million) and New Hampshire Youth Movement Project (\$30,000). America Works USA is one of the Democratic Governors Association’s affiliated 501(c)(4)s and has historically spent most of its money on Democratic PAC contributions.

The group’s May to April financial calendar means it is not possible to see the group’s finances for most of 2024 yet. But PAC spending records show that the group gave over \$6 million to the Democratic Governors Association in 2024. The organization’s only donors in 2024 were the Vanguard Charitable Endowment, which gave \$9.9 million, and the Foundation for the Carolinas, which gave the other \$4 million. Both donors operate donor advised funds (DAFs) which are traditionally not allowed to contribute directly to a 501(c)(4) organization, but the Guarantee Our Votes Project seems to have been conjured into being just to solve that problem, and on behalf of an arm of the Democratic party, no less.

Democracy Matters Foundation

The Democracy Matters Foundation (DMF), formerly the Franklin Education Forum, spent \$34.7 million in 2024, with \$31.38 million granted to the affiliated Democracy Matters and \$1.86 million granted to Onyx Impact. Both of the latter were newly created 501(c)(4) groups.

Government funding of voter registration

The explosion of the tax-exempt voter registration industry from 2020 to 2024 was not solely a function of private donors. The industry has received a generous amount of government funding as well thanks to the Biden administration's frequent grants to openly left-wing political activist groups. Thanks to policies like "Bidenbucks," which tried to turn government agencies into GOTV (get out the vote) machines, government-funded nonprofits started seeking out advice on running voter registration drives like never before.

In 2021, NonprofitVOTE, a group whose sole purpose is to encourage more nonprofits to do GOTV work, published a Federal Funds and Voter Registration guide that explained how nonprofits can get around the rules that restrict voter registration drives by government funded entities. The guide explains that nonprofits receiving Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) can't use CSBG funds "to pay for staff or materials to conduct voter registration" or "provide rides to the polls," but can "use CSBG or other funds to do any other kinds of nonpartisan voter engagement activities" as long as the nonprofit's work in "limited" in such a way that it avoids creating a "public perception" that it is "involved in partisan politics." The guide gives similar directions for recipients of Head Start early education funding and AmeriCorps volunteer funding.

Essentially, nonprofits are being encouraged to play a simple shell-game with grant funds, doing voter registration alongside their federally funded work without actually using federal dollars. It's not a hard scheme to see through since everyone knows that money is fungible, but it satisfies the minimal restrictions of the law and provides enormous utility for politicians who can direct other peoples' money towards organizations that they know will contribute, in a big or small way, to friendlier electoral margins.

This report focuses on groups whose sole or main activity is GOTV work, so the groups mentioned (for the most part) have not received government funds. Most government funded nonprofits doing voter registration work are doing it only on the side.

But even when not the bulk of the work, many nonprofits engaged in a substantial amount of voter registration and GOTV work while receiving government funding.

Examples include:

- **The National Urban League—**
The Biden Administration awarded the National Urban League, a veteran left-wing advocacy group, more than \$10.4 million in new grants from 2021 to 2024. In 2024, according to their 2024 Form 990, government grants accounted for \$35.9 million, or 41 percent, of the League's annual revenue. During the 2024 election, the League's president spoke on stage at the Democratic National Convention, the League spent \$17.2 million on "civic engagement and leadership empowerment program",
 **National Urban League**

and its "Reclaim Your Vote" program made 1.3 million voter contacts, knocked on 248,000 doors, sent over 1 million texts, and held 143 events.

- **UnidosUS—**UnidosUS was awarded more than \$12 million in new grants by the Biden administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) alone. In the lead-up to the 2024 election UnidosUS invited President Biden to speak at the group's annual conference and UnidosUS Action Fund, their 501(c)(4) affiliate, endorsed Kamala Harris after Biden withdrew. That year UnidosUS registered 126,796 voters through "digital and canvassing efforts in states including AZ, CA, FL, NV, NY, PA, and TX." The group also runs a "Hispanic Electorate Data Hub" that tracks polling data, demographic trends, and turnout statistics.

- **The Hispanic Federation,** which received more than \$95 million in new grants from the Biden Administration for programs such as teaching migrant workers how to obtain welfare, and offering "energy resiliency education" in Puerto Rico, also runs a massive civic engagement program and bragged about "[mobilizing] millions of Latino voters" in 2024 and working with 52 partner organizations to "communicate directly with 2.6 million Latino voters to participate in the 2024 election." The Hispanic Federation claims it has registered 160,000 and mobilized 3 million Latino voters since 2016.


These are far from the only organizations with substantial federal funding that have engaged in voter registration and GOTV work, but they are the largest and most notable examples. Other notable federally funded groups such as the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) have gone even further than GOTV work and directly funded ballot measure campaigns or organized protests against law enforcement that turned into violent riots.

A huge number of smaller federally funded nonprofits, such as food banks, community centers, and schools also do tiny chunks of voter registration work that are impossible to track that add up greatly over time. One of the best examples of this was a since-repealed federal policy that allowed work-study programs on college campuses to pay students to do voter registration work, sometimes even while working directly for partisan campaigns.

As this report makes clear, even privately funded nonprofits find it almost impossible to stay away from partisan electioneering in their "civic engagement" work, and there is no indication that publicly funded nonprofits are behaving much better. In fact, since their funding is controlled by politicians whose reelection might determine whether funding continues, government funded nonprofits have even stronger incentives to cross the line into partisan electioneering. ■

That means nearly 96 percent of all Democracy Matters Foundation expenses went towards grants to 501(c)(4) groups. DMF is run by Bradley Beychok, a long time affiliate of Democratic political operative David Brock. The group's biggest donors in 2024 were the American Independent Foundation (\$10 million) and the Voter Participation Center (\$5 million). The Voter Participation Center, as explained above, is one of the worst partisan offenders in the tax-exempt vote machine, and apparently its largest grant in 2024 went to nothing more than a façade for a 501(c)(4).

Bright Futures Fund

The last 501(c)(3) "blood bag" is not in the mold of the others. As mentioned above, DAFs, especially large commercial DAFs, don't traditionally make grants to 501(c)(4) groups. But many DAFs overcame this hurdle in 2024 with the invention of the "blood bag."

