



SOFT EYES FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOLUTIONS

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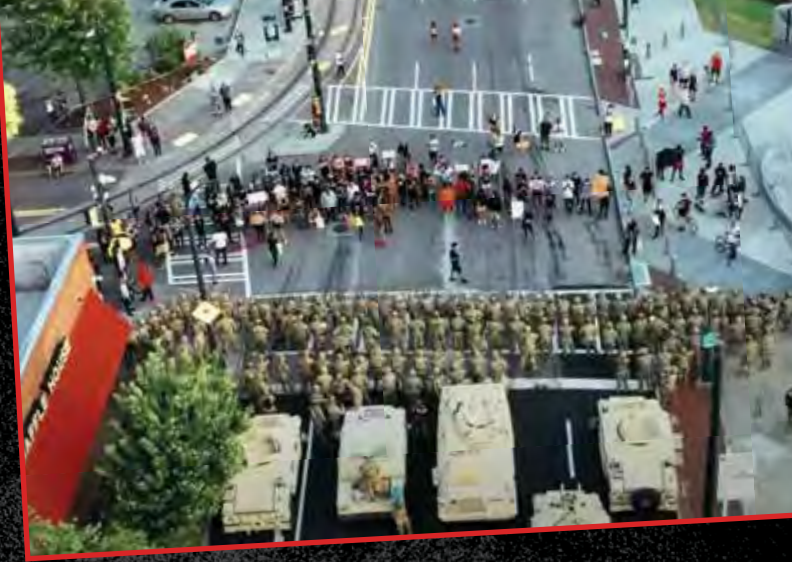
AFTERMATH

In perhaps one of the greatest messaging coups of all time, the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation—an international effort funded by some of the most powerful and wealthy leftists admittedly steeped in the Marxist playbook—took the true statement that black lives matter and used it to create chaos and destroy the livelihoods of the very people it was professing to help.

BLM Aftermath documents the consequences of the protests and riots and asks local residents for their perspectives.



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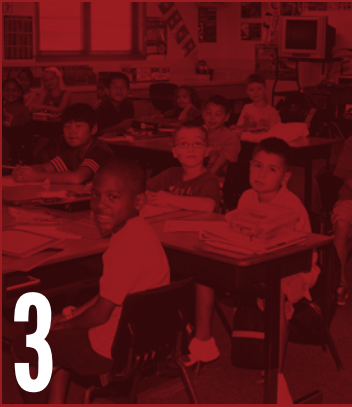
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CRC was established in 1984 to promote a better understanding of charity and philanthropy. We support the principles of individual liberty, a free market economy, and limited constitutional government—the cornerstones of American society, which make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

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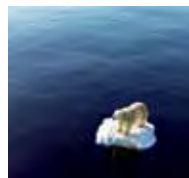


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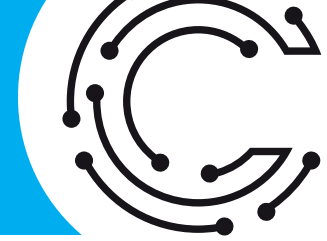


CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK

LIBERAL *RIGHT-OF-CENTER*
LEFT WING **CONSERVATIVE**
GREEN *FREE-MARKET*
FAR LEFT *LIBERTARIAN*
PROGRESSIVE **RIGHT-WING**
LEFT OF CENTER *RIGHT-LEANING*

Political and Policy-Oriented Giving After *Citizens United*: An Update to CRC's 2017 Analysis

CRC's update to the 2017 report found: In the 2018 election cycle, liberal grantmakers increased their public policy 501(c)(3) giving, increasing the imbalance from nearly 3.4 to 1 in 2014 to 3.7 to 1 (\$8.1 billion to \$2.2 billion) in 2018. "Dark money" funding through 501(c)(4) groups flipped from a 3.6 to 1 advantage for conservatives to a nearly 2 to 1 (\$81 million to \$42 million) advantage for liberals.



GOODBYE TO BAD EDUCATION

By Sarah Lee

The Hamilton Southeastern School District, which sits just north and to the west of Indianapolis, decided in early March they'd rather eat \$80K on a contract for school surveys purported to elevate student voices "on school climate, teaching and learning" than continue working with Boston-based Panorama Education, most famous for being co-founded by the son-in-law of AG Merrick Garland.

The HSE school board—most of whom were not seated when the board voted to renew the contract in February of last year—reportedly had concerns about the surveys' (used to quantify "social emotional learning" privacy and "how the information was gathered, and whether information could be tied to individual students."

