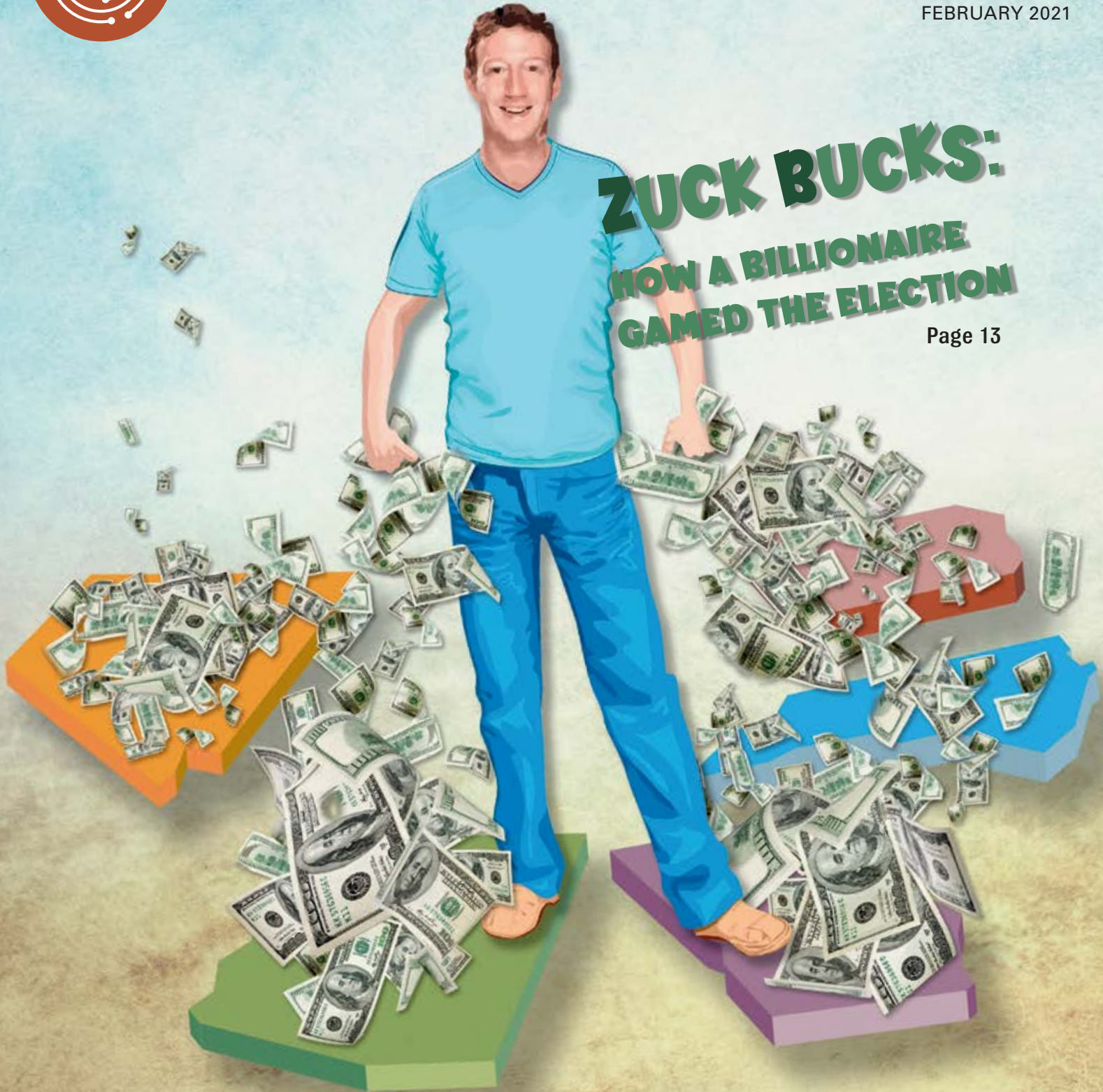




ZUCK BUCKS: HOW A BILLIONAIRE GAMED THE ELECTION

Page 13



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

5 Exposing the Eco-Activists' "Greening" of Pennsylvania in 2020

23 Christopher Rufo Talks Critical Race Theory, Election Aftermath, and Radical Activists

33 Oliver Stone's Antidote for "Apocalyptic Environmentalists"



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COMMENTARY

Big Tech, Big Trouble

By Michael Hartmann

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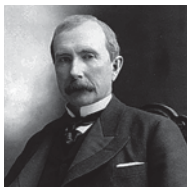
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CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 2021

Volume 6, Issue 2



5 GREEN WATCH

Exposing the Eco-Activists' "Greening" of Pennsylvania in 2020

By Hayden Ludwig and Kevin Mooney



13 SPECIAL REPORT

"Zuck Bucks": How a Billionaire Gamed the Election

By Hayden Ludwig and Scott Walter



23 ORGANIZATION TRENDS

Christopher Rufo Talks Critical Race Theory, Election Aftermath, and Radical Activists

By Joseph (Jake) Klein



33 GREEN WATCH

Oliver Stone's Antidote for "Apocalyptic Environmentalists"

By Ken Braun



**INFLUENCE
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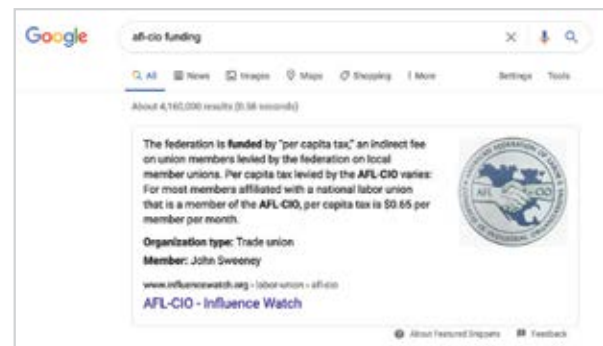
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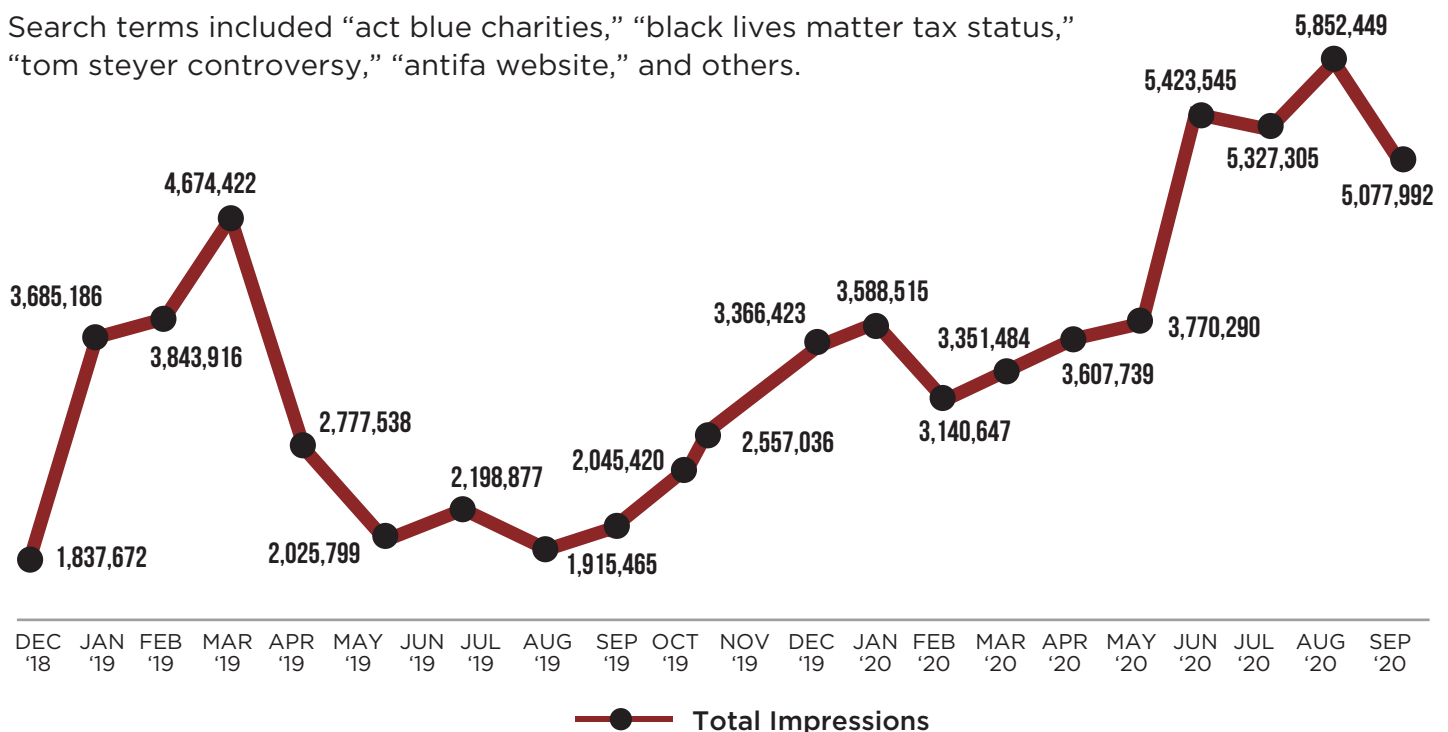
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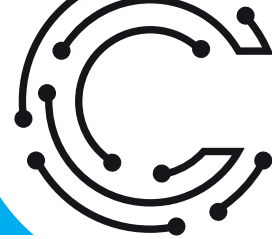
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From January through September 2020, InfluenceWatch profiles appeared nearly 40 million times when people searched Google; nearly 14 million of those results were on the first page.

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CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK



BIG TECH, BIG TROUBLE

A past, and perhaps still present, opportunity.

By Michael Hartmann

Big Tech sure seems to be in big trouble, with a lot of people and for a lot of reasons. During the past couple of years, it's variously angered liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats. And in the past couple of weeks and months, it's been the subject of further fury. And there may be much more in coming months and years. For several years, CRC has been looking at Big Tech and its influence.

In the midst of this tumult over tech, we've thought back to the forward-looking article below. It was originally published as "An Opportunity for Conservative Givers" by InsideSources on October 23, 2017.

We're not that far away from an all-out war on Big Tech. This war—or perhaps wars—is shaping up to be some combination of cross-ideological and bipartisan. The Left and the Right may have different specific complaints with the most-powerful sector in global business, but the concerns about the unintended consequences of monopolies are strangely similar.

Given the mantra of “creative destruction” we’ve heard from Big Tech for years, it’s ironic to consider the opportunities that could be created if the sector stumbles.

A Conservative View

To oversimplify, many conservatives plausibly believe that Facebook and Google, headquartered in the liberal Silicon Valley, discriminate against them and their viewpoints. They increasingly see it in corporate culture wars (the intolerance of diversity of thought at Google or Apple), and in complicated algorithms that pick what content is “OK to be viewed” (Twitter banning Marsha Blackburn’s pro-life campaign ad), among other things.

This disparate treatment of conservatism is exaggerated by the Big Techies’ very Bigness. This bigness also raises the barrier to entry for any center-right or conservative-minded competitors.

Conservatives ask: Can’t we do something about this kind of monopolistic behavior?



Credit: pixy. License: <https://bit.ly/2NEZTN3>.

Many conservatives plausibly believe that Facebook and Google, headquartered in the liberal Silicon Valley, discriminate against them and their viewpoints. Meanwhile, liberals and progressives worry that a menacing and moneyed Big Tech is snuffing out competition and oversight.

A Liberal-Progressive View

Meanwhile, across the aisle, a growing number of liberals and progressives are fighting mad at Facebook and Google, along with Amazon, Apple, and Microsoft, and maybe even Uber. To oversimplify, they worry that a menacing and moneyed Big Tech is snuffing out competition and oversight. There have been several good long-form articles on the issue, but the most self-contained analysis can be found in an

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Conservatives and liberals ask: Can't we do something about this kind of monopolistic behavior?

influential new book *World Without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech* by Franklin Foer of *The Atlantic* and formerly a fellow of the New America think tank.

On the left, these tensions finally came to a head when Google overbearingly forced New America to fire Barry Lynn after he wrote a post criticizing Google, a donor to New America. At the time, Lynn directed the think tank's Open Markets Program. He broadly argues that liberals and Democrats have become far too comfortable with corporate money and power, and he advocates for a policy of breaking up monopolies.

Liberals ask: Can't we do something about this kind of monopolistic behavior?

Open Markets

Open Markets had an idea or two about rethinking monopolies. Helped by the attention Google gave it by its own aggressive overreaction to criticism, Lynn's think-tank project is now its own separate, free-standing nonprofit—the Open Markets Institute. Foer sits on its board of directors.

If some liberals are talking respectfully about competition and open markets, conservatives should actively seek out common ground. At core, the many conservatives and the Lynn-like liberals are both against the Bigness of Big Tech—including the way Big Tech uses the arsenal of weapons that bigness brings with it. (To be sure, the Open Markets' argument is much more expansive and would involve more market controls than conservatives would ever want to see.)



Credit: USDOJ. Public Domain.

As Politico's Danny Vinik notes, the conservative legal scholar Robert Bork developed the "consumer-welfare" framework of antitrust enforcement that Barry Lynn thinks too weak.

As Politico's Danny Vinik notes, the conservative legal scholar Robert Bork developed the "consumer-welfare" framework of antitrust enforcement that Lynn thinks too weak. Yet even that "weak" framework would allow for more action—if not outright "war"—on Big Tech.

Open Markets—both the larger concept and the specific new nonprofit endeavor—will continue to exacerbate tensions within liberalism. If conservatives (read: conservative donors) are truly worried about Big Tech's unfair treatment of conservative culture and messaging, perhaps one or two should consider what opportunities there could be in working together on some well-defined projects and research.

This could mean departing from Bork's narrower antitrust framework—or working within a broader version of it to see if Big Tech's monopolistic bigness is actually harming the welfare of consumers. (Some economists are already trying to broaden the way in which

that welfare is measured.) Perhaps a conservative foundation could directly support a specific Open Markets Institute program to explore this question (assuming it would be willing to accept funding). Perhaps another funder could envision a separate, complementary project or group that taps into the same issue or larger sentiments surrounding it.

A few conservative supporters of this war on Big Tech could prove both strategic and effective. Who will be the first to lead? ■

This article first appeared in InsideSources on October 23, 2017. Subheadings added.

Read previous articles from the Commentary series online at <https://capitalresearch.org/category/commentary/>.



EXPOSING THE ECO-ACTIVISTS' "GREENING" OF PENNSYLVANIA IN 2020

By Hayden Ludwig and Kevin Mooney

Summary: *The Keystone State, an oil and natural gas powerhouse, is under siege by an alliance of well-organized, well-funded "green" activists. From cap-and-trade schemes meant to bleed ratepayers dry to fracking bans on one of Pennsylvania's most vital industries, the environmental Left is fighting an all-out war to blanket the commonwealth with its antihuman ideology. If successful, the activists will transform one of the country's most important energy-producing states into the professional Left's latest conquest—and Pennsylvanians will pay the price.*

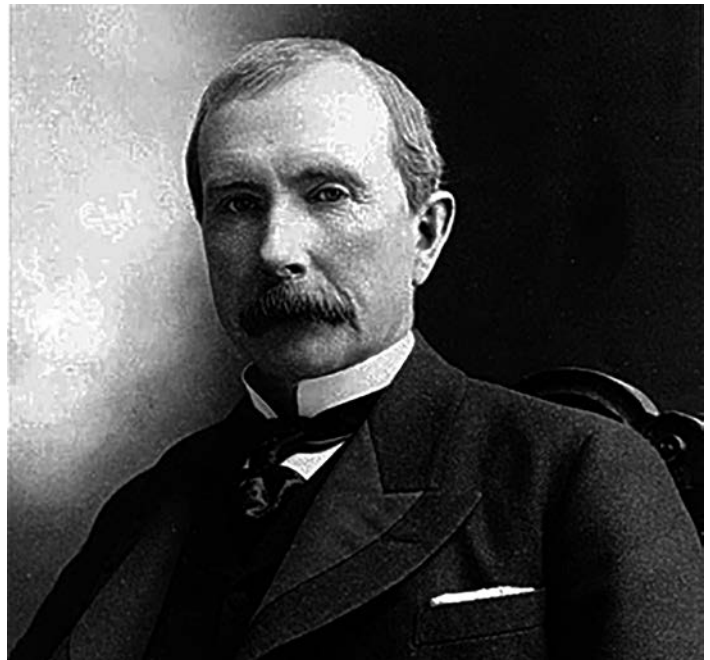
Pennsylvania is the largest net exporter of electricity in the U.S., and its great success has made it a target of professional left-wing activists. These environmentalists are waging a nationwide war on cheap, abundant energy from coal, oil, and natural gas. They want to force the country to arbitrarily shift to unreliable and expensive sources such as wind turbines and solar plants.