Fidelity Charitable Investments Gift Fund, one of America's largest commercial DAFs went straight for the jugular and made, what seems to be, its first ever grant to a 501(c)(4) rendering itself, or at least one of its accounts, the "blood bag." And what a 501(c)(4) it was.

Fidelity granted \$37.5 million directly to a 501(c)(4) named Bright Futures Fund in 2024. According to Gabe Kaminsky at *The Free Press*, the Bright Futures Fund was incorporated in late 2023 by an associate of Democratic super lawyer Marc Elias and spent \$182 million in 2024 with tens of millions going to pro-Kamala Harris and Biden super PACs and other Democrat-aligned organizations. Unlike the groups above, however, Bright Futures Fund then granted a combined \$37.5 million to 12 different 501(c)(3) groups, suggesting a little more regard for IRS rules than the other "blood bags."

What are "Blood Bags"

These charities appear to exist solely to funnel charitable funds to action arms that then use those funds for election advocacy.

501(c)(3)

America Votes Education Fund
Guarantee Our Votes Project
Democracy Matters Foundation
Fidelity



501(c)(4)/PAC

Bright Futures Fund
America Votes
America Works USA/
Democratic Governors Association
Democracy Matters

Fidelity, for its part, seems to have forgotten it gave to a 501(c)(4) group at all, telling the IRS on its form 990 that it only gave grants to 501(c)(3) groups.

Only time will tell whether this is the first of many commercial DAF grants to 501(c)(4) groups or a one-off. But if this is the start of an industry-wide trend it will mean huge changes for the charitable, "dark money," and PAC industries.

The "blood bag" tax-exempt vote machine

The "blood bag" arrangement is something new. Groups on the Left have long used the 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) pairing, but not like this, and this new tactic is concerning. If funding the charitable half of a 501(c)(4) is henceforth to be considered a sufficient tax-exempt function for an entire 501(c)(3), then it will not be long before groups like the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations are granting carte blanche to an entire array of "blood bags" in order to underwrite as much dark money

Super PAC giving as the Democratic party can handle.

Worse yet, as you can see from the grantors and grantees above, the "blood bags" are almost all tied to leading members of the tax-exempt vote machine in some way, suggesting that this is the industry's latest creation in a year where they were already pushing the envelope further than ever before. The vote machine has entire think tanks dedicated to sharing successful strategies so it's a near certainty that, by the end of the 2026 cycle, the "blood bag" arrangement will have been replicated by numerous funders all over the country.

And it won't even be noticed until 2028 when the 2026 Form 990s finally come out. ■



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The voting “experts” are full of it

For the last half dozen years, the Voter Participation Center and its allies have been promoting a myth about voter suppression that is refuted by both common sense . . . and VPC’s own data. Today, they’re promoting a new panic and there’s even less reason to believe them.

By Parker Thayer

In April 2021, a coalition of “nonpartisan” civic engagement groups led by VoteAmerica, the Voter Participation Center, and the Campaign Legal Center sued the state of Georgia seeking to block the enacting of S.B. 202, the state’s election integrity bill. In the lawsuit, the plaintiffs alleged many things. They claimed that the bill’s goal was “not to improve electoral administration but to suppress turnout.” They claimed the bill created a “disparate impact on minority communities, substantial and unnecessary burdens on the right of all Georgians to vote,” and that it had “intentional discriminatory motivation.”

In press releases about the lawsuit the groups went even further. Voter Participation Center CEO Tom Lopach said “provisions in S.B. 202 would make it more difficult to vote, especially for the New American Majority—people of color, young people and unmarried women,” while Danielle Lang, senior director of voting rights at Campaign Legal Center, said “S.B. 202’s effort to restrict civic engagement groups ultimately punishes voters, who otherwise might not be able to make their voice heard in our democracy.”

Outside of the court room, the groups led a feverish opposition and public pressure campaign, seemingly against the entire state of Georgia. The CEOs of Atlanta-based Delta Airlines and Coca-Cola denounced the bill. More than 100 companies including Amazon, Ford, and Starbucks signed a letter responding to unspecified legislation they claimed restricted voting rights. Apple and Will Smith moved the production of a movie out of Georgia. Even the 2021 MLB All-Star Game was moved from Atlanta to Colorado because



Credit: Marcus E. Jones / Shutterstock.com 2620041567

After a lawsuit failed to block Georgia from enacting an election integrity bill, Atlanta was awarded the 2025 MLB All-Star Game to replace the one the city lost in 2021.

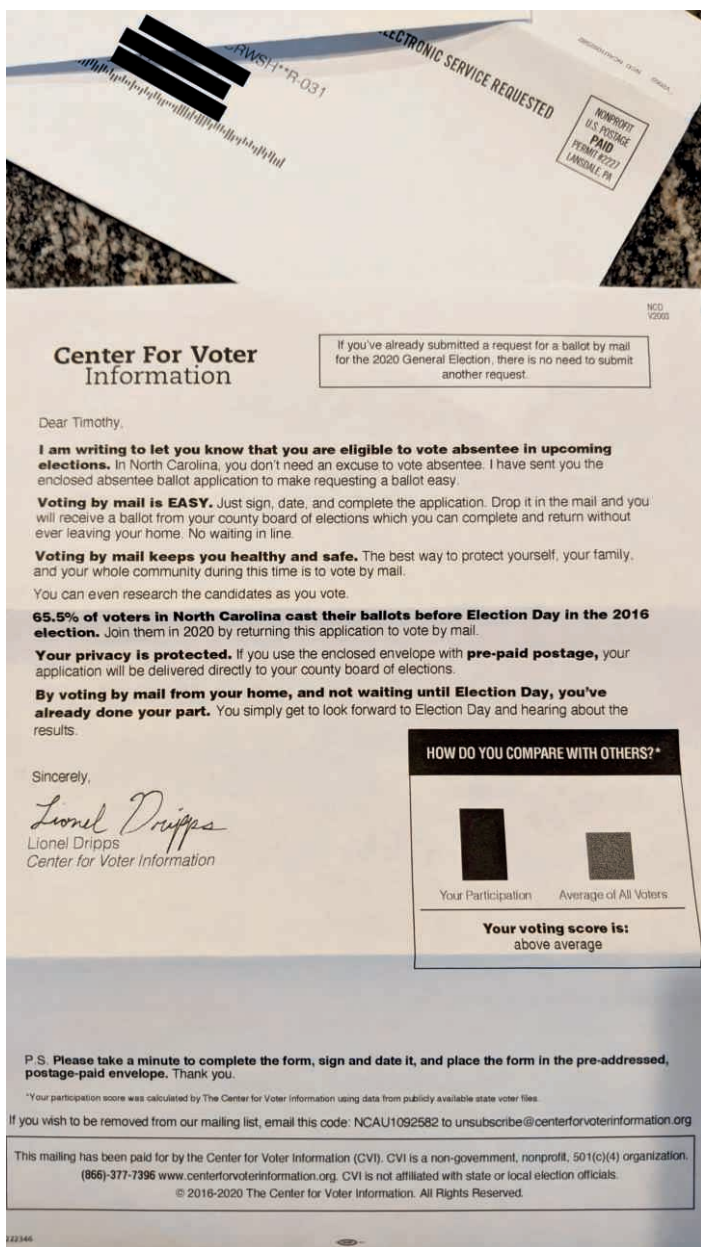
Major League Baseball claimed the legislation “disproportionately disenfranchises the Black community.”