That's a not-insignificant concern when considering the surveys also reportedly asked about "diversity, equity and inclusion within the district" and were known to have been not quite truthful about promoting critical race theory (CRT). We've all seen what happens to those who go against the current cultural trend toward leftist socio-political policy.



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"They're basically putting a behavioral characteristic report card on these children every single day, every single week, and then putting it in a system that's going to follow your child until 12th grade," reported one parent, according to Parents Defending Education.

From InfluenceWatch:

Panorama Education claims that it does not promote critical race theory. However, media reports have identified Panorama content focused on race. The Daily Mail reported that Panorama ran a free

Sarah Lee is director of communications and external affairs at CRC.

online workshop entitled “SEL as Social Justice: Dismantling White Supremacy Within Systems and Self” that included an article entitled “How White Supremacy Lives in Our Schools” among its recommended resources for teachers. The essay identified rallies supporting President Donald Trump as being comparable as symbols of white supremacy to the Ku Klux Klan.

Panorama Education—where AG Garland’s (remember his crusade against parents at school board meetings?) son-in-law served as president and may still sit on the board—also has uncomfortable ties with the Southern Poverty Law Center’s (SPLC) “Learning for Justice” project. As Capital Research Center Education Fellow Kali Fontanilla writes, “the [Learning for Justice] lessons being sent to teachers are full of leftist narratives and agendas...By taking advantage of the need for easy-to-use and readymade lessons that teachers crave and the willingness of districts to overlook the political messages in resources provided for free, SPLC has inserted its left-leaning narratives into the public school classroom through its sister site Learning for Justice.”

And apparently, some districts are using American Rescue Act Plan funds to pay for these questionably secure, almost certainly biased data sets.

“They’re basically putting a behavioral characteristic report card on these children every single day, every single week,

and then putting it in a system that’s going to follow your child until 12th grade,” reported one parent, according to Parents Defending Education.

The education company had raised, as of 2021, \$76M from some heavy-hitting investors, including The Emerson Collective—which boasts an assortment of former Obama and Hillary Clinton staffers—and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, which likes to involve itself, very controversially, in U.S. elections.

Perhaps it’s not terribly surprising that the HSE school board members in Indiana who opposed continuing on with Panorama weren’t overly forthcoming in explaining their decision. As the Indy Star reported bluntly: “Board members who supported discontinuing Panorama did not explain their votes.”

With that kind of power and money behind an opponent, it’s best to just take a vote, eat the loss, and move forward quietly. There are, thankfully, still some places you can do that in the republic. ■

This article originally appeared in the Townhall on April 17, 2023.

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



GUN CONTROL ADVOCACY

By Robert Stilson

Abstract: Gun control is one of the most perennially polarizing issues in contemporary American politics—one on which numerous well-funded activist groups operate on both sides of the debate. Nearly everyone has heard of the National Rifle Association (NRA), and its activities receive unending media coverage. On the other side are dozens of gun control activist groups organized as 501(c)(3) charities, 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations, and 527 political action committees that have received hundreds of millions of dollars in financing.

Gun control is one of the most perennially polarizing issues in contemporary American politics—one on which numerous well-funded activist groups operate on both sides of the debate. Nearly everyone has heard of the National Rifle Association (NRA), and its activities receive unending media coverage. But who are the groups on the other side—America’s major gun control activist groups? How much money do they bring in, and from where? What specifically do they advocate for? This three-part article aims to answer each of these questions.

The Landscape of Gun Control Advocacy

Dozens of gun control advocacy groups are active in the United States, and detailed financial information is available on at least 50. This includes groups organized as 501(c)(3) charities, 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations, and 527 political action committees. A financial analysis of these 50 groups reveals that during the two-year period covering 2019–2020, about \$153 million flowed into 501(c)(3)s, about \$149 million flowed into 501(c)(4)s, and about \$49.1 million flowed into 527s.

While these numbers give a rough indication of how much “gun control money” is out there, they cannot simply be added together to obtain a precise grand total because affiliated groups can and do contribute to one another in any given year, which raises the risk of double counting.



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Nearly everyone has heard of the National Rifle Association, and its activities receive unending media coverage.

Still, these figures do suggest two interesting additional data points. First, just five groups dominate the nonprofit gun control advocacy landscape from a financial standpoint. Second, 501(c)(3) charities are key funding conduits for activism, even on a thoroughly political issue like gun control.