Energy Powerhouse of the East

If any state understands oil, coal, and gas, it's Pennsylvania. America's oil industry—and its first oil boom—started in Titusville in 1859. Drillers and investors such as John D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil flocked to the commonwealth, turning backwater towns into thriving metropolises. At its peak, Pennsylvania was producing one-third of the world's annual oil output, driving the construction of railroads and the rise of American manufacturing well into the 20th century.

More than a century after its golden age ended, Pennsylvania is again the energy powerhouse of the East. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the Keystone State is the nation's second-largest producer of natural gas, third-largest producer of coal, 16th-largest producer of crude oil, and third-largest producer of electricity in general.

Pennsylvania is also the largest net exporter of electricity in the U.S., delivering an average of 58 million megawatt-hours annually between 2013 and 2017. Pennsylvanians enjoy



Credit: The Rockefeller Archive Center. License: <https://bit.ly/3qShj7>.

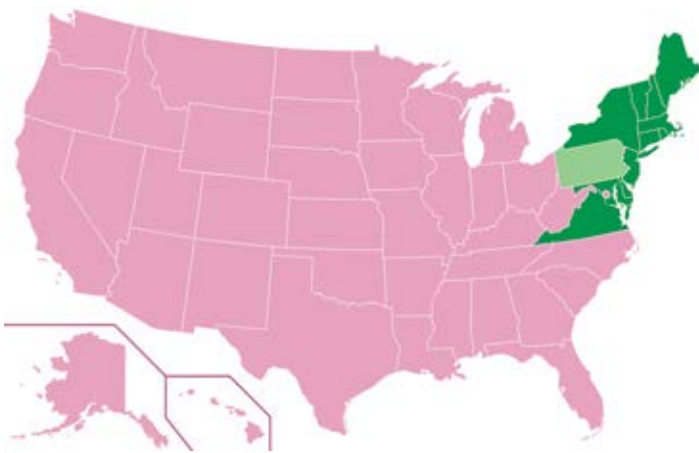
Drillers and investors such as John D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil flocked to the commonwealth, turning backwater towns into thriving metropolises.

electricity prices below the national average—largely thanks to the fracking boom of the mid-2000s, which reinvigorated the state's natural gas industry and helped much of western Pennsylvania stave off the worst effects of the Great Recession.

But all of that could change in an instant.

Pennsylvania's great success has made it a target of professional left-wing activists who subscribe to a rigid ideology that demonizes carbon dioxide—a naturally occurring gas vital to life on earth. These environmentalists are waging a nationwide war on cheap, abundant energy from coal, oil,

Hayden Ludwig is a senior investigative researcher at CRC. Kevin Mooney is an investigative reporter with the Daily Signal, who also writes and reports for several national publications including National Review, the Daily Caller, American Spectator and the Washington Examiner.



Credit: MarginalCost. License: <https://bit.ly/2L1VZUy>

Eleven states—Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia—are signatories. Virginia, the most recent addition, is scheduled to join Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in January 2021. Proponents are pressuring Pennsylvania, the second-largest energy producer in the U.S. and a neighbor to the RGGI bloc, to join the compact.

and natural gas, forcing the country to arbitrarily shift to unreliable and expensive sources such as wind turbines and solar plants.

With backing from ultraliberal foundations and mega-donors, they've made huge gains in the Northeast, instituting a cap-and-trade system (the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative) designed to snuff out traditional energy sources in favor of those of the activists' choosing. Many are lobbying for a statewide ban on fracking, which would cost Pennsylvania hundreds of thousands of jobs and spike household electricity prices. It's a war that the Keystone State can't afford to lose.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI; pronounced "Reggie") is a multistate cap-and-trade system created in 2009. RGGI is a carbon pricing program—that is, it aims to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (the leading "greenhouse gas") to offset future effects of global warming on the planet by taxing it into oblivion. As famed economist Milton Friedman would put it: "If we tax something, we get less of it."

Eleven states—Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia—are signatories. Virginia, the most recent addition, is scheduled to join RGGI in January 2021.

Naturally, proponents are pressuring Pennsylvania, the second-largest energy producer in the U.S. and a neighbor to the RGGI bloc, to join the compact. In October 2019, Governor Tom Wolf (D) issued an executive order instructing the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to begin formulating regulations for eventually joining RGGI. The agency moved to develop a plan for regulating greenhouse gas emissions under RGGI by September 15, 2020.

Whether Wolf has the authority to join the compact is a heated question.

Environmental groups such as the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) argue that he does, under Pennsylvania's Air Pollution Control Act (which authorizes the DEP to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from power plants) and the state's constitution (which requires that the agency regulate "climate pollution").

But some legal experts disagree. Joining RGGI requires the state to sign RGGI's memorandum of understanding, the contract controlling the multistate operation, but the Pennsylvania constitution delegates the power to enter into interstate agreements to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, not the governor. Further, the DEP is authorized to "formulate interstate air pollution control compacts"—not execute them—"for the submission thereof to the General Assembly" for consideration.

Republicans in the state legislature largely agree. In June 2020, the House Committee on Environmental Resources and Energy voted 16–8 to advance a measure blocking Pennsylvania from entering RGGI (H.B. 2025), almost entirely along partisan lines (one Democrat, Representative Pam Snyder, supported the bill).

In July, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed the bill, which was cosponsored by seven Democrats, by 130–71—six votes shy of a veto-proof majority. In early September, the bill passed the Pennsylvania Senate, with bipartisan support, by 33–17, one vote shy of a veto-proof majority. Governor Wolf vetoed the bill on September 24, 2020.

Cap-and-Trade Explained

Cap-and-trade is phony "market" economics at its worst. Cap-and-trade programs cap the annual amount of greenhouse gases—mostly carbon dioxide and methane—that companies are permitted to emit. Producers can then trade a limited number of emission permits in an auction, in order to emit more without being fined, but the cap and total



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Supporters tout cap-and-trade as a more market-friendly alternative to other command-and-control global warming policies, but it's entirely artificial and very expensive.

In 2019, California's cap-and-trade system amounted to a \$600 million tax on producers in the form of emission auction revenues, which are passed along to consumers. California's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that cap-and-trade will raise gas prices by 15–63 cents per gallon by 2021 in a state where retail electricity prices are already 53 percent higher than the national average.

Cap-and-trade is also deeply unpopular; it was at the heart of congressional Democrats' climate plan in 2009—the American Clean Energy and Security Act (better known as “Waxman-Markey”)—which proved so unpopular and politically risky that even the new Democratic majority soon dropped the program, declaring it dead.

Numerous states have attempted to create regional cap-and-trade systems like RGGI, only to withdraw after a few years. More than a decade ago, the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) looked set to dominate the U.S. and Canada with a massive cap-and-trade system; yet by 2011, every state except California had withdrawn from the compact, with some Canadian provinces calling the WCI a “cash grab” by their richer neighbors.

Credit: PICS Canada. License: <https://bit.ly/3qWDHFD>.

And the carbon offset “benefits” aren't impressive. In 2009, Thomas Crocker—the father of cap-and-trade theory—explained to *The Wall Street Journal* that he doubts the system can even accomplish what it sets out to do: lower greenhouse gas emissions. He stated: “I'm skeptical that cap-and-trade is the most effective way to go about regulating carbon,” adding that he favors a direct tax on emissions (a “carbon tax”).

Ironically, some of the most vociferous opponents of cap-and-trade are liberal carbon tax groups. The Carbon Tax Center—which supports the radical Green New Deal, despite the bill's rejection of carbon taxes—criticizes cap-and-trade as opaque and unhelpful, creating volatility in energy pricing and acting as a “hidden tax” on consumers. (It's worth pointing out that carbon taxes are a terrible idea: Canada's national carbon tax is expected to cost the typical household up to CA\$1,120 in extra energy bills each year by the time it reaches its peak in 2022.)

A Lot of Pain—and No Gain

Pennsylvanians enjoy low electricity rates, particularly compared with their RGGI neighbors, whose rates averaged 15.08 cents per kilowatt-hour in 2018—5 cents above Pennsylvania's. Imposing RGGI's strict cap-and-trade system on Pennsylvania would certainly raise electricity prices, but for what gain?

The DEP estimates that under RGGI, the state's annual greenhouse gas emissions could fall by 25 percent between 2022 and 2030. Yet the DEP also reports that the state's emissions naturally fell by nearly 19 percent from 2005 to 2016, without any such framework. That's largely due to Pennsylvania's dramatic shift from coal to natural gas production and modest increase in nuclear power production. (Natural gas emits roughly half as much carbon dioxide when burned as coal, and nuclear produces none.)

The DEP estimates that joining RGGI will add 27,000 jobs and \$1.9 billion to the state economy, as well as save \$6 billion in public health costs, although even sympathetic observers note that the agency didn't provide details as to how it reached those figures. State Representative Jim Struzzi (R), who authored the bill blocking RGGI membership, called the DEP report a “ridiculous piece of propaganda.”

But the DEP's own reports show that the annual cost—passed through to taxpayers—could reach \$320 million as early as 2022, using proceeds from the annual RGGI emission auction.



Credit: Living in Dryden. License: <https://bit.ly/3a0mJ6>.

The Delaware River Basin, the huge watershed running from upstate New York to the Delaware Bay south of New Jersey, is a favorite target of leftist groups trying to ban fracking in Pennsylvania piecemeal.

The Industrial Energy Consumers of Pennsylvania, a major manufacturers' trade group, estimates the minimum financial impact of RGGI at \$275 million *per year* as an added cost to energy producers, not counting the expense of purchasing cap-and-trade emission permits—much of which will be passed along to households and other consumers.

Unlike some global warming policies, RGGI has a wealth of data to examine. A 2018 study by the libertarian Cato Institute found that the program “resulted in a 12 percent drop in [overall] goods production,” compared with a 20 percent *gain* in non-RGGI comparison states. Critically, RGGI states saw power imports increase from 8 percent to 17 percent and “shifted jobs to other states.” In Delaware alone, RGGI emission allowance costs added \$11 million to the state’s electricity bills.

One independent analysis of how RGGI invested its revenues in 2018 found that the program resulted in a nearly \$900 cost per metric ton of carbon dioxide reduced, vastly higher than the “social cost of carbon”—that is, the measure of the economic impact of emissions used to justify carbon pricing schemes—that the far-left Environmental Defense

CC ———
Cato’s study found “no added emissions reductions or associated health benefits from the RGGI program.”

volume of metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions than did RGGI states between 2007 and 2015 (57 million vs. 125 million metric tons). As in Pennsylvania, that’s largely attributable to a nationwide shift from burning coal to natural gas, a product of the ongoing fracking revolution.

Some on the Left agree. Food and Water Watch (FWW), an ultraliberal environmentalist group that campaigns against

Fund estimates at roughly \$50 per metric ton.

But here’s the kicker: Cato’s study found “no added emissions reductions or associated health benefits from the RGGI program.”

Carbon dioxide emissions fell more rapidly as a *percentage* in RGGI states, given their mandated shift away from so-called fossil fuels, but non-RGGI states slashed more than twice the

natural gas and supports a ban on fracking, called RGGI a “flawed and ineffective program that does not meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” Of course, FWW doesn’t believe that RGGI goes far enough and demands a statewide fracking ban.

The War on Fracking

The fight to expand RGGI hasn’t been fought in a vacuum. Pennsylvania has been targeted by environmental activist groups for years, since victory in the Keystone State would almost certainly lead to a ban on fracking—dealing an enormous blow to traditional energy sources such as coal, natural gas, and petroleum in the state that begat the American oil industry.

Many of these environmental organizations are headquartered in California and Washington, DC, and all of them operate with huge funding from ultra-wealthy liberal foundations and Democratic mega-donors.

While RGGI doesn’t specifically target fracking—it levies taxes on coal and natural gas power plants—these groups have been angling for a statewide ban on fracking for years.

Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing, is a method of extracting crude oil and natural gas by injecting a solution of sand, water, and chemicals (about 0.5 percent–2 percent of the mixture) into bedrock under intense pressure, fracturing rock formations to increase oil and gas flow. Contrary to popular opinion, fracking isn’t new—it has been widely used since the 1950s—but it experienced a boom, starting in the mid-2000s.

America owes its energy independence to fracking. In 2009, the U.S. was the world’s third-largest oil producer behind Russia and Saudi Arabia. In 2019, it led the globe in oil and natural gas output, more than doubling oil production and increasing gas production by two-thirds in a decade—producing 12.3 million barrels of crude oil per day. And in 2019, America became a net energy exporter for the first time in 67 years, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Pennsylvania sits firmly atop the Marcellus Shale, an enormous formation that runs from upstate New York to all of West Virginia. Geologists have known about the Marcellus Shale since the 1830s, but not until the mid-2000s—when drillers applied modern fracking techniques pioneered in Texas—did they discover just how blessed with resources Pennsylvania really is.



Geologists have known about the Marcellus Shale since the 1830s, but not until the mid-2000s—when drillers applied modern fracking techniques—did they discover just how blessed with resources Pennsylvania really is.

The Marcellus Shale contains an estimated 84 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, making it perhaps the largest natural gas field in the country. Some experts estimate that it contains up to 500 trillion cubic feet, making it the second-largest natural gas field in the world. Utica Shale, another massive formation, also runs beneath western Pennsylvania. Fracking enabled drillers to reach the gas trapped in shale—thin layers of fine-grained rock—quickly and cheaply.

Fracking helped much of western Pennsylvania escape the worst of the 2009 Great Recession. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that between 2007 and 2012, the average annual pay in Pennsylvania’s oil and gas industry grew faster (by \$13,624, or 14.6 percent) than pay in the rest of the nation. Between 2008 and 2012, employment in the Keystone State’s oil and gas industry went from the nation’s 10th largest to its sixth largest.

The American Petroleum Institute, an industry trade association, reported that Pennsylvania’s natural gas industry contributes nearly \$35 billion to the state’s economy. Combined with its oil industry, the natural gas industry supports about 340,000 local jobs.

And the industry hasn’t let up—in 2016, Shell began construction on a \$5 billion plant outside Pittsburgh that will use ethane produced from the Marcellus and Utica fields to produce polyethylene, a plastic widely used in commercial products and packaging. The plant is expected to create as many as 20,000 local jobs.

One Allegheny County executive, Rich Fitzgerald, put it this way:

No city in America has benefited more from the shale revolution in the last dozen years than Pittsburgh. We were one of the only regions in the country that did not experience the Great Recession back in 2008, because that’s when we discovered the Marcellus Shale.

Pittsburgh mayor Bill Peduto (D) told *The New York Times* in January that the far Left's "ban-all-fracking-right-now" position favored by former presidential candidates Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Bernie Sanders (D-VT) would "absolutely devastate communities throughout the Rust Belt." And Pennsylvania lieutenant governor John Fetterman (D) agreed, adding that a fracking ban would leave "hundreds of thousands of [people in] related jobs . . . unemployed overnight."

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has waffled on a fracking ban, but his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA), supports the far-left Green New Deal and a national fracking ban.

Enter Activism Inc.