There was a full court press against the bill, but it failed and S.B. 202 was enforced with only minor injunctions during the 2024 election. All was lost, and democracy was doomed in Georgia. Right?

Not so much.

Much ado about nothing

The Voter Participation Center and its allies lost their lawsuit in September 2025, Atlanta was awarded the 2025 MLB All-Star Game to replace the one the city lost in 2021, and the apocalyptic forecasts of all the “democracy experts” and “voting rights advocates” turned out to be as accurate as Al



Credit: ProPublica via <https://bit.ly/3S1prYN>

In September 2025, the VPC published the results of research they commissioned on “Voter Participation Among Underrepresented Communities in 2024.” The research slide deck admits that “Turnout in 2024 was actually higher than turnout in 2020 among UC groups in some swing states—Georgia, Nevada, and Michigan.” Georgia’s “Underrepresented” or “UC” turnout, defined as turnout from African American, Latino, Asian, under 35, and unmarried women voters, increased by nearly 200,000 votes, or 6.8 percent, while “non-UC” votes decreased by nearly 180,000, or 9.2 percent. That means Georgia’s “UC” turnout increased while “UC” turnout decreased nationwide and particularly in states like California, New York, and Wisconsin.

The VPC confronted this embarrassing irony by shamelessly and repeatedly ignoring it.

For example, on September 9, 2025, in a statement on their lawsuit being shot down in court, Tom Lopach, president of the VPC said; “This decision is not what we had hoped for. The provisions in S.B. 202 are dangerous and will make it more difficult for Georgians to vote, especially those in the historically underrepresented communities that we serve—people of color, young people and unmarried women.” But just *eight days later*, on September 17th (the date at the top of the memo) the VPC research showed that those “historically underrepresented communities” had no trouble at all voting in 2024 and actually voted *more*.

This destroys the VPC talking points from eight days earlier so thoroughly that one has to wonder how long the VPC sat on those results, and if they intentionally waited to publish them until *after* their lawsuit against S.B. 202 was resolved.

The next month Lopach again ignored the inconvenient findings from his own research when he wrote an op-ed for *Time* claiming that the Supreme Court was putting the right to vote on trial in *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case challenging certain redistricting-related elements of the Voting Rights Act. Lopach claimed that “participation among underrepresented voters is slipping—not because they’ve stopped caring, but because states keep putting up new barriers to vote.”

But VPC’s research shows indifference really was the cause. When VPC asked “UC adults” why they didn’t register to vote for 2024, 40.8 percent said they just weren’t interested, 9.9 percent said they weren’t eligible to vote, and 4 percent said they didn’t think their vote would make a difference.

Another VPC slide has a table revealing the “Top reason for not voting” in 2024 for each demographic surveyed. For African Americans, Latinos, and unmarried women the top

According to ProPublica, “A North Carolina resident shared an image with [us] showing one of several mailers they received from [the Center for Voter Information.]”

Gore’s weather forecasts. A record-setting 5.29 million people turned out to vote in Georgia during the 2024 election, which was about 64 percent of all registered voters. Not only did overall participation set records, the law then-President Joe Biden and others dubbed “Jim Crow 2.0,” coincided with *increased* turnout from “underrepresented” communities in Georgia while *decreasing* turnout among older white people.

The Voter Participation Center’s (VPC’s) own research confirms it.



Voter Participation Center’s own research shows that “participation among underrepresented voters” is slipping precisely because they don’t care, and that relatively few reported they were stymied by any of the “barriers to vote” that Tom Lopach, CEO of both the Voter Participation Center and the Center for Voter Information, alleged.

answer was “Not interested,” and for Asian Americans and people under 35 the top answer was “Too busy.”

VPCs own research shows that “participation among underrepresented voters” is slipping *precisely because* they don’t care, and that relatively few reported they were stymied by any of the “barriers to vote” that Lopach alleged.

Lopach then went on to say:

In 2022, voter turnout among people of color, young people, and unmarried women trailed older white voters by 22%. This gap persisted in 2024 when Black voter turnout fell by nearly 240,000 votes. Unmarried women cast 723,000 fewer votes than in 2020. Together, these groups and young voters cast over one million fewer ballots even as turnout among other voters rose by nearly 800,000.

What he neglected to mention was that his own group found the worst declines in “UC” turnout happened in Democrat-run states (such as Wisconsin, Arizona, California, and New York) while the state that his group was suing was a top ten performer in “UC” turnout. Did California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Wisconsin’s Tony Evers create “obstacles that make participating increasingly difficult” between 2020 and 2024?



The “experts” that cried wolf

Not to be shamed by their hysterical overreactions to Georgia’s election integrity bill, the VPC has now embarked on another media blitz against the proposed SAVE Act, which would require voters to demonstrate proof of citizenship before casting a ballot. VPC has published a half dozen blogs and op-eds advocating against the proposal and produced a new report claiming that 83 percent of voters would not be able to register in the same way they did in 2024 if the SAVE Act were passed. This, they claim will “negatively impact and disenfranchise” a whopping “21 million” American citizens who “do not currently have access to documentary proof of citizenship” while “disproportionately [impacting] already underrepresented groups like women, people of color, trans individuals, and young people.”