Methodology and Other Considerations. For the purposes of this research, an organization was considered a gun control advocacy group if it appeared primarily focused on the ownership and/or use of firearms by American civilians, and if it promoted increased restrictions on such ownership or use. Although admittedly a bit subjective, dozens of distinct nonprofits seem to fit fairly within these criteria. These were categorized by their tax-exempt status, and their reported revenues in both 2019 and 2020 were combined. Figures for 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) nonprofits were obtained from Form 990s covering the fiscal years that ended in 2019 and 2020, while figures for 527 groups were

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obtained from OpenSecrets and covered the entire 2020 election cycle.

During this period, gun control groups organized as 501(c)(3) charities reported \$153,038,641 in combined revenue. Those organized as 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations reported \$148,984,013. And those organized as 527 political action committees reported \$49,165,116. While these numbers cannot simply be added together due to the risk of double-counting funds that one gun control group may have contributed to another, a few other notes and observations suggest that these figures are otherwise probably on the conservative side.

First, groups for which precise financial information was unavailable were excluded. This includes fiscally sponsored projects like Fund for a Safer Future (a project of the New Venture Fund, managed by Arabella Advisors), as well as groups housed at universities such as the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. Also excluded for this reason were small nonprofits that filed a Form 990-N by virtue of having annual gross receipts of \$50,000 or less.

Second, multi-issue groups for which gun control accounts for only a portion of their advocacy were excluded. A January 2023 letter from a coalition called The Time is Now, urging President Joe Biden to be more aggressive on the issue, was signed by more than 100 activist groups—including some that the public would rarely if ever associate specifically with gun control. They included the American Federation of Teachers, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, the Union for Reform Judaism, and Equality California. Major liberal public policy groups like the Center for American Progress, the Brennan Center for Justice, and the League of Women Voters also devote some portion of their work to gun control, among many other issues, but were likewise excluded.

Finally, some judgment calls simply could not be avoided. For example, gun control advocacy groups use data from the Gun Violence Archive to support their activism, but because the group *itself* does not promote gun control as policy, the Gun Violence Archive was excluded from the total. However, if a gun control advocacy group exists as part of a family of affiliated nonprofits—for example, a 501(c)(3) with an affiliated 501(c)(4)—all of those groups were included if their financials were available.

Accordingly, the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation was included despite its substantial work in other areas because the affiliated Sandy Hook Promise Action Fund promotes gun control. The two groups share overlapping leadership and complementary websites, direct prospective donors to

one another under the same public brand, and promote gun control policies on shared social media. It simply feels more accurate to include groups like the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation than to exclude them, and it is worth noting that informed commentators such as *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* have done the same.

The Big Five. In addition to identifying America's gun control advocacy groups and giving a rough idea of how much money they bring in, the biggest takeaways from this research are twofold. First, even though gun control is a decidedly political issue, 501(c)(3) charities play a central role in the associated fundraising. Second, five groups dominate the gun control activism landscape: Everytown, Giffords, Brady, Sandy Hook Promise, and March for Our Lives. Even excluding their affiliated PACs, they still accounted for over 83 percent of the total 501(c)(3) money and over 96 percent of the 501(c)(4) money raised by the groups analyzed.

Everytown is the largest by a substantial margin. Its constituent 501(c)(3) Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund brought in \$61,429,910 in 2019–2020, while the 501(c)(4) Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund brought in \$105,284,377. The affiliated Everytown for Gun Safety Victory Fund reported raising \$32,396,481 during the 2020 cycle, but it is important to keep in mind that about half of that total came from the 501(c)(4) Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund itself, according to Open Secrets.



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Five groups dominate the gun control activism landscape: Everytown, Giffords, Brady, Sandy Hook Promise, and March for Our Lives.

Giffords is comprised of the eponymous 501(c)(4) and the 501(c)(3) Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, which reported revenues of \$17,903,588 and \$13,555,850, respectively, in 2019–2020. The affiliated Giffords PAC raised \$11,095,925 during the 2020 cycle.

Brady consists of the 501(c)(4) Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence and the 501(c)(3) Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence. The 501(c)(4) arm reported revenues of \$6,376,425 in 2019–2020, while the 501(c)(3) arm reported \$16,402,732. There is also the Brady PAC, which raised \$5,592,431 during the 2020 cycle.

Sandy Hook Promise consists of the 501(c)(3) Sandy Hook Promise Foundation and the affiliated 501(c)(4) Sandy Hook Promise Action Fund. The 501(c)(3) foundation raised significantly more money than the 501(c)(4) action fund in 2019–2020, reporting revenues of \$28,141,906 compared to only \$4,434,135 for the 501(c)(4) action fund.