The loudest voices demanding a fracking ban in Pennsylvania come from the professional Left, headquartered in California and Washington, DC. While a fracking ban is supported by virtually every environmentalist group, a few national groups are noteworthy for driving the far Left's anti-fracking agenda and take-no-prisoners tone.

Sierra Club. The Sierra Club, based in Oakland, CA, has lobbied the commonwealth for a fracking ban and supports a blanket ban on fracking across the country as part of its goal of "eliminating the use of fossil fuels . . . as soon as possible." "There are no 'clean' fossil fuels," the group contends.

The Sierra Club represents the extreme tip of the activist Left and attracts hardline environmentalists. Among its board members is Paul Watson, founder of the radical Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and a cofounder of Greenpeace, infamous for using steel-hulled ships to ram and sink whaling vessels.

The group opposes all extraction, transportation, and use of oil, natural gas, and coal, as well as nuclear power plants and hydroelectric power generated by dams. Nevertheless, the Sierra Club accepted \$25 million from the natural gas industry between 2007 and 2010 as part of its Beyond Coal campaign, most of which came from the CEO of Chesapeake Energy, a company involved in fracking.

However, most of its significant funding (nearly \$250 million in 2018 revenues, including its fund-raising arm) comes from ultra-wealthy liberal foundations such as Tom Steyer's TomKat Charitable Trust, New Venture Fund, Sea Change Foundation, Energy Foundation, and Rockefeller Brothers Fund.



Greenpeace spreads the claim that fracking creates "explosive water"—tap water so contaminated with methane that it's flammable—a claim the New York Times refuted.

And it's moving further left into so-called environmental justice. In June 2020, the group announced that it was disowning its founder, famed conservationist John Muir, for his friendship with fellow conservationist Henry Fairfield Osborn, who cofounded the American Eugenics Society after Muir's death.

Greenpeace. Tied with the Sierra Club on the far Left is Greenpeace, born from the antinuclear activism of the 1960s. Greenpeace opposes all use and extraction of fossil fuels, organizing stunts such as dangling protesters from a bridge in Portland, Oregon, to block a Shell icebreaker from leaving port en route to the Arctic, where the company planned to drill for oil. Greenpeace was one of the earliest groups to demand the absolute transition to renewables by 2050, now an issue supported by the broader Left—albeit for the entire planet, not just the country, at the bargain-basement price of \$48 trillion (more than twice the GDP of the U.S.).

Greenpeace's anti-fracking crusade is largely built on lies and deception. Its website contains numerous images of bronze-colored water supposedly "contaminated" by nearby fracked wells and spreads the claim that "fracking causes earthquakes." The group also spreads the claim that fracking creates "explosive water"—tap water so contaminated with methane that it's flammable—popularized by the 2010 propaganda documentary *Gasland*. (In reality, according to the *New York Times*, the methane-laced water depicted in the film was due to gas migration caused by poor cement well casings and not fracking. Methane, while potentially asphyxiating in high concentrations, is not harmful to drink.)

Pennsylvania is ground zero for Greenpeace's war on coal. "Did you know that 1,359 people die each year . . . as a result of coal pollution in Pennsylvania?" its website asks, citing the now-debunked theory that coal-burning power plants contribute to acid rain (the big environmental scare of the 1970s and 1980s).

Like other eco-activist groups, Greenpeace receives huge grants (\$53 million in 2018, between its two national arms) from liberal foundations such as the Hewlett Foundation, Packard Foundation, and Ford Foundation.

League of Conservation Voters. The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is even more politically active than Greenpeace or the Sierra Club, serving as little more than an advocacy group for the Democratic Party's left wing.

LCV publishes a scorecard in which it rates the "pro-environment" vote on bills passing through the Pennsylvania legislature. It regularly lobbies for legislation that would expand the scope of government regulation and hamper the oil and gas industry. The group also endorses environmentalist politicians for Congress and the Pennsylvania General Assembly, ranking each politician on a personal "green" scorecard. In 2016, LCV endorsed Josh Shapiro's successful bid for Pennsylvania attorney general, lauding his efforts to enact a fracking ban and for seeking "criminal penalties for those who poison our air and water."

LCV receives funding from the same bevy of liberal foundations (\$99 million in 2018 revenues, including its fund-raising arm) and major political groups, including the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and "dark money" Sixteen Thirty Fund, as well as the Hewlett Foundation, Sea Change Foundation, Energy Foundation, and Joyce Foundation, which once had Senator Barack Obama on its board.

PennFuture. Pennsylvania is also replete with homegrown eco-activists—unsurprising, given the commonwealth's importance to the war on fossil fuels and fracking. These groups operate with funding from outside donors and ultra-liberal foundations based in Pennsylvania.

PennFuture (formerly Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future) is one of the leading homegrown "green" groups championing a shutdown of "dirty fuels" in Pennsylvania. PennFuture also lobbies for a severance tax on natural gas—that is, a tax when gas is extracted from the ground—that it (misleadingly) claims will be "borne by the producers instead of taxpayers."

The group envisions reducing Pennsylvania's carbon dioxide emissions by a whopping 50 percent over the next five years, mostly by implementing President Obama's 2015 Clean Power Plan, which would have hiked household energy prices by some 250 percent while reducing global temperatures by only 0.02 of a degree by the end of the century.



The Delaware Riverkeeper's CEO, Maya van Rossum, argues for adding "inalienable rights to pure water, clean air, a stable climate and healthy environments" to the U.S. Constitution.

(Obama himself said on the campaign trail that under his plan, "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket.")

The Clean Power Plan—axed by Donald Trump early in his presidency—was supposed to be the culmination of the Left's decades-long war on coal after congressional Democrats failed to pass the 2010 Waxman-Markey cap-and-trade bill, leaving President Obama to enact the 460-page behemoth by executive order rather than legislation.

The group's board of directors includes prominent global warming advocate Michael Mann. PennFuture has hosted at least one gala attended by climate alarmist Al Gore and Teresa Heinz, heiress to the Heinz family's food fortune and wife of former Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry. This is not surprising, given where PennFuture receives its funding.

Heinz Endowments, the \$1.2 billion mega-foundation in Pittsburgh chaired by Teresa Heinz, has given PennFuture \$15 million since 2002. Heinz—who married Senator John Heinz (R-PA) and inherited his family fortune after his death in a 1991 plane crash—is a global warming devotee. In 1990, she met Kerry at an Earth Day event; two years later, she was made a delegate to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, which created the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which governs the UN global warming agenda.

PennFuture also receives substantial funding from the William Penn Foundation—\$5.5 million since 2001—a little-known Philadelphia-based foundation that poured out \$136 million in grants in 2018. The Penn Foundation also funds left-wing environmentalist groups, including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Sierra Club Foundation, League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, and Nature Conservancy.

The San Francisco-based Energy Foundation has given \$2.1 million to PennFuture since 2003. The Energy Foundation is a "pass-through" group created in 1991 as a \$20 million

collaborative by the Pew Charitable Trusts, Rockefeller Foundation, and MacArthur Foundation to move hundreds of millions of dollars to far-left political groups.

Delaware Riverkeeper. The Delaware River Basin, the huge watershed running from upstate New York to the Delaware Bay south of New Jersey, is a favorite target of leftist groups trying to ban fracking in Pennsylvania piecemeal.

President John F. Kennedy founded the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) in 1961 to monitor local water quality, but it has since morphed into a cudgel that special interests use to stymie development of traditional energy sources.

In 2010, the New Jersey-based commission imposed a de facto ban on fracking natural gas in parts of Pennsylvania and New York, citing three concerns related to water quality. Predictably, the ban wasn't enough for environmental activists, who submitted thousands of comments to the commission and have sought a moratorium on all natural gas development in the commonwealth.

The DRBC is closely tied to Delaware Riverkeeper, an activist group based in Bristol, Pennsylvania. Riverkeeper is as ideologically motivated as they come. The group's CEO, Maya van Rossum, authored *The Green Amendment: Securing Our Right to a Healthy Environment*, which argues for adding "inalienable rights to pure water, clean air, a stable climate and healthy environments" to the U.S. Constitution. It regularly sues the government on environmental issues. In April 2020, it sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after it approved construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal on the Delaware River.

According to testimony by Tom Shepstone, who operates the blog NaturalGasNow on behalf of his research firm, the DRBC "has stacked almost all its committees with representatives of the Delaware Riverkeeper, a special interest anti-gas advocacy group that sued it over gas drilling issues." Shepstone has called the DRBC and Riverkeeper "allies" in their funding and agenda:

The fact the DRBC saw no conflict of interest in taking money from a foundation that also financed the Riverkeeper, which was suing the agency at the same time over gas issues, tells anyone with half a brain the William Penn Foundation was orchestrating everything. The foundation funded DRBC studies of gas drilling impacts were a sham effort to delay forever having to take a vote, killing fracking without taking responsibility as the Riverkeeper provided the opposition to justify the studies.

The DRBC and Delaware Riverkeeper are both funded by the William Penn Foundation, which has given grants totaling at least \$2 million to the DRBC and close to \$3 million to Riverkeeper. Many of the grants are marked for "advocacy" against natural gas development—that is, fracking. PennFuture, which also receives Penn Foundation grants, supports a "permanent ban on natural gas extraction" in the Delaware River Basin.

But the biggest donor to the Delaware Riverkeeper is the Woodtiger Fund, a foundation based in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, operated by the descendants of Henry Wallace—vice president to Franklin D. Roosevelt and widely considered a far-left radical sympathetic to the Soviet Union. Woodtiger has gifted \$4 million to the Riverkeeper in recent years.

A Turning Point for Pennsylvania

This year could prove one of the most important in Pennsylvania's history. Pennsylvanians have a clear path laid out before them on the road toward growth, prosperity, and affordable energy, or they could succumb to the designs of the far Left. It's no exaggeration to say that the very future of the commonwealth hangs in the balance. The consequences of the decisions that Pennsylvanians make this year will ring through the ages. ■

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Read previous articles from the Green Watch series online at CapitalResearch.org/category/green-watch/.



“ZUCK BUCKS”: HOW A BILLIONAIRE GAMED THE ELECTION

By Hayden Ludwig and Scott Walter

Summary: In 2020, left-leaning donors Mark Zuckerberg and wife Priscilla Chan gave \$350 million to an allegedly “nonpartisan” nonprofit, the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), which in turn regranted the funds to thousands of governmental election officials around the country to “help” them conduct the 2020 election. These grants were focused on battleground states, predominantly in strongly Democratic areas. CTCL grants were focused on the counties most likely to vote Democratic, presumably to juice the Democratic vote in battleground states in order to help flip them blue. This may explain why Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, and Pennsylvania among other battleground states went Democratic.

In 2020, left-leaning donors Mark Zuckerberg and wife Priscilla Chan gave \$350 million to an allegedly “nonpartisan” nonprofit, the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), which in turn regranted the funds to thousands of governmental election officials around the country to “help” them conduct the 2020 election.

The Capital Research Center is conducting state-by-state investigations of these unusual grants in order to educate the public on the ways these grants may have influenced the election. This preliminary report looks at CTCL’s activities in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. In lieu of self-reporting from CTCL, it relies on Ballotpedia’s tracking of these grants based on news reports, as well as our own additional research in news databases.

Overall, a fairly consistent pattern emerges from the data. CTCL grant money was focused on the counties most likely to vote Democratic, presumably to juice the Democratic vote in battleground states in order to help flip them blue. In effect, Zuckerberg and his wife, through CTCL, attempted to privatize the election in key states.

Even before the 2020 election, the *New York Times* and the Associated Press ran articles on these grants. The stories expressed great sympathy for local election officials scrambling to conduct balloting under difficult circumstances, but even these two left-leaning media outlets noted how



Credit: Brian Solis. License: <https://bit.ly/3oontdk>.

In effect, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, through a \$350 million donation to the Center for the Tech and Civic Life, attempted to privatize the election in key states.

odd and suspicious the operation was. The *New York Times*’s respected reporter Ken Vogel, observed,

The prospect of election administrators tapping large pools of private money has raised new legal and political questions. That is partly because it is unusual for elections to be subsidized by nongovernment funding at this level, but also because most of the cash is coming from nonprofit groups that have liberal ties, and the biggest source of the cash, Mr. Zuckerberg, has drawn fire from across the political spectrum.

Similarly, writing on September 16 for the Associated Press, Nicholas Riccardi reported, “The cash comes with a new set of questions about donor transparency, motivations and the influence of groups and figures that are not democratically accountable.” He also reported without objection that conservatives were concerned because of “the Democratic origins of CTCL and that its donations have predominantly

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been in areas where Democrats depend on votes.” Riccardi even quoted my skepticism: “I cannot believe people of such partisanship will put their partisanship aside while taking hundreds of millions of dollars and distributing it to election offices.”

CTCL's Partisan Ties

The CTCL was founded in 2012 by Tiana Epps-Johnson, Whitney May, and Donny Bridges. All three remain the group's leaders, and all three worked together for years at the New Organizing Institute, a 501(c)(4) or “dark money” nonprofit whose partisanship is beyond dispute. The institute was described by the *Washington Post* as “the Democratic Party’s Hogwarts for digital wizardry.” It trained activists, campaign staffers, and nonprofit employees so they could conduct voter outreach via email lists and social media ads, spread online video content, and produce eye-catching online messaging.

The *Post* reported that the institute was created because Democratic Party operatives wanted their field workers to be trained in the digital techniques perfected by the 2012

Obama presidential campaign, in hopes of giving a lasting advantage to Democrats. “Graduates of NOI’s boot camp,” the *Post* wrote, are “subtly influencing the tone and the strategy of hundreds of campaigns and nonprofits at every scale.” While “political technology tends to make the most difference on the margins,” still, “in the aggregate, all that nudging can add up.”



Credit: Smart Chicago Collaborative. License: <https://bit.ly/39kE0bZ>

The CTCL was founded in 2012 by Tiana Epps-Johnson, Whitney May, and Donny Bridges (May and Bridges not shown). All three remain the group’s leaders, and all three worked together for years at the New Organizing Institute, a 501(c)(4) or “dark money” nonprofit whose partisanship is beyond dispute.

The institute was co-founded by Judith Freeman, a long-time strategist for the Democratic Party and allied organizations. In 2004, Freeman worked for M+R Strategic Services and on then-Senator John Kerry’s (D-MA) presidential campaign. In 2005, Freeman began serving as a senior political strategist for the AFL-CIO labor union federation and co-founded New Organizing Institute. In 2008, Freeman worked as a digital field director for Barack Obama’s presidential campaign. From 2004 to 2015, Freeman served as president of New Organizing Institute.

In 2013, Ethan Roeder became the executive director of New Organizing Institute. Roeder had served as a voter file manager and the national data manager for Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign. He then worked at New Organizing Institute as director of data, technology, and election administration for three years until he returned to President Obama’s re-election campaign as director of data.

While CTCL today may have a few members of its governing and advisory boards with Republican affiliations, its leading donors and partner organizations lean exclusively to the left. No conservative-leaning donor, individual or institution is ever known to have supported its work, but it has received grants from the left-of-center Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a significant supporter of the Iranian nuclear deal brokered by President Obama and ended by President Trump, and it has received at least \$690,000 from the Democracy Fund, a foundation controlled by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, who is a primary funder of numerous NeverTrump political efforts.

On its “Key Funders and Partners” webpage, CTCL credits these organizations as having “supported” its work:

- Google
- Facebook
- Rock the Vote
- Center for Civic Design
- Women Donors Network
- Center for Democracy and Technology
- The Voting Information Project (a project of Democracy Works)

CRC has documented the left-wing ideology and sometime partisanship of these groups. For instance, Rock the Vote in 2014, ahead of the midterm elections, released an advertisement featuring celebrities encouraging young people to vote for left-progressive agenda items like abortion rights,



Biden, on the other hand, outperformed every presidential nominee in Arizona history. By any normal metric, Arizona should have been an easy win for Trump, even a blowout. Something's fishy in the Copper State.

and in 2019 it circulated a petition in support of abolishing the Electoral College. Similarly, the Women Donors Network directs money only to left-of-center organizations. The Voting Information Project, like CTCL itself, is funded by NeverTrump stalwart Pierre Omidyar. The project's parent organization, Democracy Works, also receives funding from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (itself a CTCL funder) and George Soros's Open Society philanthropies. It is best known for increasing voter registration among Democratic-leaning constituencies like college students. In this work, it partners with universities as well as with left-leaning companies like Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Amazon.