Is there any reason VPC should be believed this time?

Have they done anything to explain why they were so utterly wrong about their last moral panic?

Is there any reason we should trust all the other “experts” who stood alongside the VPC and tried to orchestrate boycotts of an entire state over fears that turned out to be completely baseless?

Absolutely not. ■



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The Vote Machine is already planning for the 2030 Census

A partisan left-leaning coalition with no shortage of loot has meddled in the last two Census counts for the benefit of Democrats. Their 2020 work helped produce one of the most inaccurate Census counts in modern American history.

By Parker Thayer

For months the best show on cable TV news has been the sublime drama of the mid-decade redistricting wars. The blow-for-blow spectacle of Texas, California, Indiana, Virginia, and Florida has dominated air waves and the internet with both sides boldly asserting that they will win in spectacular fashion and that their side alone holds the moral high ground.

Then, just as the dust seemed to be settling, the Supreme Court's *Louisiana v. Callais* decision added an action movie plot twist by ending the longstanding injustice of race-based redistricting and introducing Louisiana, Tennessee, and Mississippi into the fray. The resulting discourse has resembled nothing so much as a debate between fanatical schoolboys on the likely victor of a WWE cage match.

Above the redistricting circus, though, a small, secretive, and well-organized group of left-wing activists and billionaires have already put their heads together to focus on manipulating the 2030 census to influence the outcome of all future redistricting battles in their favor, just as they did in 2020 and 2010.

The FCCP

The Funders Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP) is a coalition of self-styled “democracy defending” activists and donors who convene to discuss strategy for using nonprofits to help Democrats win elections (though they would never admit that goal openly.) The FCCP dates back to 1981 and can be credited as the pioneer of organized nonprofit get-out-the-vote (GOTV) work, which has now become a billion-dollar-per-cycle industry. For each election year they conduct enormous research, outreach, and planning projects to tell the biggest names in left-wing philanthropy how and where to use millions of tax-exempt dollars to increase voter turnout from “underrepresented” demographics that all happen to favor the Democratic party.



Credit: Shutterstock 1404721736

A small, secretive, and well-organized group of left-wing activists and billionaires are already focused on the 2030 census.

Starting in 2008, though, the FCCP expanded its focus from GOTV to GOTC, or get-out-the-count. According to FCCP records, the project, called the Funders Census Initiative (FCI), began in 2008 with a meeting at the Ford Foundation headquarters in New York. It was an elite guest list: “Attendees included representatives of the Ford, Hagedorn, Annie E. Casey, MacArthur, Gates, and Knight foundations, as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Open Society Foundations (OSF), Pew Charitable Trusts, and Atlantic Philanthropies.”

GOTC work, and census policy warfare, these well-endowed donors had realized, “could be conceptualized as the third leg of civic engagement, after voting and redistricting.” By January 2009 the FCI was officially formed, and it wasn’t long before some grew skeptical of its motives. By 2010 *The New American* (a publication from the right-wing John Birch Society) was writing that the FCI clearly intended “to use the Census drive as a huge tax-supported venture in radical political organizing.”

2010 Census

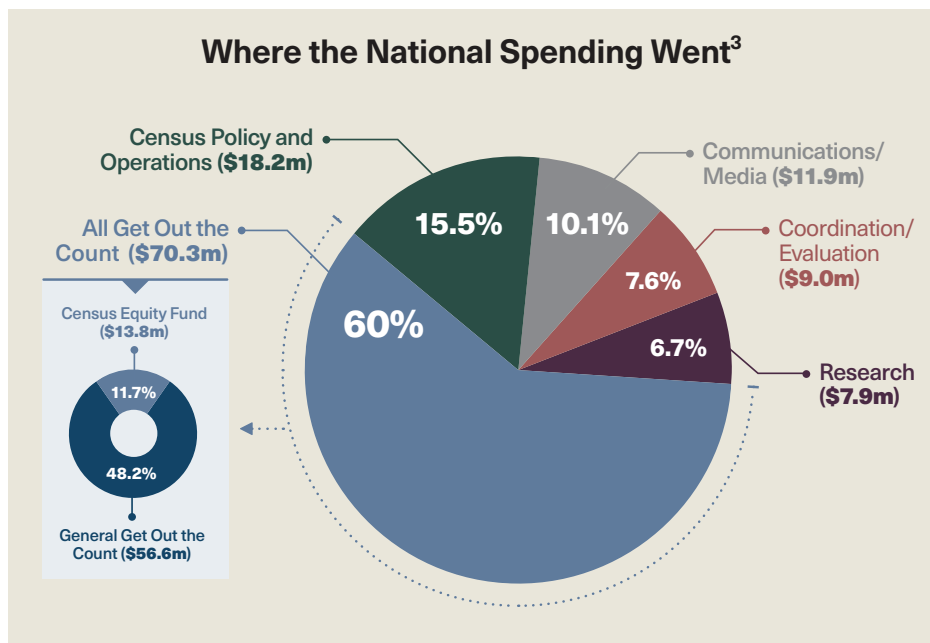
The FCI influenced the 2010 census in several important ways. For example, in a list of the coalition's 2010 achievements, the FCI takes credit for “[mounting] a substantial campaign to defeat what became known as the Vitter Amendment, which would have added a last-minute question on citizenship and legal status to the Census, for the later purpose of excluding noncitizens from the state population counts used for congressional apportionment.” The FCI boasts that it “activated networks” to convince lawmakers to support the appointment of the Director of the Census Bureau and to prevent budget cuts. They also claim that FCI staff that first “[raised] the idea of developing a federal government funding stream to support community groups to help promote the census in 2020.”

Led by activist Terri Ann Lowenthal, a veteran census activist and member of the Obama presidential transition team, FCI served as the bridge between activist groups and the Census Bureau to make sure that big philanthropy was able to insert itself into the process as much as possible. The FCCP's report on 2010 brags that FCI created “an unusual, possibly unique, public-private partnership” with the Census Bureau that granted them “unprecedented, close, ongoing contact and collaboration” with Census Bureau staff “at the local, regional, and national levels” thanks to “relationships with Census Bureau staff, in some cases going back decades, which enabled [FCI] to break through bureaucratic barriers and obtain critically important information for nonprofits.” Using this insider information, FCI trained left-leaning nonprofits across the country on the best ways to motivate constituents to take the census, tech tools to improve census turnout, and even “when and how the census bureau would be hiring door-to-door staff,” so that FCI grantees would be able to seed their own operatives into these jobs.

In 2020 the FCI did largely the same things, but on a much, much larger scale.



Starting in 2008, the Funders Committee for Civic Participation expanded its focus from get-out-the-vote to get-out-the-count. According to FCCP records, the “Funders Census Initiative” began at a meeting at the Ford Foundation Headquarters.



The Funder's Census Initiative reports that, from 2008 to 2010, big philanthropy spent \$38 million on census outreach work, undeniably more than any previous census. The 2020 census put that number to shame, and a similar effort is planned for 2030.

2020 Census

The FCI reports that, from 2008 to 2010, big philanthropy spent \$38 million on census outreach work, undeniably more than any previous census. The 2020 census put that number to shame. In an all-out effort that Sue Van, president and CEO of the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation called a “philanthropic tour de force,” over 100 donors were recruited to spend more than \$118 million on a “coordinated plan of action” for the 2020 census.

To raise that 200 percent increase over the 2010 effort, the FCI and FCCP worked closely with a like-minded new group, the Democracy Funders Collaborative Census Subgroup, a fiscally sponsored project housed at the Arrabella Advisors led New Venture Fund. In a 109-page document titled “Philanthropy and the 2020 Census,” the FCCP lays out a detailed history of how planning started as early as 2015, and together, the collaborating networks funded “260 grantee organizations engaged in litigation, advocacy, outreach and other activities.”

States Undercounted and Overcounted in the 2020 Census

Arkansas	-5.04
Florida	-3.48
Illinois	-1.97
Mississippi	-4.11
Tennessee	-4.78
Texas	-1.92
Delaware	+5.45
Hawaii	+6.79
Massachusetts	+2.24
Minnesota	+3.84
New York	+3.44
Ohio	+1.49
Rhode Island	+5.05
Utah	+2.59

Source: US Census Post-Enumeration Survey

Of the \$118 million spent, \$70.3 million went towards GOTC work while \$18.2 million went towards influencing census policy.

As in 2010, with the Vitter Amendment, one of the most notable ways that the FCI and its partners got involved with the census was fighting against the addition of a citizenship question. FCI's report cites a letter signed by more than 300 nonprofits and FCI funding of litigation groups that submitted more than 50 legal briefs to the Supreme Court which, they contend, may have actually swung Chief Justice Roberts' decision against the citizenship question.

The GOTC work was largely the same as it was in 2010, but there were some notable changes. First, they shifted away from focusing on a national scale of work and focused more on using local "hubs" that catered to specific demographics and affinity groups to increase turnout from "historically undercounted" people. New digital tactics included "geofencing" of cellphone data to target ads at locations with high concentrations of historically undercounted people; using automated chatbots to recruit census workers and answer questions about the census; and collaborating with the hub group State Voices to develop a texting platform for use by state and local census advocates to reach millions of people with census information." Some consultants even developed a Census Digital Academy that offered training session on developing "hard-to-count (HTC) outreach messaging," improving "HTC" targeting methods using voter

files, and how to convince donors to keep funding GOTC work in the future.

The results of the 2020 Census were not good. The reasons for this are manifold, but the most important statistic is that, by the Census Bureau's own admission, there was massive overcounting, mostly in blue states, and massive undercounting, mostly in red states. The 2010 Census was reported to have a minuscule error rate of less than 1 percent; in 2020, the census reported undercounting six states and overcounting eight. (See table below.) As Hans Von Spakovsky explained in 2022, the Census Bureau's post-census survey data for the 2020 count shows that the over and under counts were so egregious that Minnesota and Rhode Island were apportioned two congressional seats that ought to have rightfully been assigned to Florida.

How's that for gerrymandering?

It does not seem like a coincidence that the census that big philanthropy meddled in more than any before was also the worst census in recent history. With \$118 million worth of thumbs being placed on the scale, how could it not be?

2030 Census

The FCCP and its allies seem to have given themselves a pat on the back from the "tour de force" that produced the worst census in modern American history and are already well into the planning process for 2030. The Funders' Toolkit for the 2030 Census has already been posted. The toolkit provides prewritten memos for encouraging donors to fund GOTC work, fill-in-the-blank op-eds calling for more census related activism, a "Census 101" one pager template with "What is Census 2030 and why does it matter for [Your State]?" at the top, and even a prewritten job description for a census fund coordinator. There are also links to best practices for GOTC and a list of left-leaning census partners including Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Color of Change, Faith in the Public Life, National LGBTQ Task Force, National Urban League, and State Voices.

The toolkit doesn't shy away from the electioneering impacts of census work either. One of the first paragraphs states, rather bluntly, that "Our state and local voting districts are drawn using census data, which directly correlates to who is elected to lead our communities." One might reasonably ask whether "who is elected" should be a concern of, much less primary motivating considerations for, a "nonpartisan" GOTC group, but FCCP advertises that the census is important because of the "4 D's ... Data, dollars, districts, and decisions." ■



FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN AMERICAN NONPROFITS



Scott Walter testifies before the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means

On Tuesday, February 10, Scott Walter, President of Capital Research Center, testified before the prestigious House Ways and Means Committee regarding the growing threat of malign foreign influence operating through American nonprofit organizations.

A Clear Endorsement of CRC's Work

Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (R-NY) thanked Scott for his testimony, re-quoting his powerful statement:

“ The line between Philanthropy and Politics has been obliterated. ”

Stu Smith of *City Journal* summarized the testimony:

“ His bottom line was simple. Domestic pseudo-philanthropy is bad. Foreign money flowing through alleged charities is far worse, and it is a channel most Americans reject outright. ”



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Ranked choice voting is down, but not out

The convoluted plan to remake our elections is so unpopular that it has been serially rejected by voters across America and even banned in 19 states. Only RCV's donors love it enough to keep it alive.