Weirdness in Arizona

First, a bit of history. Arizona comfortably favors Republicans running for president, hovering around 52 percent of the vote in elections over the past two decades. While President Bill Clinton won the state in 1996—the first Democrat to do so since Harry Truman in 1948—Democrats consistently flopped in the state before 2020, never garnering more than 45 percent of the vote. Republicans' high-water mark was in 2004, when President George W. Bush won almost 55 percent of the state, a full 10.5 percentage points above his opponent, Sen. John Kerry.

But since then Republicans have slowly trended downward. In 2016, Donald Trump won Arizona by 3.6 percent, a disappointing margin compared to Mitt Romney's 9 point margin in 2012. The margin was almost identical to Sen. John McCain's margin in his own state in 2008, and probably indicates strong antipathy to Obama more than a particular fondness for either man.

In 2020, Biden won Arizona by a scant 0.3 percent—a margin of just 10,457 votes—gaining a staggering 735,893 votes over Hillary Clinton's 2016 figures, bringing his total to 1,672,143 votes.

Barring ballot fraud, that is an absolutely stunning result—particularly given that the Biden campaign's presence in Arizona was *minimal*, to be charitable, and during the campaign he first visited the state in early October. Biden himself has no historic ties to Arizona and twice lost the state as Obama's running mate, both times by huge margins (9-10 percentage points) and losing nearly 18,000 votes from his 2008 figures in his 2012 re-election bid.

Chalking it up to President Trump's supposedly historic unpopularity, as some pundits like to do, explains nothing. While Trump won a lower percentage of Arizona's votes compared with his Republican predecessors, he still won a historic 1,661,686 votes—improving his vote count in the state by an unheard of 640,532 votes over his 2016 totals and 518,635 votes over Romney's totals in 2012. That's an impressive comeback for any politician.

Biden, on the other hand, outperformed *every presidential nominee in Arizona history*, Republican or Democrat, as shown in Table 1, which compares his votes in 2020 with past results.

Table 1. Arizona Presidential Election Results, 2000–2020

	Republican	Increase	Democrat	Increase
2020	1,661,686	640,532	1,672,143	735,893
2016	1,021,154	-121,897	936,250	5,581
2012	1,143,051	10,491	930,669	-17,979
2008	1,132,560	28,266	948,648	55,124
2004	1,104,294	322,642	893,524	208,183
2000	781,652	—	685,341	—

Arizona is a rapidly growing state, gaining an additional 1 million people (16 percent) between 2010 and 2020. But Biden's preposterous performance cannot simply be explained by population growth. By any normal metric, Arizona should have been an easy win for Trump, even a blowout. Something's fishy in the Copper State.

Enter CTCL, which made grants to nine Arizona counties just prior to the 2020 election, five of which have been confirmed by CRC to total just over \$5 million.

- Biden won just five of Arizona's 15 counties, accounting for 85 percent of his overall votes in the state and almost 80 percent of Arizona's entire population.
- CTCL funded four of the five counties Biden won. The exception was little Santa Cruz County on the U.S.-Mexico border.

- CTCL funded five of the 10 counties that Trump won, containing just 11 percent (187,146 votes) of his overall votes in Arizona and 11.6 percent of the state's entire population.
- Only one county in the state flipped in 2020: Maricopa County, which narrowly broke for Biden by 50.3 percent to 48.1 percent. Maricopa County gave Biden 1,040,774 votes (62 percent of his statewide total), miraculously *doubling* Clinton's 2016 figures.
- In 2016, Trump won Maricopa 49.1 percent to 45.7 percent with 590,465 votes. Yet he lost the county in 2020, despite winning an additional 405,000 votes, bringing his total to 995,665 votes (59.9 percent of his statewide total).
- CTCL gave Maricopa County elections officials close to \$3 million, or \$1.80 for every Biden vote in the jurisdiction. Centered on Phoenix, Maricopa is the fourth most populous county in America and the largest in Arizona, containing roughly 62 percent of the state's population and over 60 percent of its registered voters.
- Across all CTCL-funded counties, Biden improved his turnout over Hillary Clinton's 2016 performance by 694,469 votes, an incredible 81 percent. Trump improved his turnout in these counties over his own 2016 figures by 565,677, or 66 percent.

Unlike true battleground states like Pennsylvania and Michigan, victory in Arizona always came down to capturing Maricopa County, which was the key to Trump's success in 2016 and his loss four years later.

CTCL's grants may not have won Arizona outright for Biden, but they certainly helped him clinch victory by greasing the skids for voter turnout. CTCL grants largely seem to have had a similar effect as political advertisements, which pump up turnout in places where the candidate isn't physically present to rally. No wonder that CTCL's largest grant targeted Maricopa County and saw the greatest returns.

That result would be impressive for a political action committee (PAC) designed to do just that, but CTCL isn't a PAC. It's a 501(c)(3) public charity *barred from intervening in elections*. Zuckerberg was, in effect, able to tilt the outcome of the vote in Arizona to favor Biden using the wrong vehicle, while receiving a tax break in the process.

The CTCL Went Down to Georgia



In Georgia, the CTCL grant picture is notably partisan, even though we have only incomplete data on where CTCL's money went.

Credit: Thomas Cizauskas. License: <https://bit.ly/3qMOM>

In Georgia, the CTCL grant picture is notably partisan, even though we have only incomplete data on where CTCL's money went. As the AP's Riccardi reported, "The CTCL declined to disclose its other donors" besides the Zuckerbergs, who made their donation public, or to "itemize all its contributions to local offices."

The CTCL's website lists only the counties in Georgia that received grants, but not the level of funding, though that would hardly be difficult to include. CTCL, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is legally obligated to report on its IRS filings when it grants or provides other assistance of \$5,000 or more to "domestic organizations and domestic governments" (see Schedule I of IRS Form 990). It is notable that CTCL has not, in something as public and controversial as the 2020 election, made these grant numbers public.

Were its operatives and massive funding from the opposite end of the spectrum, one doubts the cosmos would have enough electrons to power the outrage vented on NYTimes.com and CNN.com, much less to post the objections by left-wing critics of "dark money" like Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY).

For this preliminary report, in lieu of self-reporting from CTCL, we relied on Ballotpedia's tracking of these grants based on news reports, as well as our own additional research in news databases.

Our research found grant amounts for 18 of the 43 Georgia counties that received funds. If CTCL ever provides more information, we will update our reporting.

- CTCL did fund more counties won by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump than by

Democratic candidate Joe Biden: 27 Trump counties versus 17 Biden counties.

- But that's a function of how many more Georgia counties went for Trump. A better comparison: CTCL funded 21 percent of Trump counties versus 55 percent of Biden counties. So a Biden county was over two-and-a-half times more likely to receive funding.
- Nine out of 10 of CTCL's largest known grants in Georgia went to Biden counties.
- Even more ominous, CTCL gave grants to nine of the 10 counties with the greatest Democratic shifts in their 2020 voting. Those nine grantees averaged a 13.7 percent shift blue-ward, and two of those counties (Cobb and Gwinnett) were in the four counties that delivered Biden the most votes.
- Of the four counties won by Biden that delivered him votes in six-figures, CTCL funded all four.
- Of the 29 counties won by Biden that delivered him votes in five-figures, CTCL funded 19, or 66 percent. (No counties delivered either candidate more than six-figure vote totals.)
- So Biden carried 33 counties that delivered him votes in five- and six-figures, and 70 percent received CTCL grants.
- By contrast, 46 counties carried by Donald Trump delivered him votes in five-figures (no county supplied the president a six-figure vote). CTCL funded only nine such counties, or 20 percent.
- So the most vote-rich counties for Biden were 3.5 times more likely to be funded than the most vote-rich counties for Trump.
- Nine counties were both top vote-producers for Trump and also received CTCL funds. *Five of these counties were among the top ten most blue-shifting counties in the state.*

Nevada—with less than half the population of Arizona (3 million to 7 million)—is something of its mirror opposite in elections. It became a Democratic stronghold only in 2008. Prior to that the last Democrat to win Nevada was Bill Clinton in 1992 and 1996 and Lyndon Johnson in 1968, with the state breaking for Republicans as far back as 1976 when the Republican Party dominated in the West.

For the past two decades, Democrats have typically hovered around the 50 percent mark, with popular candidates such as Barack Obama winning 55 percent of the vote and unpopular candidates such as Al Gore garnering only 46 percent.

After George W. Bush won Nevada in 2000 and 2004 (the first Republican to do so since his father in 1988), John McCain lost the state to Obama, underperforming Bush by a crushing 8 percentage points. In 2012, Mitt Romney chiseled away 3 percentage points from Obama's majority but still lost the state handily.

In 2016, Trump lost Nevada by about the same margin as Mitt Romney. However, Hillary Clinton dramatically underperformed Obama by 4.5 percentage points—the worst Democratic performance there since 2000, nearly costing her the state. She ultimately won Nevada by just 26,000 votes, less than the margin by which she lost Arizona.

In 2020, Trump improved his margins by 158,571 votes, an impressive 31 percent increase over 2016. Biden scored an additional 165,733 votes over Clinton's 2016 figures, *an increase of 30.8 percent*, giving him a 33,596 vote lead over Trump.

That's utterly extraordinary. Trump improved his total vote share in the state by only 2 percent, but that belies the fact that he had *the largest increase in votes in Nevada history*—beaten only by Biden's miraculous trove of largely mail-in votes.

In a normal election, Trump's incredible surge over his 2016 turnout would have flipped Nevada into his column. Instead, Biden's votes eerily seem to track with Trump's, rising at almost the same rate to give him a modest lead.

Once again, Joe Biden outperformed *every presidential candidate in history*, as shown in Table 2.

Something Stinks in Nevada



Trump improved his total vote share in Nevada by only 2 percent, but that belies the fact that he had the largest increase in votes in Nevada history—beaten only by Biden's miraculous trove of largely mail-in votes.

Table 2. Nevada Presidential Election Results, 2000–2020

	Republican	Increase	Democrat	Increase
2020	669,890	158,571	703,486	165,733
2016	511,319	48,897	537,753	8,952
2012	462,422	50,434	528,801	-3,083
2008	411,988	-6,702	531,884	134,694
2004	418,690	117,115	397,190	117,212
2000	301,575	—	279,978	—

Statistically, that boggles the mind. Trump’s 158,000-vote increase is consistent with a state he aggressively courted in numerous massive rallies. But Biden almost never visited Nevada before early October, and even then his Las Vegas rally on October 9 drew a scant 20–30 people. Nor are his absurdly high margins explained by population growth; Nevada’s population grew by only 190,000 people (7 percent) between 2010 and 2020.

As in Arizona, Biden spent heavily in Nevada yet has no historic ties there that one would expect in a state whose voters turned out for him in unprecedented numbers. It’s true that as Obama’s running mate the pair drew historic turnout in 2008 and 2012, but did Biden really shatter even Obama’s 2008 record by more than 171,000 votes in 2020 (itself more than 113,000 votes above George Bush’s 2004 triumph)?

Democratic strategy in Nevada comes down to racking up large turnout in two left-wing strongholds: Clark County, centered on Las Vegas, and Washoe County, home to Reno. Republican strategy naturally revolves around overcoming the Democrats’ advantage in these cities with rural turnout in the other 15 counties.

Enter CTCL and \$2.7 million in grants split between just two Nevada counties, Clark (\$2,394,036) and Washoe (\$277,479)—the only two counties Biden won in the Silver State.

- Washoe and Clark Counties, the state’s most populous spots, accounted for 92.4 percent of Biden’s overall votes in Nevada. They also contain roughly 89 percent of the state’s population.

- CTCL spent \$4.59 per Biden voter in Clark County. That’s \$1.06 for every man, woman, and child living there.
- No less than 74 percent of Biden’s votes came from Clark County: 521,852 votes, a whopping 77 percent increase (120,784 votes) over Hillary Clinton’s 2016 figures.
- CTCL spent \$2.17 per Biden voter in Washoe County. That’s \$0.59 for every person living in the county.
- Washoe County gave Biden 128,128 votes, a 76 percent increase (31,096 votes) over Clinton’s 2016 figures.
- Trump also improved his turnout in Clark County by 111,359 votes, and Washoe County by 22,231 votes (an 81 percent increase over 2016). Together they accounted for 81 percent of Trump’s overall votes in Nevada, although Clark provided Trump with less than half of his votes statewide.

Besides Washoe and Clark Counties, Trump won Nevada’s remaining 15 counties by an average of 73 percent. He lost Reno by only 11,000 votes, but Las Vegas put Biden over the edge. In Sin City, Biden crushed Trump by almost 91,000 votes—almost three times his 33,000 statewide lead over Trump. Without a bumper crop of Biden ballots in Las Vegas, Trump would have won Nevada by a comfortable margin.

How much did CTCL’s \$2.3 million grant to Clark County help turn out Biden voters? Clark County contains 71 percent of Nevada’s 1.8 million registered voters. If there was one jurisdiction where partisan get-out-the-vote infrastructure would pay dividends in Nevada, it was there.

Just how county elections officials spent their CTCL funds is unclear, as the public document describes its use as only “planning and operationalizing safe and secure election administration” during the COVID-19 pandemic. But a similar \$10 million CTCL grant to Philadelphia stipulated that the city use the funds for printing and postage for mail-in ballots. In 2020, Nevada conducted an all-mail election, sending absentee ballots—which usually must be requested by voters—to every registered voter in the state.



Dropboxes sidestep basic voting integrity requirements, allowing anyone—without any identification—to drop any number of ballots into a collection bin with no official oversight and no accountability after the fact.



Credit: Robert Vidrine. License: <https://bit.ly/2ogCP4h>.

CTCL's grants likely had a similar effect as targeted political advertising—bolstering support for Biden in exactly the key places he needed to win North Carolina, but in this election the efforts fell about 75,000 votes short of flipping North Carolina blue.

CTCL's grant to Philadelphia also required the city scatter "Secure Dropboxes" around the city for voters to drop ballots into. This matters because dropboxes sidestep basic voting integrity requirements, allowing anyone—without any identification—to drop any number of ballots into a collection bin *with no official oversight and no accountability after the fact*. If a fraudster wanted to flood Philadelphia with phony ballots, CTCL's Zuck bucks enabled him to bypass U.S. Postal Service mailboxes.

There's no reason to believe CTCL did not require the same dropboxes be scattered around Reno, Las Vegas, and everywhere else its funds were sent. We'll never know how many fake ballots entered into the election bloodstream this way.

Trouble in the Tar Heel State

North Carolina is a perennial battleground state for Republicans and Democrats. President Donald Trump won the state by 74,000 votes in 2020, down from his over 177,000 vote margin over Hillary Clinton in 2016.

CTCL gave grants to at least 34 cities and counties in North Carolina, according to an online list of "preliminary" grants, although the specific grant amounts are not detailed.

- Joe Biden won 26 of North Carolina's 100 counties, accounting for 65 percent of his overall votes in the state and containing just over half its entire population.