By Parker Thayer

Ranked choice voting (RCV) was once promoted as the exciting new solution to all of America's polarization problems; a magic cure for the excesses of the two-party system that would restore sanity and fairness.

In the simplest form of an RCV election, all candidates, regardless of party, are placed in one pool, and voters rank them in order of preference. If no candidate secures a majority of first place ballots, then the candidate with the fewest first place ballots is removed from consideration, and the rankings on those ballots are reassigned. Voters who placed the removed candidate as their first choice have their second choice promoted as their top remaining (i.e.: first) choice. This process repeats until one candidate survives as the top remaining choice for the majority of the voters.

Getting ranked choice voting actually approved by those voters has been another matter. In the past few years a wave of overwhelming rejections has relegated RCV to a political fad. The RCV camp has suffered expensive defeats, failed signature drives, multiple statewide bans, and losses in court, while securing only a handful of wins; mostly local wins affecting small jurisdictions.

RCV in 2024

In November 2024, voters simultaneously rejected RCV or RCV-adjacent policies in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Arizona, while voters in Missouri approved a constitutional amendment codifying a formal ban on ranked-choice voting.



Credit: Shutterstock 1978870817

Under ranked choice voting, all candidates, regardless of party, are placed in one pool, and voters rank them in order of preference. Candidates are then eliminated until one receives a majority.

These weren't just small losses, they were devastating routs. In deep blue Colorado, Proposition 131, which would have replaced partisan primaries with "jungle" primaries and implemented RCV in general elections, failed despite a massive \$14 million fundraising haul that made it one of the most expensive ballot measures in state history. Similar to Proposition 131, Question 3 in Nevada would have created chaotic top-five primaries and ranked-choice general elections that included the five best finishers from the primaries. Things initially looked good, since the proposal had passed once in 2022, but it needed to pass again in 2024 to become law. The measure failed the second time around, making Nevada an especially devastating loss because it proved that voters who had once been open to the *concept* of RCV had reversed course completely when faced with the *reality* of RCV.



Voters don't like RCV. Legislators don't like RCV. RCV has been overwhelmingly rejected multiple times. But the dream sticks around because there are donors who want it.

Idaho's Proposition 1, which proposed top-four primaries and ranked-choice general elections was rejected by an astounding 70 percent of voters. Oregon's Measure 117, which would have adopted RCV in federal and state elections, also failed. Arizona's Proposition 140, while not a strictly RCV-only proposal, would have created a "jungle" primary structure while introducing the *possibility* of RCV in the general elections in the future. Even the possibility of RCV was undesirable for voters, though, and the proposal went down 41 percent to 59 percent. Missouri's Amendment 7, which proposed the combined package of codified voter ID requirements and an RCV ban also passed with flying colors, garnering nearly 70 percent of the vote.

RCV in 2025 and 2026

Following a spectacular string of losses at the ballot box in 2024, the RCV movement moved right along to losing in the legislatures.

In 2025 Arkansas, Kansas, North Dakota, Wyoming, and West Virginia passed and signed legislation banning the use of RCV in local, state, and federal elections; joining Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi who had all done the same in 2024.

RCV's first loss in 2026 was neither at the ballot box, nor the legislature, because it didn't make it that far. The Rank MI Vote campaign, which aimed to put a constitutional amendment to bring ranked-choice voting to Michigan elections on the 2026 ballot, failed to get the necessary signatures. Rank MI Vote did not give up though, promising to try again for the 2028 ballot. Then, in March 2026, Rank MI Vote activists were heckled and unceremoniously expelled from the Michigan GOP amid cries of "shame" and "communists." Needless to say, it was not the shot in the arm that RCV needed.

In February 2026, Indiana became the 18th state to ban RCV by passing SB0012. One month later, Ohio became the 19th when Governor Mike DeWine signed Senate Bill 63 prohibiting the use of RCV, even in city or township elections, and imposed the threat of a loss of funding on any city or county that continued to use RCV.

RCV is still holding on

The forecast is not good for ranked choice voting—in fact it's about as bad as it can be. But RCV did manage to hold its ground and even make a few small gains amid all the losing.

The most important recent win was in Alaska, where voters very narrowly rejected Ballot Measure 2, an effort to repeal the state's open-primary and ranked-choice general-election system, by less than 1,000 votes. By winning, RCV managed to hang on to the state that has been its crown jewel since RCV was first instituted by ballot measure in 2020. A razor-thin margin like that hardly inspires confidence, but RCV supporters also managed to pick up another win in Washington, D.C., where voters overwhelmingly approved Initiative 83, setting a course for the city to begin using it in the 2026 primary.