- Of the 26 counties Biden won, CTCL funded nine. These nine counties alone provided Biden with over 908,000 votes, or roughly one-third of all his votes in North Carolina.
- Of the 74 counties that Trump won, CTCL funded 26. These 26 provided Trump with over 654,000 votes, or less than 24 percent of his votes in the state. They also contain only 18 percent of North Carolina's total population.
- No county that received CTCL funding flipped from Trump to Biden or vice versa. Rather, CTCL grants "greased the wheels" for impressive growth in voter turnout—particularly for Biden.
- Across all CTCL-funded counties, Biden improved his turnout over Hillary Clinton's 2016 performance by 255,125 votes, an increase of 25 percent. Trump increased his turnout in those same CTCL-funded counties by 170,519 (an 18 percent increase).
- Overall, we see a median increase of 21 percent for Biden and a 17 percent increase for Trump in counties funded by CTCL.
- Key Biden gains were concentrated in CTCL-funded counties that Clinton won in 2016: Greensboro in Guilford County (25,857 votes, a 17 percent increase), Durham in Durham County (25,905 votes, a 22 percent increase), Asheville in Buncombe County (21,578 votes, a 29 percent increase), and Raleigh in Wake County (94,983, a 32 percent increase). In only one of these heavily populated counties, Wake, did Trump's improvement over 2016 exceed 10,000 votes.
- Wake County, CTCL's most richly funded county and the largest in the state, received \$2.83 for every Biden vote, or \$0.90 cents for every person living there. Wake County is a Democratic stronghold, earning Biden more than 393,000 votes—his largest grab in the state and over 167,000 votes more than Trump earned there.
- Biden's most impressive gains over 2016 Democratic turnout were also in Wake County: A whopping 94,983 additional votes—a 32 percent increase over Clinton's figures. Biden netted over 393,000 votes in a county that contains 1.1 million, or 35 percent of its entire population. (Trump, who lost Wake in 2016, gained only another 32,590 votes in the county.)

- Elections officials in CTCL's second-most richly funded county, Durham, received \$4.56 for every man, woman, and child living there. Durham County broke heavily for Biden: nearly 145,000 votes, almost 4.5 times as many as Trump won (32,000). That's nearly \$10.14 for every Biden vote in the county.

CTCL's grants likely had a similar effect as targeted political advertising—bolstering support for Biden in exactly the key places he needed to win North Carolina, but in this election the efforts fell about 75,000 votes short of flipping North Carolina blue.

Return on Investment in Pennsylvania

Now we've crunched the numbers for Pennsylvania, and the partisan outcomes are just as stark as Georgia's.

The one thing CTCL has done is list the local governments they've funded, though without disclosing the dollar amounts. So we at Capital Research Center have examined that list, as well as news databases and local government reports, to put together the picture revealed here. We think these numbers won't change much when the full truth comes out because we've found grant amounts for most large jurisdictions in the Keystone State. And we have another reason to think the partisan results we found in Pennsylvania won't change significantly with the remaining data: The population of Trump-won counties for whom we lack specific grant amounts is less than half the population of Biden-won counties with unknown grant amounts.

Meanwhile, consider that the IRS prohibits a 501(c)(3) non-profit like CTCL from "voter education or registration activities" that "have the effect of favoring a candidate." Yet these skewed numbers indicate that CTCL's work in Pennsylvania was clearly designed to favor the Democratic candidate.

- CTCL funded slightly more counties won by President Trump (13) than by Vice President Biden (11).
- Statewide, Biden won only 13 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, so CTCL funded 85 percent of Biden counties, compared to 24 percent of Trump counties.
- A Biden-winning county was over 3.5 times more likely to be funded by CTCL than a Trump-winning county.
- Biden won six counties across the state that delivered him 100,000 or more votes. CTCL funded 100 percent of those six.
- Trump won four counties that delivered him 100,000 votes or more. CTCL funded 75 percent of them (three of four).
- We have data on the grant amounts received by 13 of the 24 counties CTCL funded. All five of the highest-funded counties were won by Biden. By contrast, four of the five *least*-funded counties were won by Trump.
- Even those numbers understate the funding disparity. A more accurate picture arises when we compare the funding per capita: Trump counties received an average of \$0.59 per capita, while Biden counties averaged \$2.93 per capita—over five times more funding per capita.
- No Biden county received less than \$0.55 per capita; the least-funded Trump county received \$0.18.
- The most richly funded Biden county (Philadelphia) received \$6.32 for every man, woman, and child, compared to a mere \$1.12 for the most richly funded Trump county (Berks).
- In fact, for every voter who cast a ballot in Philadelphia county, the Democratic election officials there received \$13.60.
- When we compare the presidential vote in 2020 to 2016 numbers, we find that in the 24 counties CTCL funded, 266,000 more votes were cast in 2020 for the Republican candidate and 460,000 more for the Democrat candidate. That partisan difference of about 194,000 votes is more than double Biden's official victory margin for the entire state (80,555 votes).
- Looking at this increased turnout in percentage terms, we find the median increase in Republican votes in all 24 counties CTCL funded was +17 percent in 2020 over 2016. The median increase in Democratic votes was +27 percent.
- One final disparity: CTCL-funded counties supplied 79 percent of Biden's total Pennsylvania votes, compared to 60 percent of Trump's total Pennsylvania votes.

Seasoned election observers went into November saying that Pennsylvania was a critical swing state for the presidential election and that Philadelphia would be ground zero for the Democratic candidate's hopes. CTCL partisans knew this too, and their investments in Pennsylvania show it.



CTCL partisans knew that Pennsylvania was a critical swing state for the presidential election and that Philadelphia would be ground zero for the Democratic candidate's hopes, and their investments in Pennsylvania show it.

Legally Murky Grant-Making

This pattern of grant-making across multiple states by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit may or may not be illegal given the murky laws governing nonprofits. The IRS states:

Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. . . .

Certain activities or expenditures may not be prohibited depending on the facts and circumstances. . . . [A]ctivities intended to encourage people to participate in the electoral process, such as voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, would not be prohibited political campaign activity if conducted in a non-partisan manner.

On the other hand, voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that (a) would favor one candidate over another; (b) oppose a candidate in some manner; or (c) have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.

Whether or not CTCL has crossed legal lines, the starkly partisan outcomes from its giving should lead state and federal authorities to determine just what has happened. Not only should CTCL be investigated for its adherence to nonprofit law, but the local election officials should also ask many questions about its role, such as,

- How were temporary election staff hired? Where were they recruited from? What were the interview questions, who served on the interview panels, and what percentage were hired?

- What training did new and old staff receive? Were there written training manuals? What other training curricula exist? Are they publicly available?
- Who did the training? How were *they* selected? Did CTCL or other nonprofits assist in any way with the training or curricula?
- Were state and local laws governing the receipt of private funds followed? Was all spending in accord with state and local laws and budget procedures?
- Exactly how much money did each government body receive, and what exactly was it spent on?
- Are the contracts between state and local government bodies and CTCL publicly available?
- Did the state and local government bodies spend any of the money on tasks that would help prevent voter fraud, such as how properly to match signatures?

Some states prohibit outside funding of governmental functions like elections, and such laws seems ripe for consideration at all levels of government and by all citizens, regardless of political affiliation.

CTCL Stonewalling

Admittedly, we don't know every detail of what happened in these states because CTCL has not disclosed the funding. The *New York Times*, the Associated Press, the *New Yorker*, National Public Radio, and more have asked for the funding data, but CTCL has declined to provide the information.

Federal law requires CTCL to disclose on its annual filings with the IRS all grants of \$5,000 or more to government entities, but not until nearly a year for now. The leadership of CTCL knows this and will likely keep their 2020 grants in the dark for as long as legally allowed. After all, "dark money" is what powers CTCL's heavy thumb on election scales across the nation.

To bolster transparency, we're posting our data for each state online for the public to examine. When CTCL decides to disclose the data, we'll update our reports accordingly. ■

Read previous articles from the Special Reports series online at [CapitalResearch.org/category/special-report/](https://capitalresearch.org/category/special-report/).



THE LEFT'S VOTING MACHINE

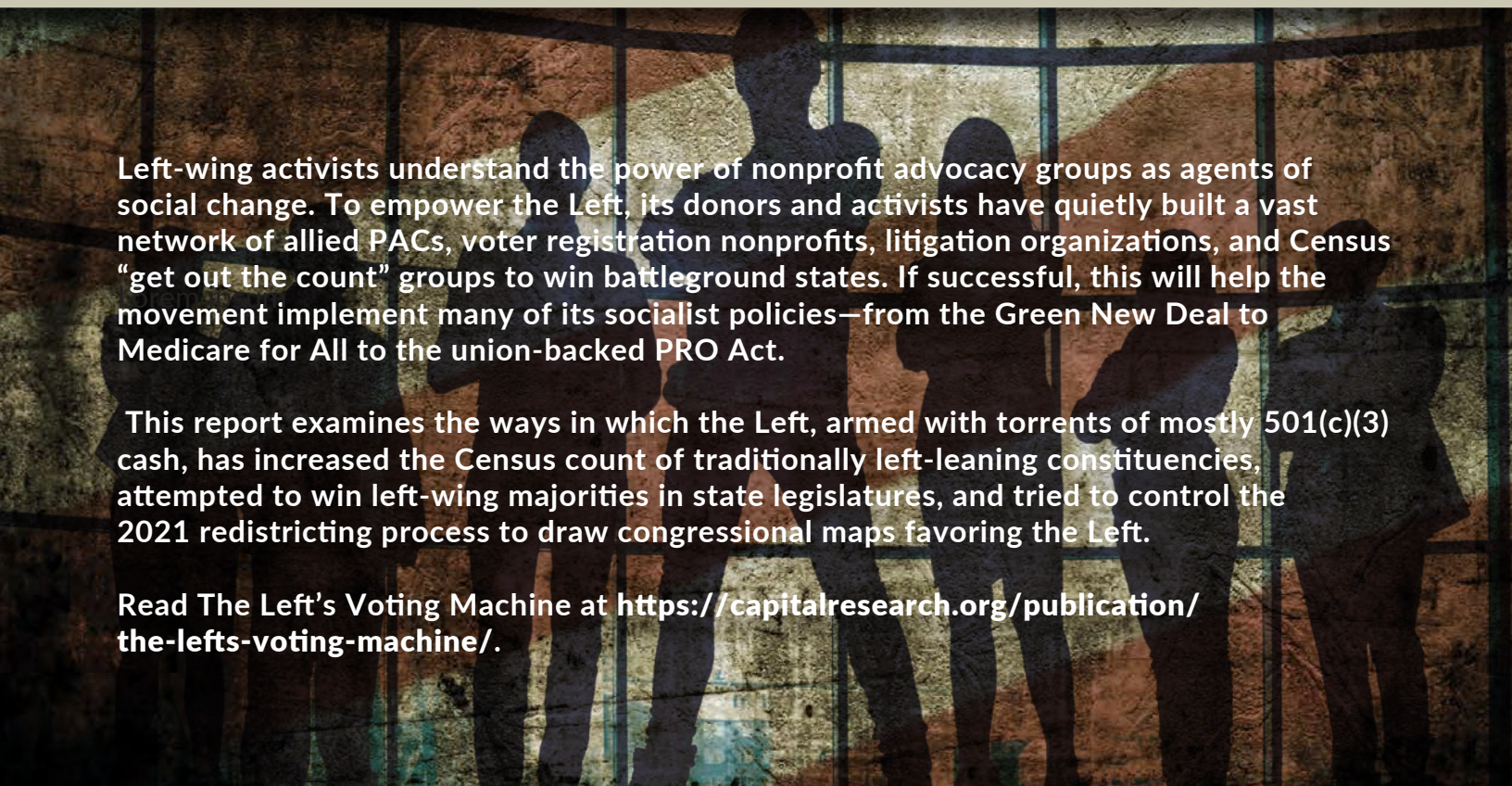


CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK

Left-wing activists understand the power of nonprofit advocacy groups as agents of social change. To empower the Left, its donors and activists have quietly built a vast network of allied PACs, voter registration nonprofits, litigation organizations, and Census “get out the count” groups to win battleground states. If successful, this will help the movement implement many of its socialist policies—from the Green New Deal to Medicare for All to the union-backed PRO Act.

This report examines the ways in which the Left, armed with torrents of mostly 501(c)(3) cash, has increased the Census count of traditionally left-leaning constituencies, attempted to win left-wing majorities in state legislatures, and tried to control the 2021 redistricting process to draw congressional maps favoring the Left.

Read The Left's Voting Machine at <https://capitalresearch.org/publication/the-lefts-voting-machine/>.





CHRISTOPHER RUFO TALKS CRITICAL RACE THEORY, ELECTION AFTERMATH, AND RADICAL ACTIVISTS

By Joseph (Jake) Klein

Summary: Joseph (Jake) Klein interviewed Christopher Rufo (filmmaker, writer, and policy researcher) on critical race theory and the destructive ideas it promotes. Rufo also describes his role in creating the Trump executive order that banned critical race theory trainings in government and federal contractors. He also discusses how this “training” has become so widespread and how to fight it.

Joseph (Jake) Klein: Hi everyone, I’m Jake Klein. I’m a film and video producer at the Capital Research Center and I am also the author of the upcoming book *Redefining Racism: How Racism Became Prejudice Plus Power*, which people can expect early next year [2021], and I’m really happy to be here with Christopher Rufo. Chris is a filmmaker, writer, and policy researcher. He’s directed four films for PBS, including his latest, *America Lost*, which you can see at americalostfilm.com. He’s also a research fellow at the Discovery Institute Center on Wealth, Poverty, and Morality and a contributing editor at *City Journal*. But Chris is perhaps best known of late for his work opposing critical race theory.

Chris, I’m particularly pleased to be speaking with you because I think we have a lot in common. We’re both filmmakers whose side interest of opposing radical social justice politics have ended up taking more and more of our time. That’s a funny little similarity we have, but unlike me, you’ve actually had some really immense political impact on the issue.

So we should probably start off with some background. You were, I understand, highly influential in initiating Trump’s executive order banning critical race theory trainings in government and federal contractors. So, do you want to start us off by explaining first of all what critical race theory even is and then your role in bringing that executive order about?

Christopher Rufo: Sure. Critical race theory in a nutshell is the idea that American social and political institutions are preaching values of equality, liberty, and opportunity but that it’s really a camouflage for racial oppression. You have to essentially dig under the surface to uncover racism,



Credit: <https://americalostfilm.com>

Christopher Rufo is a filmmaker, writer, and policy researcher. He’s directed four films for PBS, including his latest, America Lost, which you can see at americalostfilm.com.

oppression, discrimination, etc., which is the true heart of American institutions. This is an interesting academic theory that emerged I guess now 30 years ago, but it’s been repackaged in a number of ways. It’s been repackaged from academia into HR language.

So at federal bureaucracies and corporations they’ve repackaged diversity training, human resources training, using the key ideas of critical race theory. It’s also been repackaged in

Joseph (Jake) Klein is the film and video producer who runs CRC’s media operations.

the street protests that we've seen since the death of George Floyd. If you listen closely, a lot of the key messages on the street are really translations of critical race theory.

Over the summer I did a series of investigative reports, almost exclusively based on leaked internal documents from federal, state, and local agencies where they were teaching the tenets of critical race theory within the public bureaucracies—teaching, for example, that employees can be reduced to a racial essence, that they share some race-based guilt and must be put through a series of race-based reeducation and in many cases just simple brainwashing.

The reports that I released at the *New York Post*, *City Journal*, *Wall Street Journal*, and elsewhere, and then my appearances on Fox News and a long opening segment on *Tucker Carlson Tonight* got the attention of the president, who then took action. I was able to have the good fortune of working with their team to craft the executive order that eventually abolished these trainings in the federal government.

Klein: I'm, first of all, a huge fan of that executive order. I think it's one of the best things that's happened in the last couple months. I wish it were maybe messaged by the administration a little bit differently, but it's the first big step that was really necessary. Now I understand Biden has expressed an intention to overturn the executive order when assuming he gets into office. How do you see that playing out?

Rufo: Yeah, I mean, it's not certain. There are reports and speculation that that will be one of the first to get overturned. I sure expect it. [President Joe Biden overturned that executive order on January 20, 2021, the same day he was inaugurated.] It's just a double-edged sword when you get something done by executive order. When the administration changes, they can typically get rid of it. So we'll see. I don't think the battle is totally lost, but certainly if they were to get rid of it that would be a step back. I think the larger point is really that we demonstrated a proof of concept. We demonstrated that it's both feasible at the level of governance but also frankly politically popular.