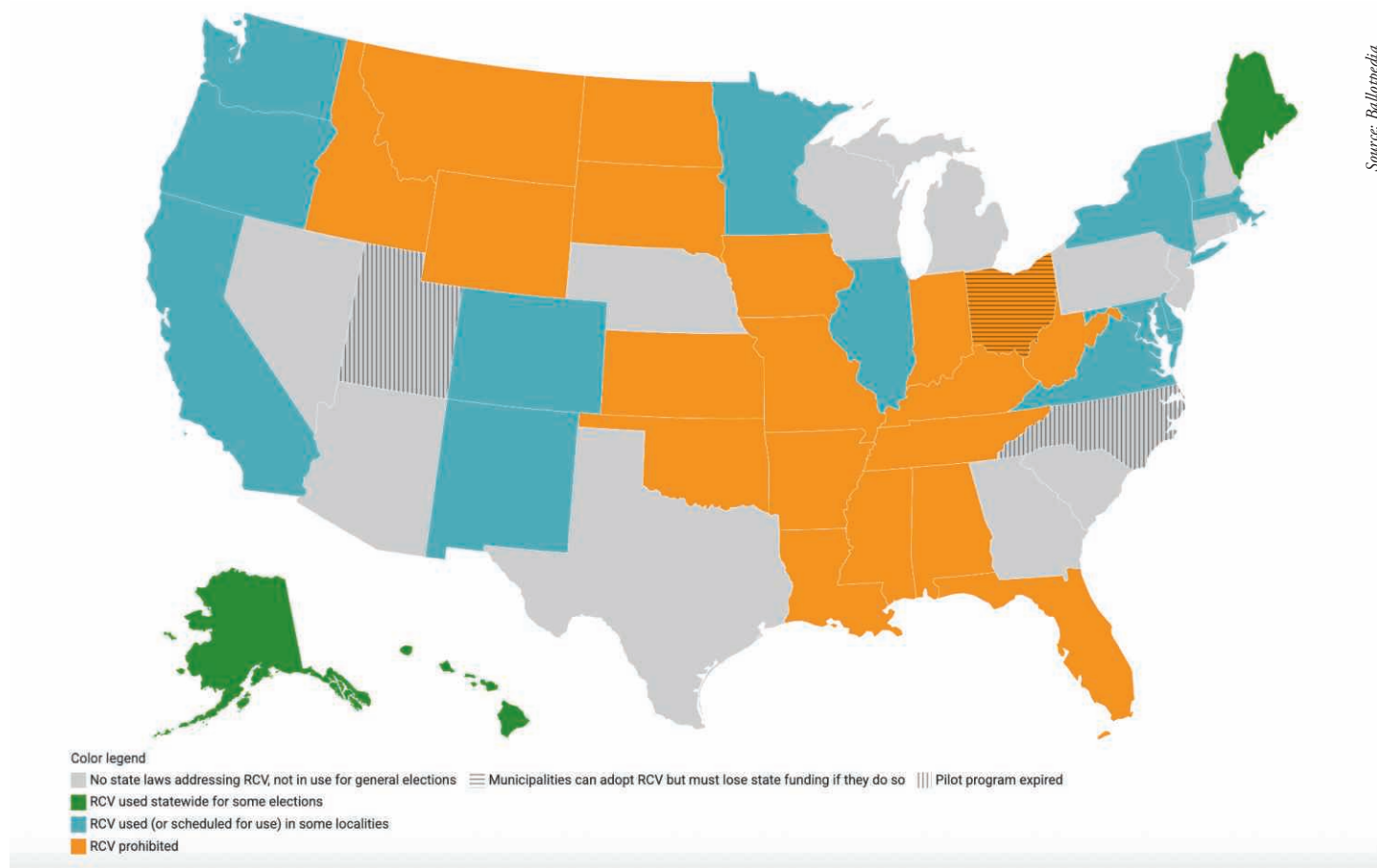
In other words, RCV is fading fast, but it's not dead yet. And with Alaska putting a repeal of RCV on the ballot *again* in 2026,

Credit: <https://www.achute.org/ranked-choice-voting-in-dc/>

Ranked-Choice Voting					
<i>How to rank your top 5 candidates</i>					
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
FINE (RANK 5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
GREAT (RANK 2)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
VERY GOOD (RANK 3)	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
FAVORITE (RANK 1)	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
GOOD (RANK 4)	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

Ranked-choice voting in U.S. states and localities

The map below details the use of ranked-choice voting (RCV) in U.S. states and localities. Each state's color corresponds to its usage of RCV in local, state, or federal elections, excluding partisan primaries.



the movement is probably going to have to make its last stand. Without Alaska, RCV will be reduced to a fad that clings to the edges of urban progressive areas, low-salience local elections, and enclaves where the activist class propping up RCV can focus its resources.

The donors keeping RCV on life support

Through all the highs and (mostly) lows the RCV movement has been kept alive by a small network of left leaning donors and activists who have refused to give up on the dream that once allowed Alaska to elect a Democrat in a statewide election. That fleeting victory seems to have created an addiction, and many donors are still happily forking over cash to the floundering cause.

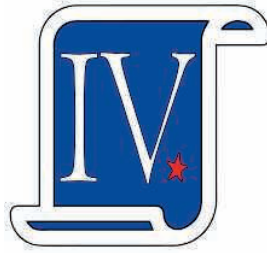
The most notable backer of RCV is probably Unite America, a Denver-based political action committee (PAC) that promotes open primaries and ranked-choice voting as a cure-all for America's political and cultural woes. In Colorado, Unite America gave roughly \$4.7 million to support Proposition 131. The proposition's individual backers included former DaVita CEO Kent Thiry, Walmart heir Ben Walton, Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings, video game magnate Marc Merrill, and Fox heiress Kathryn Murdoch.

The same donor network showed up again in Nevada and Alaska. In Alaska, the 2024 campaign to keep RCV alive raised more than \$12 million, while the campaign to end it raised barely \$120,000. Unite America was once again one of the top donors, and was joined Article IV, a Virginia-based nonprofit, and Action Now Initiative, Texas-based "dark money" group funded by hedge-fund manager John Arnold. Even with that 100-to-1 funding advantage

provided by out-of-state groups RCV was only able to hold on by less than one percent.

Nevada followed the same pattern: the pro-Question 3 campaign was once again funded heavily by Article IV and Unite America. Interestingly, one of the leading donors to the anti-Question 3 campaign was the Nevada Alliance, another left-leaning group. Opposing RCV is becoming bipartisan.

RCV activists get around quite a lot. The top donor to the failed Rank MI Vote campaign, for example, was Doug Robbins, who was formerly a pro-RCV activist in Alaska before he packed up and began to champion the cause in Michigan. Robbins contributed \$100,000 to the Rank MI Vote committee. It seems like RCV might need him back in Alaska before long, so only time will tell if he remains a Michigander long enough to try and put RCV on the ballot in 2028.