The thing that we've seen in the past is a real fear of engaging on these issues politically, and I think that fear has really been exposed as being overwrought, as being unnecessary, and I think that it provides a template for legislation, should Congress change or when the presidency changes again for further action. I'd actually like to see it done on a much bigger scale, a much broader scale. I think that there's a lot of ways that we can take this victory as a template or first shot and then hopefully take broader and deeper action in the future.

Klein: What do you think some of those might look like?

Rufo: I think that you have to look at expanding it institutionally. So I had some productive conversations with the Department of Education and other folks within the legal world, and we were trying to think of how we could extend this to K–12 schools and to universities. I think that's a natural next step.

I think another executive order in the future would be something done very quickly that would immediately use the power of the federal government and federal contracting to get rid of it in federal agencies directly, in federal contractors, and also in K-12 schools that take federal money, and in universities that also take federal money, which would be virtually all of them.

I think you could really in one fell swoop cripple these programs and then also looking at line by line federal funding towards research projects, scientific projects, etc. and really just zeroing all of those out all at once through the federal process.

Klein: It's amazing the extent to which, having done a lot of digging into the history of these trainings, I think the people that first started doing them were very genuinely motivated, and they weren't making a lot of money doing it. I'm not saying they're not genuinely motivated today, but it's amazing to the extent that this has become a cash grab for people.

So we put out a short film a couple months ago about how college administrators, a lot of them are people who majored or studied in general in college these ideas and maybe went to grad school in these ideas, and then they're just totally unemployable. So because they can't teach and they can't get work in the private sector, they just become administrators and then have all these trainings for students separate from classes where they just force it down everybody's throat.

Then the *Washington Free Beacon* published an article about how Robin DiAngelo is making \$14,000 on average a training session doing this. Humorously, she was brought to the University of Wisconsin for one of them and was paid 70 percent more as a white woman than a black woman teaching the same ideas on the panel.

In education, we're seeing this as a cash grab that keeps these people employed, and they just have to keep it going, even if the ideas are bad, because otherwise they're out of money. Then in the private sector we're seeing outrageous fees for these people to come and teach it in corporations.

Are you seeing any pushback on that in corporations, or in education, or in government? They're paying these outrageous fees, and then they're seeing what's actually being taught. And are we getting any sense that after they see



The diversity industrial complex is a circular, self-reflective, navel-gazing oppression business.

what it actually is and what they just paid for that they're unhappy with it at all?

Rufo: No. There're two levels to look at it. On the direct level the answer is "No" because the diversity administrator hires the diversity consultant to teach in a diversity class. All of those people are benefiting from this ecosystem where money is flowing almost always from the public sector, taxpayer funds, into these bureaucracies, into these private entities. Then they cycle in and out? So they're very happy with the arrangement.

But the third parties are now becoming unhappy. And third parties are things like the students in universities or the parents in K-12 schools, where they're saying, "Wait a minute, is this a really good use of public funding when we have, for example, falling municipal budgets? We have schools that are having to cut costs. Do we really want a \$465,000 diversity audit? Is that really the best use of funding?"

So I think we're finding that the supposed beneficiaries of these systems are starting to revolt against them because they're really seeing them for what they are. They're a circular, self-reflective, navel-gazing oppression business. [It] doesn't actually do anything for students and serves only to reinforce the ideologies of people within the institutions and then pads the bank accounts of the diversity industrial complex. [The diversity industrial complex] survives by teaching these frankly ridiculous seminars that are self-justifying and also self-perpetuating, along their own economic interests.

Klein: I think one of the things that's been really difficult here is a lot of people will listen to us and at this point [say], "Okay, they're calling these programs that are meant to fight against racism self-serving and cash grabs." I think a lot of the people that are pushing this forward are truly in their heart coming from a place of good intention, and they haven't thought these ideas through at all. I think a lot of this is like a language game. They've

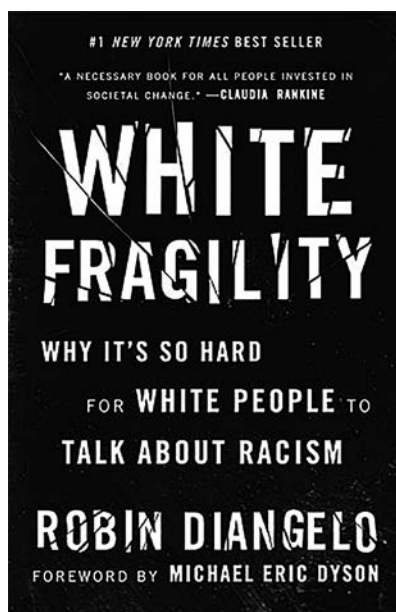
captured the term anti-racist. So their perspective—in my view and I'm sure your view—is very directly racist. They're asking people to judge others based on the color of their skin, but yet they're calling that anti-racist.

If you had to make the best possible argument for why this is catching on and why we're not always getting through, what do you think is going on that's allowing these just terrible ideas to spread?

Rufo: I think it's catching on because they've constructed an effective argument where it's very hard to say no? If you are a middle-aged corporate vice president at some company, are you going to be the guy who [says], "No, we're not going to do this anti-racism training, we're not going to do the implicit bias training. We're not going to do X, Y, and Z training." Probably not.

I think a lot of these folks understand that this stuff is BS, half-baked pseudo-science, but no one really wants to take the stand to stand up against it within an institution. So what happens is that you get two or three people, maybe a dozen people within almost any large bureaucracy. If they push hard enough to include this, they're really going to find no internal resistance. People will say, "Well, that's the tax of doing business. That's a bribe I'm willing to pay. That's an extortionary demand that I'm willing to just settle for because I don't want to be fighting this fight." So you replicate that enough times and all of a sudden you have it being unstoppable within institutions.

I think, secondly, they construct the argument so that if you do resist, if you do dissent, if you do disagree, it's just proof of your own white fragility, white privilege, or internalized white supremacy—whatever they want to deploy. So they've done it in a way where any disagreement is proof of guilt, which is logically and intellectually bankrupt, but politically very effective.



Credit: Beacon Press. License: <https://bit.ly/2YruZV>.

White Fragility is the name of Robin DiAngelo's book, and she is most associated with that theory. If you deny your white fragility, that's evidence of your white fragility. That's something James Lindsay has called a Kafka trap.

I think people have just gone along with it, and a lot of people because they have good intentions, say, “Well, that’s probably good. It’s probably not bad.” People who have dug a little deeper or have some skepticism, they well, “I’m not going to really die on this hill. I’m just going to let this thing go.” Then fast-forward a couple years where you have really no opposition, and I think the opposition has not been effective so far because there hasn’t been any. You haven’t had any political figures on the right making a substantive case against this stuff. People have been conditioned since the culture wars. Peak of the culture wars in polite society, in corporate society, and even the bipartisan consensus is to avoid these issues. Only relatively recently has that changed, and I think that as that changes we can expect political changes to follow.

Klein: Well, I want to add a couple points, and then let’s talk about those political changes. Which is that concept of if you deny your white fragility—*White Fragility* is the name of Robin DiAngelo’s book, and she is most associated with that theory. If you deny your white fragility, that’s evidence of your white fragility. That’s something James Lindsay has called a Kafka trap. It’s good to recognize that logic because it just points out how that entire framework just falls apart. There’s no legitimate way to criticize it at all. Then this part about it getting into the corporations because they just feel like they have to do it.

In some of the research I’ve been doing, I’ve been tracking corporate trainings for these sorts of ideas, going back to the late 1960s before there even was a thing called critical race theory. The same ideas were being taught by the original race trainers before it became a formal theory. They had something called an inside outside strategy. This was started by a man named Robert Terry who worked at a place called the Detroit Industrial Mission, teaching these ideas mostly around Detroit.

The idea was what we need to do is get people inside businesses, and they were working mostly at auto companies and industry that was associated with Detroit in the era. Let’s get them to pressure people that racism is a huge problem—which it was back then—and we need to do something about it. Then they have the outside groups that are prepared to rush in and provide those trainings. Those outside groups are explicitly socialist, but they’re not communicating that to people. The whole idea was this is how we’re going to prepare to get the businesses on our side for a literal socialist revolution. We’re going to get those inside people to bring us in and then we’re going to change the organization from within. So that’s a real strategy that they had, and we’re really seeing that actually pay off now.

I also worked on a video recently about Black Lives Matter, and it’s not just about police violence and stuff like that. If you look at what the actual Black Lives Matter organization is promoting, not just people saying that as a hashtag, or protesting, or whatever. [They] want explicit socialism. They praise Fidel Castro. They’ve advocated for abolishing the nuclear family—real crazy stuff. You know who is giving money to them? Microsoft, the Pokémon Company, Dropbox, Pusheen, Bungie—these random video game companies and major cultural institutions that you wouldn’t think as capitalist companies would be supporting explicitly socialist groups.

So this has really worked out, but onto the politics and the victory of this. Something that we saw recently was—a positive thing from this past election—California did not pass Proposition 16, which was going to amend the state constitution to allow racial discrimination and racial preferences in education, contracting, and employment. What do you make of that victory and what can we learn as those issues come across on the ballot and in state legislatures across the country?

Rufo: Yeah, California is interesting, and there was a similar ballot fight here in Washington State, one or two years ago. The same thing was on the ballot. Essentially, they were trying to allow for race-based discrimination in college admissions in Washington State and public hiring. This is a fight that they had fought I guess more than 20 years ago. Washington State voters with a large majority said, “Hey, no. We want to have colorblind neutral admissions, no affirmative action.”

When it came up again the interesting thing, and similarly to California, Ward Connerly, who helped run the initiative and advise the [California] initiative, also worked on the initiative here in Washington State. The real driver of both initiatives were Asian Americans because Asian Americans realized that they were going to really bear the massive brunt of the burden in especially college admissions. Their idea was, hey, we came to the United States, in many cases fleeing communist countries for individual liberty, political equality, and for meritocracy—basically saying if you study hard, you excel in education, you can have a high-quality education and then move up in the world. They really felt like that was under threat, that their college admissions would plummet, their opportunities would plummet, and they fought for it.

I think this is a moment where Asian Americans, white Americans, and, I believe, even Latino Americans in California voted against the race-based preferences. I think that it really shows that people, despite the political dominance of the Left in a state like California, still believe in the ideas of meritocracy.

racy, colorblind admissions, and earned success. And they're rejecting the most polarizing, racially divisive policies. You're finding leadership in the Asian American community that typically has not been involved in American politics to a large extent. They're becoming mobilized because they're sensing a danger to their own fortunes.

Rufo: I think that you're going to see, especially where they're most exposed in the West Coast, a real realignment. First in Asian Americans and then among Latinos and Hispanics where they're going to start to realize that the Left that has traditionally and culturally been their home doesn't actually have their best interest at heart. And they're going to be looking for another place to put their vote, to put their power, and I think these ballot initiatives have started what could be a big realignment along ethnic and political lines.

Klein: Going forward, as more of these things come up whether ballot initiatives or other ways of doing it, do you think this theory gains more ground and they start winning those fights? Or do you think the coalition that you described stays steady, grows, and manages to successfully defeat this ideology?

Rufo: Yeah. I'm optimistic. I'm optimistic because you've [defeated] the ballot measure in California, which was sponsored by the largest corporations in the world and by the Democratic political machine that has a supermajority in the California legislature, and then was pushed by all of the Hollywood stars and most famous people in the state against a ragtag group of formerly politically disengaged Asian American noodle shop owners, small business people, and dry cleaners.

I know Washington State better. I spoke at the dinner celebrating the victory, and it was predominantly Asian American and people who had supported the campaign who got up to speak. It was literally noodle shop owners, delivery truck company drivers, testing and tutoring center owners, Microsoft middle managers—really a predominantly working class and then some professional class Asian Americans—and a lot of recent immigrants that beat the political machine. They beat all of the major corporations, the Microsofts, the Amazons, the Kaiser Health, and they won because they had a popular issue. They were denounced

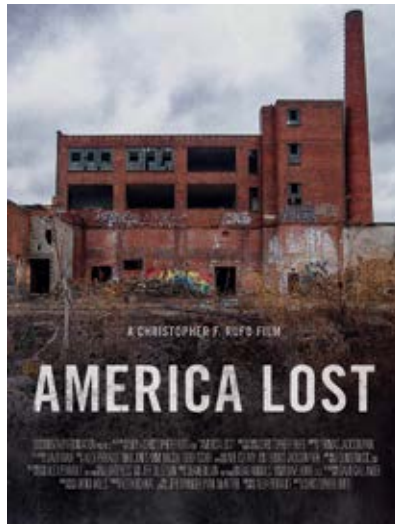
as white supremacists. They were denounced in the media. Everyone was against them, but they managed to cobble together a coalition that won in Washington State and then by an even bigger margin in California.

So I think it shows there's a ceiling to this stuff. No matter how much money, no matter how much star power, no matter how much corporate support, there's a ceiling to these ideas because they're unpopular. They rub people the wrong way. They undermine core values that are more deeply held. I think the real limit is really the Republican Party. When you have it on a partisan basis—when people are deciding between Democrats and Republicans in California, Oregon, or Washington—they're going to break Democrat because the Republican Party has such a destroyed and kind of underwater brand. But when you actually look at it on the issues in the language of a ballot measure that is nonpartisan by nature—that is not connected to a person or a party—I think there's a clear ceiling and that we can work from the issues outward. Winning on ballot measures, winning on individual issues, winning with the public, and then hopefully over time cobbling that into a political coalition that could win legislative races, gubernatorial races, etc.

Klein: So you talked a lot there about this being pushed by Hollywood celebrities, big wealthy figures, and major Democratic politicians. That seems very strange that these ideas are largely being picked up by college-educated persons of higher class. Given your work on poverty issues,

why do you think we're seeing this. And again, I don't have data to back that up. I could be wrong that it's mostly a higher-class thing. So I guess, do you agree with that premise, that it is a higher class thing? What do you see in terms of what people actually in poverty, people actually suffering, think about all this that's allegedly being pushed on their behalf?

Rufo: I have an interesting window where in my investigative reporting starting this summer I really dove deep into the ideology of critical race theory, reading the texts, reading the trainings, doing the investigative reporting, talking to people who've gone through some of these programs. Then also in my background as a documentary filmmaker and a writer, I've spent a lot of time in the poorest communities



Credit: Amazon. License: <https://amen.to/3sZoXyd>.

America Lost is a feature documentary that explores life in three “forgotten American cities”—Youngstown, Ohio; Memphis, Tennessee; and Stockton, California. The film reveals the dramatic decline of the American interior through a combination of emotional personal stories and thoughtful conservative commentary.

in the United States, and the gap between these two things couldn't be larger.

The things that the critical race theorists rail against: They rail against the nuclear family. They rail against earned income and low wage or starting wage work. They rail against religion. It's a devoutly atheistic thing. They rail against meritocracy, upward mobility. Those are actually all of the things that people in poor communities, people who are theoretically oppressed, latch onto [that] they want to either restore or preserve and give the sense of meaning and direction.

The gap is really huge. I think the real moral crime of critical race theory is that it serves to establish and secure the social status of woke elites of all races. So that if you are the fashionable critical race theory intellectual denouncing oppression, the nuclear family, earned income, and all these things, you're going to get the prestigious *Atlantic* byline. You're going to get the professorship at an Ivy League school. You're going to be speaking for \$20,000 a pop at the Shell Oil shareholders meeting or whatever. But it really does nothing for the people at the bottom. Again, for all races, it does nothing for a poor family in Memphis, Stockton, Bakersfield, Youngstown, or Gary, Indiana. Critical race theory has nothing to offer people who are actually living at the bottom of our society.