It's time to let RCV go into the light

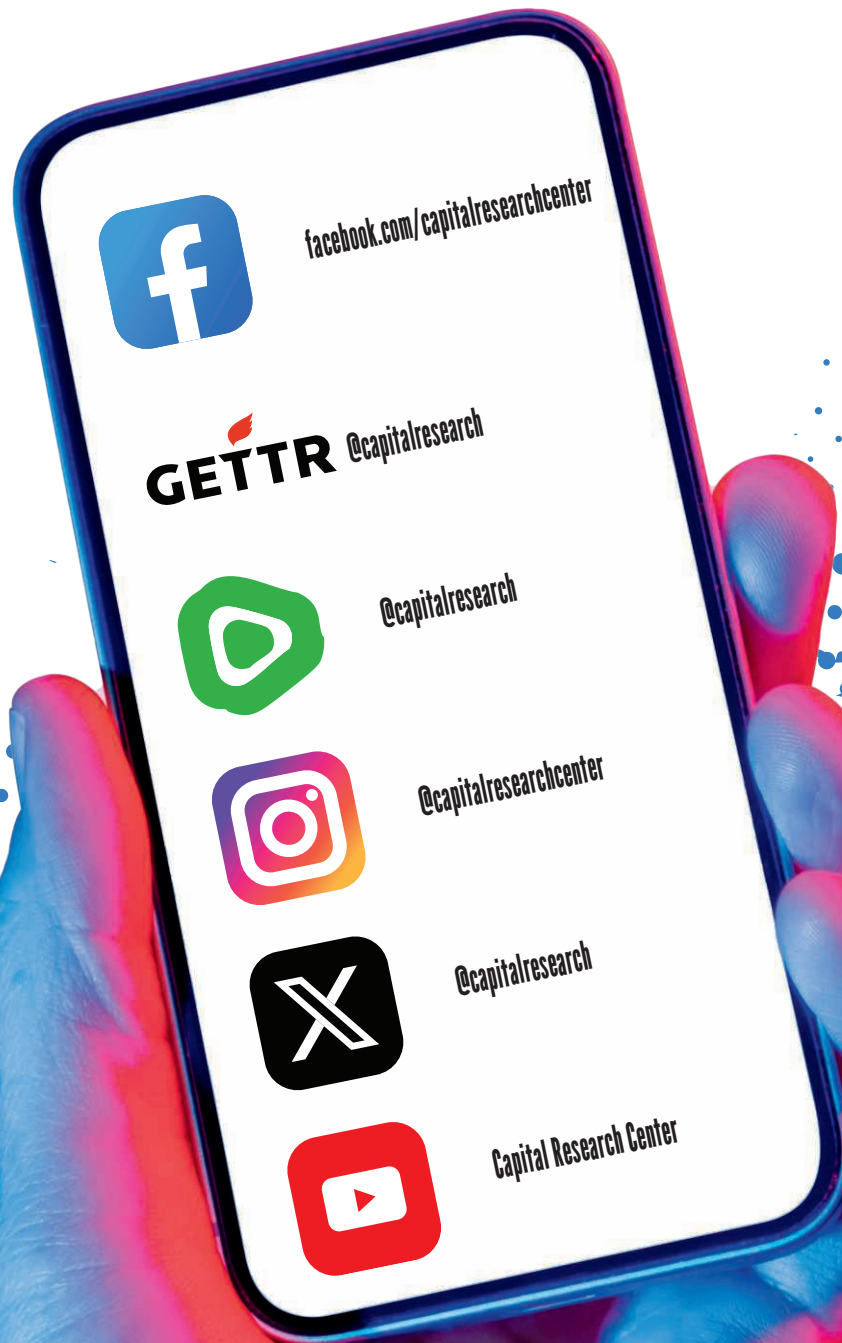
Voters don't like RCV. Legislators don't like RCV. RCV has been overwhelmingly rejected in nearly every state and territory where it has been put to the ballot that isn't a complete political oddity. It doesn't seem to have any meaningful grassroots support. So why does this pipedream continue to stick around?

Because there are donors who want it.

As with a huge number of seemingly popular political causes, the whole operation is little more than a few donors pulling the strings of an apparently wide array of groups. Together these donors are keeping a long-since dead fad on life support when the humane thing to do would be to pull the plug. ■

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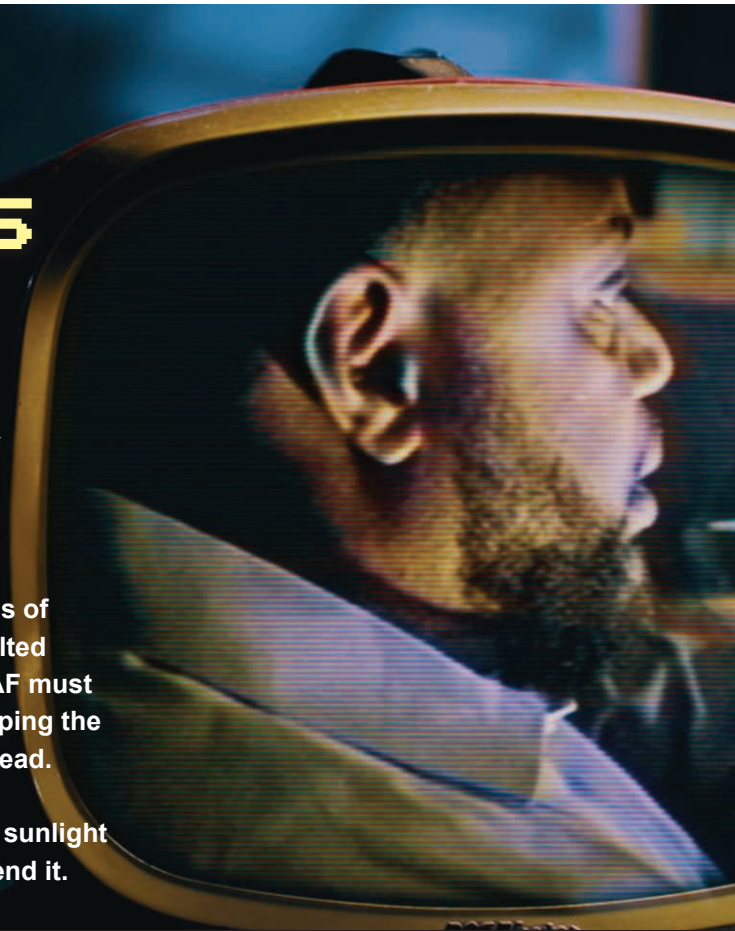
When Cops Become Robbers

A NEW FILM THAT EXPOSES BIG GOVERNMENT'S
BIGGEST OVERREACH:

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Civil Asset Forfeiture allows law enforcement agents at all levels of government to seize property they suspect was used in or resulted from a crime without proof or due process of law. Victims of CAF must prove the innocence of their property at their own expense, flipping the American legal principle of innocent until proven guilty on its head.

CRC's new feature documentary brings this corruption into the sunlight of public discourse through the stories of the heroes trying to end it.



Host a screening in your community by contacting
Julie Taylor at jtaylor@capitalresearch.org or (202) 464-2043.



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