It's even worse than that. It actually undermines the very institutions that are essential for people that are growing up and living in those communities. So I think critical race theory is deeply self-serving for elites and deeply destructive for the poor Americans of all racial backgrounds. Personally I don't care that Robin DiAngelo gets paid 20,000 bucks to speak at a thing. It doesn't bother me. These corporations that are hosting these things are doing well. They can waste their money in unlimited amounts of ways? And I don't really care that Ibram Kendi is getting big payouts from tech companies. Whatever. That's fine.

What I really, really truly feel is an outrage is that these things really truly do nothing to alleviate suffering for the poorest Americans. I actually think they create a values-based chaos that is destructive to those communities. So that's where I come into it. I think it's hypocritical, self-serving, and ridiculous, but I think it actually is something much deeper than that: The actual destructive power of these ideologies shouldn't be underestimated.

Klein: I agree completely. Something I've been really astonished by in my research is the extent to which the communities for whom these ideas claim to speak don't agree with them at all. Something that I found is you had educators in the late '60s, early '70s period who were adopting black nationalist ideas and turning it into this ideology. You had polling at the time demonstrating above 95 percent of African Americans disagreed with these ideas. At the same time, you had mostly white educators developing and teaching these ideas to other white people. I have a quote from one of them saying essentially that most black people don't understand their own experience, and we need to appeal. We need to learn from that sub 5 percent group of African Americans that truly authentically understand their own experience and then teach that to all white people. [It] is just fascinatingly baffling how absurdly racist it is to say African Americans don't understand their own life experience while teaching about racism.

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Critical race theorists rail against the nuclear family, low wage work, religion, meritocracy, and upward mobility. It's a devoutly atheistic thing.

Rufo: I mean, it's always been this way. In a way it's not surprising because if you look at the Bolshevik Revolution 100 plus years ago now, they were really frustrated by the same principles. Even Marx himself was frustrated, basically saying, "Ugh, we've hoped for this spontaneous revolution of the proletariat, but the proletariat seems uninterested in revolution. They don't want to sign up for the program. They don't understand their own oppression. They have false consciousness that has been embedded into them by the bourgeoisie and the oppressors. So we need to, on their behalf as the intellectual vanguard, conceptualize it and refeed it back to them, and lead as the vanguard of the proletariat."

This is the same thing but with racial issues. Robin DiAngelo, white scholar of Seattle, is the vanguard of the black revolutionary spirit. I mean, it's ridiculous. It's hard to even look at these things with a straight face, but they're so pernicious, and they somehow function despite this surface-level absurdity. You have to take it seriously. I spent three years in and out, working on a film in a public housing project in Memphis, Tennessee: 100 percent African American, 100 percent under the poverty line, nearly 100 percent single-parent families. If there is an oppressed group in the United States—if we're making an argument that there is racial oppression—this would be it. I mean, this is the fourth poorest zip code in the whole country. I spent years talking to people, learning from people, interviewing people, and observing, and none of this language ever emerged, not once. The things that the

critical race theorists have conceptualized as oppression—faith, Christianity (the oppressive, opium-of-the-masses religion), family structure, the earned income system, or entry-level employment that is a capitalist oppression—those are the things that people really wanted.

People really wanted to get a good education. They wanted to move up and out of the housing project. They wanted to get a meritocratic job and opportunity. They wanted to restore families that had been broken in many cases for generations, and the anchor in this community for I'd say the majority of people was the church. The Southern black church that was still, despite dislocations over the years, the moral center of these communities.

I just find it astonishing that you have Ivy League, white intellectuals that are essentially preaching down and trying to say, "Actually, all those things that you believe in, those are the things that are oppressing you." [They are] ignoring the real on-the-ground experience and conceptualization of people who are living it, just casting aside all of that experience and saying, "Actually, I understand your experience better than you." It's so insulting and infuriating.

In the film I try to give as much latitude, as much expression as possible to people who are there, people who are experiencing it. And again, I never once heard that kind of revolutionary rhetoric actually on the ground from people in these communities.

Klein: The film is really excellent, by the way. Again, I want to recommend people go to americalostfilm.com to check that out. You talked about religion there. I'm myself an atheist, so I'm not that connected to that end of things, but I have found it really interesting tracing these ideas, the extent to which the role of religion in this has all changed. Because again, one of the really important groups in founding and spreading these race trainings in the late '60s and early '70s was a group called the Detroit Industrial Mission. They were a mission. They were a religious group. I think you can make a really strong argument for why Christianity isn't compatible with these ideas, but they were trying to come at it from a Christian perspective. They were teaching it very much from the Christian perspective. Now it's completely the opposite. I don't know who's responsible for that, maybe it's just a general societal shift, but it's interesting.



Credit: AfroMarxist. License: <https://bit.ly/2MduOwK>.

Stokely Carmichael was a civil rights activist, but he was really an explicit black nationalist. He moved to Africa in the early '70s with the goal of forming a Pan-African communist black ethnostate and renamed himself Kwame Ture after two communist dictators in Africa.

Then that false consciousness point that you bring up. I mean, that is spot-on. You're really tracing that further back than I am because where I start my book is talking about Stokely Carmichael. Stokely Carmichael was a civil rights activist, but he was really an explicit black nationalist. He was an explicit communist. He moves to Africa in the early '70s with the goal of forming a Pan-African communist black ethnostate and renames himself Kwame Ture after two communist dictators in Africa. His definition of institutional racism is, I think, really where a lot of these ideas started to develop. He ran an organization called the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which used to be run by John Lewis, but then John Lewis lost an election, Stokely Carmichael won and the organization went way radical. He held a vote to kick all the white people out of that organization and told them to go back into the white community and teach my ideas because black people and white people shouldn't work together to end racism. Instead, white people should work on their own to end racism in the white communities based on my ideas.

That's where a lot of these race trainers in the '60s and '70s came out of. These people that were involved in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, got kicked out, and went and taught these ideas.



Race essentialism—the idea that you can reduce the essence of a human being to their racial category. You are white and therefore the racial essence within you is whiteness.

So that whole thing of thinking they know better than the vast, vast majority of African Americans came from an implicit orthodox Marxist. So it's interesting to hear you connect those dots because that lines up exactly with what I found.

I want to pivot a bit back to Seattle because you're from that area, and that is another area where it's gotten really bad. You mentioned earlier that you had leaked documents from whistleblowers about trainings going on there. Also, you just published an article in *City Journal* about these ideas. The activists are taking it into the policy arena, pressuring politicians and really making policy changes in terms of defunding the police and stuff like that. So, have you seen any connections between the documents that the whistleblowers leaked to you and the specific ideas that are being taught in the Seattle area to what's going on in the policy arena level?

Rufo: Yeah, yeah. I mean, it really is interesting. I think that most people, most Americans zero in on the national politics, where national politics in the United States is still pretty middle of the road, let's say. The actual legislation that gets hammered through in Congress is fairly middle of the road. That's my analysis, just take it or leave it. But what's happening is that you're seeing a huge split now. Whereas you have countervailing factions within Congress, where you have Republicans and the Senate especially representing predominantly Republican states, and then you have even Blue Dog Democrats, or you have your Joe Manchins who is a Democrat but he's from West Virginia. He's going to moderate whatever policies that are being spun up by the Ocasio-Cortezes and the Ilhan Omars. What activists have realized, to their credit, is that in municipal politics there isn't really a countervailing faction or a counterbalancing vote. So if you're in Minneapolis or Seattle or Portland or San Francisco, the political center of gravity is to the furthest left: the Democratic socialist, Antifa, Black Lives Matter. All of the energy in these cities is really there with the very far activist left.

They've realized that municipal politics is no longer filling potholes and getting the buses running and salting the roads. They've said, "Hey, municipal politics is really our shot at transforming governance into these progressive utopias." They've gotten really aggressive about it from electing

prosecutors who are very far left to the decriminalize-everything-under-felonies mantra that they've adopted to local councils. In Seattle, they're really going straight forward. Their activists have said, "We need to abolish the police, at least cut 50 percent. Defund the police. We need to shut down the county's largest jail." The county executive recently announced they're going to reduce jail capacity by nearly two-thirds.

Then we also need to abolish the local courts. Get rid of municipal judges that are handling misdemeanor compliance predominantly. Reduce it to the smallest possible number of judges, just a handful, maybe two or three judges. So they're trying to overhaul the justice system locally in a way that they could never do nationally. The documents, the demands from the protests groups and in the trainer documents that I've seen, and then the internal documents from the county executive here and others are really the same narrative.

You can see the pervasive influence of the activist ideology, where the county executive of King County, Washington—the largest in the state—is saying the criminal justice system is predicated on white supremacy and needs to be dismantled for all of these reasons. There's really little separation now between activist ideologies from the outside and the activist ideology from the inside, to an extent that I think that most residents are just now starting to understand. I think that for the foreseeable future the activists are really in the driver's seat, and we'll see how far they can get.

Klein: We've talked a lot in broad terms about the ideas that are contained in critical race theory and being taught to people, but having those whistleblower documents, are there any specific things that you think people would be particularly shocked to know are being taught in those classes?

Rufo: Yeah, I'd say these are the three recurring concepts that I think are the most disturbing.

First, race essentialism—the idea that you can reduce the essence of a human being to their racial category. You are white and therefore the racial essence within you is whiteness. Without knowing you as a human being at all, I know that and that there are all these things, all negative things,

that are true about you. That's a key concept and is basically the same racial essentialism of 100 years ago that was used on a different hierarchy. They're reviving race-based hierarchies.

Second, the idea that in order to tackle racism you need to have racial segregation. I've documented a number of instances [where] governments are now segregating employees on the basis of race, saying: Here's a room for white employees. Here's a room for black employees, Here's another room for people of color. That segregation is really the root towards social justice, which I think is really disturbing and probably shocking to most people.

Third is really race-based guilt and race-based harassment, where you have a number of cases where white employees are forced to acknowledge their own complicity in white supremacy, to publicly denounce themselves, and in some cases to write letters of apology. [These are] people who have done nothing wrong. They're working in bureaucracy, probably doing their job with a reasonable amount of competence, [and] have done nothing wrong but are being forced to go through this regiment of reeducation just because of their inborn characteristics.

I think that's wrong. I think it's wrong no matter who it's targeted towards, and I think that most people, especially that read the reporting that I did over the summer were rightfully horrified to learn about it.

Klein: In the late '60s and early '70s Robert Terry was teaching that the best a white person could be is a "anti-racist racist." And I think that's really shocking. That's the sort of the thing where I think if you share that fact with somebody who is vaguely sympathetic to these race trainings and thinks vaguely that they must be having some impact against racism because otherwise why would they do them—if they knew that it considered all white people, including you, the listener, racist by definition—they would really pull back from that.

Are you seeing that specific idea still alive in today's trainings? If so, are you seeing the people that are being forced to stand up and admit guilt? Are you seeing them have any reaction to that that might be a recoiling and moving away from this and starting to realize no, this is not right?

Rufo: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I have at this point hundreds upon hundreds of whistleblowers from different companies, agencies, and governments. They're all unanimously horrified by this, and in many cases they're scared to speak out. But they want to expose this to the world because they are insulted, frightened, and morally recoil from this stuff. I think it really seeks to undermine in a lot of ways the progress that we have made on these issues and redefine the

terms so that you can never get out of it. I mean, it tries to make racism and oppression into a permanent condition that permeates everything. Most people don't believe that, and I think that most people of all races don't believe that. I think people who have been maybe seduced by the rhetoric or in many cases bullied into tacitly supporting it, the further that they get in, have an instinctual reaction to say, "Wait a minute, this isn't right. This isn't what I signed up for. This doesn't have anything to do with making progress. This is very divisive. This is very toxic. This is very harmful."

Then any ideology that promises forever guilt and forever evil is just really destructive. You're offering people essentially no way out. And I think the closest thing that you can think of is that it operates almost like a cult programming where they're convincing you of some deep internal flaw. They're saying that they have the unique answer, that you need them in order to purge yourself of this guilt, but then always moving it just beyond reach. It's manipulative, and I think people are catching on.

Klein: On that cult brainwashing point, I agree with that entirely. Something that I found is that a lot of the educational techniques used in these trainings were developed at an organization called the NTL Institute. Now, this is something interesting to talk about with you because you recently wrote an op-ed—I think it was in the *Wall Street Journal*—where you said, "This is not sensitivity training." That's such nice flowery words for it, and that came up in the first debate between Trump and Biden. Chris Wallace called it racial sensitivity training.

I actually disagree with you here. I think it is sensitivity training, and I think sensitivity training is worse than you think. The reason that I think that is this organization called the NTL Institute founded the field of sensitivity training. It is a lot of those same educational techniques that are used. That organization is one such organization teaching these trainings today, but back in the day when these techniques were created it wasn't just for that, it was also for corporate leadership trainings, and these educational techniques were used in all sorts of areas.

One intellectual educational path of it was into these race trainings, but another one where the same technique was used was into a cult called Synanon, which was a big thing in the '50s, '60s, '70s, where it claimed to be like an Alcoholics Anonymous group, but it was a literal cult that gave up the Alcoholics Anonymous thing halfway through and made all the members shave their heads and stuff like that. They were implicated in murders, and they used some of the same educational techniques as was originally called sensi-



You have to be willing to get beaten up by your opponents a little bit, but then actually cobble together a coalition that has enough power, strength, and authority to push back.

tivity training. It also informs the way that racial awareness trainings are done. So I think it really very literally is that.

Well, I think we're almost about out of time. I may have asked you about this already, but in light of the whole conversation that we've had, what is the biggest thing that you would recommend people do if they want to put a stop to this and reclaim the fight against racism from these self-described anti-racists to I think true anti-racists like us, who want to end judging people based on the color of their skin? What can people do?

Rufo: I think it's essential that people . . . I'm obviously a big proponent of using executive and political power to do as much as we can, but ultimately this has to be fought in a decentralized way. So parents, students, citizens, corporate employees will have to get organized within their institutions to put up a fight on this stuff and will have to have some courage to stand up to it. I think that we've seen already a couple of successful campaigns against it in K-12 schools. For example, in Fairfax County and, I believe, Loudoun County, Virginia, parent groups have successfully fought against it, and they've done it by mobilizing, organizing, running PR campaigns, showing up for meetings, and really gathering a multiracial coalition of people from all different backgrounds to say, "Hey, we don't believe in this. We don't like this. We don't want this. This is harmful to kids." Just what the Asian Americans and others did in California and Washington, pushing back against the race-based preferences.

You have to make the case. You have to be willing to go through the gauntlet. You have to be willing to get beaten up by your opponents a little bit, but then actually cobble together a coalition that has enough power, strength, and authority to push back. I think it totally can be done, and

I think that it just takes smart organizing on the ground among concerned people. I think that ultimately we can win because ultimately these diversity trainers and others are wrong on the issues. It conflicts with the values that most people have, and I think that my favorite thing about this is that what taxpayers giveth, taxpayers can taketh away.

These race trainers have no independent base of support. They're almost entirely the creatures of public funding, whether in education, consulting, or a university setting. So we can very easily cut off the funding and cut off the gravy train for these folks, and over time put them really back in this same place they ended the 1960s, which was when they tried to foment the revolution. And the revolution was very unpopular. They alienated most Americans, and they laid dormant for a number of years. I think that's where we have got to put them. Politically, we have to put them back in that position.

Klein: Chris, I can't thank you enough for taking the time to talk to me. This has been wonderful, and also thank you so much for all the incredible work you've been doing on this for a good bit of time now. Where can people who are interested in following your work and learning more go?

Rufo: Sure. You can follow me on Twitter @realchrisrufo or go to my website christopherrufo.com.

Klein: Thank you so much.

Rufo: Thank you. ■

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OLIVER STONE'S ANTIDOTE FOR "APOCALYPTIC ENVIRONMENTALISTS"

By Ken Braun

Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All
by Michael Shellenberger
HarperCollins, 432 pp.

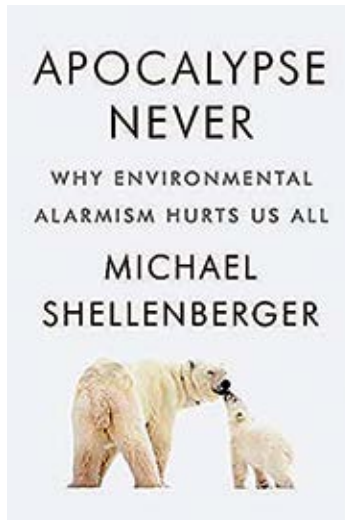
In the waning days of the 2012 presidential election, left-wing filmmaker Oliver Stone proclaimed a recent hurricane to be "punishment" on America because neither candidate (including President Barack Obama, whom Stone voted for) had discussed climate change during their final debate. For Stone, Hurricane Sandy's brutally destructive hit on the U.S. mainland just after the debate was evidence that "Mother Nature cannot be ignored."

But in the waning days of the 2020 election, Stone read *Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All*. Afterward, he told his 170,000 Twitter followers that the newly released book was "a striking, optimistic cry against the apocalyptic environmentalists that haunt the present landscape."

Wow . . . sometime during the past eight years Stone seems to have lost his faith in angry, self-aware hurricanes and the other end-times prophecies of the environmental Left. In place of all that he converted to the pro-growth, pro-energy gospel of *Apocalypse Never* author Michael Shellenberger.

That is a hopeful development. If the same transformation can be accomplished with the rest of the enviro-Left, *Apocalypse Never* may indeed live up to Stone's further analysis that it is the "most powerful & influential book in recent memory."

Shellenberger could have been custom-built in central casting to appeal to Stone, a movie man who spent a lifetime filling the silver screen with overtly political and stridently left-wing work. *Apocalypse Never* recounts how Shellenberger started an Amnesty International chapter at his school in the 1980s when he was 15 and held a fundraiser for the Rainforest Action Network when he was 16. Watching the Amnesty



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club in action, a teacher asked whether Michael was a communist, a suspicion Shellenberger suspects might have been confirmed at age 17 when he persuaded his school to let him spend his senior year in Nicaragua learning Spanish and observing the "Sandinista socialist revolution."

A highly decorated soldier in the war on carbon emissions, in 2008 Shellenberger was named one of Time magazine's "Heroes of the Environment." It is as if he were the grown-up and middle-aged future of Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who is today one of the mainstream Left's most celebrated climate alarmists.

Except, Shellenberger is no alarmist. He believes climate change is a man-made and a serious problem, to be mitigated only through sharply and quickly reducing carbon output. But armed with scientific papers and interviews with climate scientists, he puts the climate risk in perspective.

A Visit to the "End of the World"

He writes that natural disasters (such as Stone's vengeful hurricane) are not gaining in severity and—adjusted for increased development in their path—are doing no greater damage than ever before. Sea levels will indeed increase a bit, he affirms, but we have the time and technology to work around it. He points to the wealthy Netherlands, most of which sits below sea level—some parts far below even the worst-case climate scenarios.

The book provides an equally well-documented and passionate case for rich nations to get off carbon-based fuels and switch quickly to carbon-free nuclear energy. Even more

Ken Braun is CRC's senior investigative researcher and authors profiles for InfluenceWatch.org and the Capital Research magazine.



Credit: Gage Skidmore. License: <https://bit.ly/3xYUjlp>

Sometime during the past eight years Oliver Stone seems to have lost his faith in angry, self-aware hurricanes and the other end-times prophecies of the environmental Left. In place of all that he converted to the pro-growth, pro-energy gospel of Apocalypse Never author Michael Shellenberger.

passionately, he argues that desperately poor nations must be helped to get rich as quickly as possible by using more carbon-based fuels if necessary, so they too can more quickly transition to nuclear.

As the book title makes clear, the world is not coming to an end, but Shellenberger writes that many parts of the planet still look like end of the world.

He tours the eastern end of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where 98 percent of the people “rely on wood and charcoal as their primary energy for cooking.” Anyone who sits near a campfire or

charcoal grill can attest that these are sources of carbon emissions.

According to a CIA analysis, 79 million of the Congo’s more than 100 million people have functionally zero access to electricity. On the United Nations’ Human Development Index, the Congo ranks 179th out of 189 nations, and Afghanistan checks in nine spots higher.

Harvesting the Congo’s forests for fuel so people can survive has also been inflicting horrific damage on the habitat of native gorillas and other creatures that everyone otherwise has an interest in protecting.

Shellenberger argues that these people in dire circumstances need reliable electricity as soon as possible. The forests surround them, as does the environment we all use. And he recognizes that for most of the world this means transitioning from wood and forests to natural gas or coal. But he profiles the Congo because they have an even better option.

The Congo’s path to prosperity is the Grand Inga Dam, a series of hydroelectric dynamos proposed for the Congo River. Grand Inga would deliver at least 20 times the power capacity of the Hoover Dam, a Depression-era project that still pumps cheap electricity to 8 million energy-thirsty Americans in three states.

But even though hydroelectric energy is carbon free, some of us in the wealthy Western world want the Congolese to continue living like the Flintstones.

Later in the book Shellenberger introduces International Rivers, a “little-known but influential NGO” from Berkeley, California, that has “helped stop 217 dams from being built, mostly in poor countries.” The International Rivers website brags of the organization’s part in “successfully delaying” Grand Inga. These tourists from Berkeley claim that proven, reliable power isn’t the right fit for 79 million Congolese still living in the dark. Instead, International Rivers recommends they adopt “solar, micro-hydro and wind power.”

“Environmental Colonialism”

This advice is nonsense, according to Shellenberger.

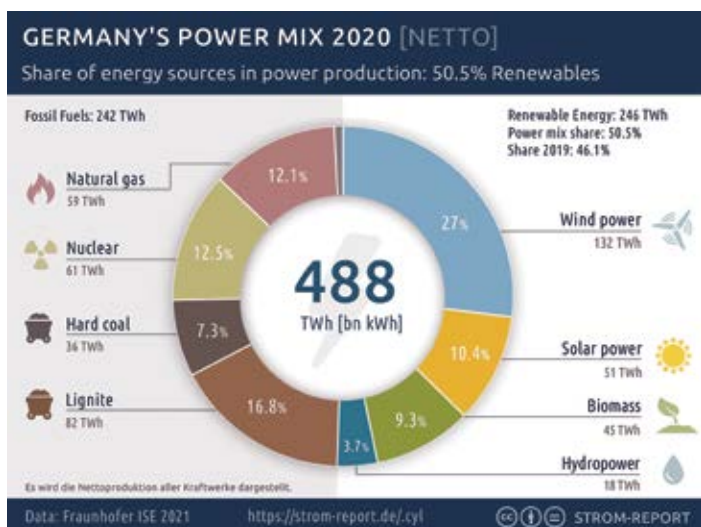
He fully covers the tedious renewable energy reliability trap. The wind doesn’t always blow, the sun doesn’t always shine, we’re laughably far away from the battery potential needed to store power for when we need it, and thus building out to any reasonable fraction dedicated to wind and solar swiftly escalates into a need for just as many traditional-fuel backup power plants as would have been needed without any wind or solar at all. (It is frustrating, yet necessary, that Shellenberger and others must continue to repeat this obvious and easy-to-follow math. One day, maybe we should build a public education system so voters can learn these lessons as children?)

But Shellenberger’s bigger point is land use. According to one estimate he cites, “a wind farm requires 450 times more land than a natural gas power plant” to provide the same power capacity. And that is before an equally sobering discussion of the eagles, bats, owls, hawks, falcons, and other airborne predators that get pummeled by the massive spinning blades. Similar space and other habitat concerns afflict solar energy.

There are clear and unavoidable reasons why no rich nation is remotely close to switching over to wind and solar, and likely never will be. We all like to keep the lights on, watch our big screen televisions, and increase our wild spaces. It is “environmental colonialism” for any of us in rich nations to



The wind doesn’t always blow, the sun doesn’t always shine, and we’re laughably far away from the battery potential needed to store power for when we need it.



Credit: Strom-Report.de. License: <https://bit.ly/59g29u>

American efforts have failed less only because less has been attempted. Shellenberger writes, “Electricity prices in renewables-heavy California have risen six times faster than in the rest of the United States since 2011.” And California’s celebrated Ivanpah solar array “requires 450 times more land than its last operating nuclear plant, Diablo Canyon.”

Nuking a Reasonable Compromise

Against all this Shellenberger notes that “a single Coke can of uranium can provide enough energy for an entire high-energy life.” The book’s advocacy of nuclear energy is arguably its most important and potentially game-changing argument.

Even strident climate change skeptics should consider Shellenberger’s pragmatic case for nukes.

Every other form of serious energy production (for electricity and otherwise) is significantly more dangerous than nuclear power. In April 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil platform fire in the Gulf of Mexico killed 11 people, and four months later a natural gas pipeline in California blew up, killing eight more. Coal mining is even more dangerous. And the 1975 collapse of a hydroelectric dam in China killed more than 100,000. In comparison, Shellenberger notes the radiation-caused death toll for the 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident stands at ... zero. Even including the 1986 Chernobyl disaster and all other accidents in the entire history of civilian nuclear power he tallies up just over 100 nuclear (i.e., radiation) fatalities.

The potential for redirecting wasteful solar and wind energy subsidies to more useful endeavors should also be appealing. The *Apocalypse Never* tally for total world spending on the development of nuclear energy, 1965 through 2018, is \$2 trillion. The comparable figure for wind and solar was \$2.3 trillion. Yet “the world received about twice as much electricity from nuclear” during that period.

Imagine a healthy compromise in which Republicans and Democrats agreed to end decades of dangerous bickering over climate and energy in favor of directing all the policy and money toward proven nuclear power? We would all be better off.



The book’s advocacy of nuclear energy is arguably its most important and potentially game-changing argument.

After spending nearly \$500 billion by 2019, only 42 percent of German electricity was generated by renewables, which, significantly, included carbon-emitting biomass as well as wind and solar. That same year Der Spiegel had already declared that Germany’s “wind power boom is over.”

expect those in the Congo and other high-poverty nations to find a different path to our level of prosperity.

It’s not that the rich world hasn’t tried the renewable path. *Apocalypse Never* also explores the sad fate of Germany’s Energiewende “energy transition” to renewables.

After spending nearly \$500 billion by 2019, only 42 percent of German electricity was generated by renewables, which, significantly, included carbon-emitting biomass as well as wind and solar. That same year *Der Spiegel* had already declared that Germany’s “wind power boom is over.” Looking at the entire project, the behemoth consulting firm McKinsey recently concluded it was a triple threat to “climate protection, security of supply, and economic efficiency.” Shellenberger writes that German electricity prices in 2019 “were 45 percent higher than the European average.”

Energiewende is expected to cost an estimated \$580 billion through 2025. Shellenberger writes this same investment in nuclear energy would have allowed Germany to generate “100 percent of its electricity from zero-emission sources and have sufficient zero-carbon electricity to power all of its cars and light trucks as well.” Making awful ironies worse, the Energiewende policy required a shift away from Germany’s nuclear plants.

Shellenberger doesn’t say so, but one might need to go back to World War II to find a more comprehensive public policy failure for Germany, which is saying a lot.



Credit: Yale University. License: <https://bit.ly/3ppgeTK>.

Shellenberger writes of a cartoon run in an 1861 issue of *Vanity Fair*, “showing sperm whales . . . dressed in tuxedos and ball gowns, toasting one another with champagne” and a caption reading “Grand ball given by the whales to celebrate the discovery of the oil wells in Pennsylvania.”

The value of this deal to both climate alarmists and anyone else worried about rising global temperatures should be self-evident. These folks are the primary audience for the message of *Apocalypse Never*, which prompted the praise from Oliver Stone for such a direct hit on target.

But it will still be a difficult sell. Despite the clear zero-carbon advantages, major left-wing environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club and some of the most prominent climate alarmists remain wedded to the failed wind and solar mirages, and resolutely opposed to nuclear energy. Shellenberger lays out the sordid history of how Sierra evolved from sensible to unreasonable on nuclear power.

He makes a case that the anti-nuke Left has interesting allies: “Between 2016 and 2019, the five largest publicly traded oil and gas companies—ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron Corporation, BP, and Total—invested a whopping \$1 billion into advertising and lobbying for renewables and other climate-related ventures.”

But not nuclear? Well, no. Shellenberger notes, “Killing nuclear plants turns out to be a lucrative business for competitor fossil fuel and renewable energy companies.” He uses the example of the Indian Point nuclear station in New York, which over 40 years could pull in \$32 billion in revenue, but “[i]f the plant closes, those billions will flow to natural gas and renewable companies.” The Sierra Club’s annual revenue exceeds \$100 million.

Apocalypse Never explains there are logical connections to these facts.

Shellenberger raises other fascinating (that is, appalling) land-use concerns beyond just energy.

For example, pasture-raised beef “requires fifteen to nineteen times more land per kilogram than industrial beef.” Because those cows live much longer, they also “produce more manure and methane,” which adds up to “300 to 400 percent more carbon emissions per kilogram.” So, the sanctimonious food crowd at the organic grocer is placing their dietary fetish ahead of rangeland for gorillas and other endangered creatures. Similar concerns exist for fish and other major meat sources. He writes that even eating vegetarian doesn’t add up to much of a difference versus eating meat because studies show the veggie consumers end up spending the money they’re saving on carbon-heavy toys and services.

Saving the critters also often means embracing that which we have been taught to hate.

In the earliest days of the 19th century Pennsylvania oil strike, a single well was producing “as much oil as it took a whaling voyage three or four years to obtain.” Shellenberger writes of a cartoon run in an 1861 issue of *Vanity Fair*, “showing sperm whales . . . dressed in tuxedos and ball gowns, toasting one another with champagne” and a caption reading “Grand ball given by the whales to celebrate the discovery of the oil wells in Pennsylvania.” A subsequent 20th century threat to whales emerged when their oil became valuable for making margarine and soap but was similarly defeated when industry created more lucrative artificial alternatives such as vegetable oil.

By the time international treaties prohibited most whaling, capitalism had already saved them. The chapter on this is titled “Greed Saved the Whales, Not Greenpeace.”

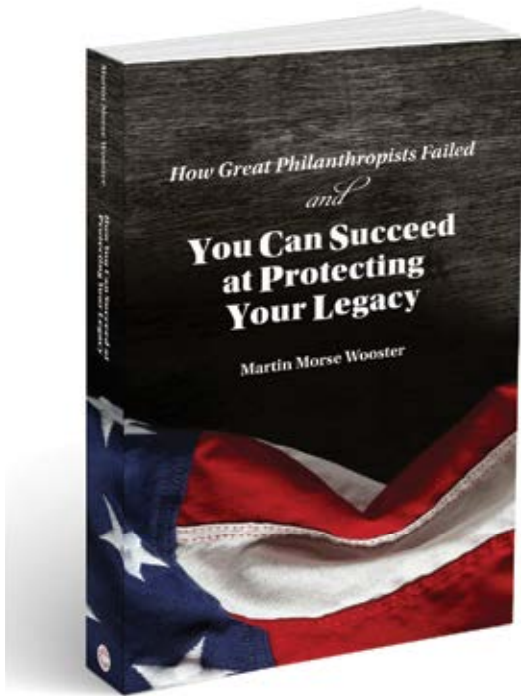
Back in the first chapter the reader learns of a 2020 survey of British schoolkids showing one of five “was having nightmares about climate change.” Three years earlier the American Psychological Association “diagnosed rising eco-anxiety” which it defined as “a chronic fear of environmental doom.”

There is no excuse for the politicians, schools, media, and advocacy organizations that immorally inflict these needless terrors on children. But there is an antidote: *Apocalypse Never*.

It even worked on Oliver Stone. ■

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Is Your Legacy Safe?



An instructive and cautionary tale for our time.

—W.J. Hume,
Jaquelin Hume Foundation

This is a must read for anyone thinking about establishing a private foundation.

—Linda Childears,
*Former President and CEO
The Daniels Fund*

No, your legacy is not safe.

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