March for Our Lives is made up of the 501(c)(4) March for Our Lives Action Fund and the affiliated 501(c)(3) March for Our Lives Foundation. The action fund's 2019–2020 revenues were \$9,231,361, while the foundation's were \$8,237,600. However, the 501(c)(3) foundation reported making a \$3,500,000 grant to the 501(c)(4) action fund in 2019 for “nonpartisan charitable and educational activities.”

Of the remaining groups, notable ones include The Trace, a 501(c)(3) with combined 2019–2020 revenues of \$6,627,281, and the Violence Policy Center, another 501(c)(3), with revenues of \$2,007,857 over that same period. The 501(c)(4) Alliance for Gun Responsibility brought in \$2,659,164, and the affiliated 501(c)(3) Alliance for Gun Responsibility Foundation brought in \$1,603,250. The 501(c)(3) Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence also brought in \$3,574,437 in 2019–2020, but it has since merged into the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, housed at the university's Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The Funders of Gun Control Advocacy

Where does this money come from? This question can only be partially answered, which itself highlights some of the realities and limitations of tracking nonprofit money flows. Unlike PACs, 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) nonprofits are required to disclose *to whom* they give money but not from whom they receive money. There are good reasons for this—the privacy of individual donors being chief among them—but it necessitates piecing together funding information

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Unlike PACs, 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) nonprofits are required to disclose to whom they give money but not from whom they receive money.

from a variety of other sources into what is still generally an incomplete picture. Another complication is that many foundations and other nonprofit grantmakers operate broad gun violence prevention programs through which they fund gun control policy advocacy alongside rather less controversial (and perhaps more traditionally “charitable”) initiatives such as crisis intervention and conflict mitigation.

All that said, vast sums of dedicated gun control money can nevertheless be tracked with a tolerable degree of specificity. These funds can broadly be broken down into “political” gun control money, which flows to PACs and 501(c)(4) nonprofits, and “charitable” gun control money, which flows to 501(c)(3) nonprofits. This latter funding may be particularly notable to those who are concerned that philanthropy is increasingly blurring the line between charity and politics.

Political Gun Control: PAC and 501(c)(4) Funding. PACs must disclose their donors, which makes identifying their immediate sources of funding relatively straightforward. The specific type of PAC—and what it does—determines how much money each donor may give. Hybrid gun control PACs like the Brady PAC and the Giffords PAC raised almost \$16.7 million combined during the 2020 cycle, but no one donor gave more than six figures. By contrast, just three funders gave a combined \$24.7 million to the independent expenditure Super PAC Everytown for Gun Safety Victory Fund, representing most of its 2020 cycle revenue. These were the affiliated 501(c)(4) Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund, Ballmer Group co-founder Connie Ballmer, and Michael Bloomberg.

Indeed, the ultra-wealthy former mayor of New York City and unsuccessful candidate for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination is the single most important individual in the world of gun control activism, at least from a financial standpoint. The *New York Times* reported in 2020 that Bloomberg had contributed upwards of \$270 million to the issue since 2007. The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions—a combination research and advocacy institution—is housed at the billionaire's namesake Bloomberg School of Public Health.



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Everytown was established in 2014 following the merger of Mayors Against Illegal Guns (itself co-founded by Bloomberg in 2006) and Moms Demand Action for Guns Sense in America.

Bloomberg’s biggest organizational legacy in the field, however, is the Everytown family of nonprofits, which are now the most well-funded gun control activist groups in the country by a significant margin. In addition to its PAC and 501(c)(4) arms, Everytown also operates the 501(c)(3) Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund. Everytown was established in 2014 following the merger of Mayors Against Illegal Guns (itself co-founded by Bloomberg in 2006) and Moms Demand Action for Guns Sense in America. Bloomberg pledged \$50 million to the effort at the time, and *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported as of 2022 that he was still providing as much as a quarter of Everytown’s funding.

The combined 2019–2020 revenues of the 501(c)(4) Everytown Action Fund were over \$105 million, which dwarfed other gun control groups organized under that same tax-exempt category. The next largest 501(c)(4) by revenue—Giffords—reported just under \$18 million across that two-year period. Bloomberg himself appears to have been the principal source of Everytown’s 501(c)(4) money. The *New York Times* reported that near the end of 2019 he gave an “extra \$35 million” to the Everytown Action Fund, to be used the following year. The Action Fund’s 2019 tax filings disclosed that it received total contributions and grants of \$80.7 million, of which over \$60.8 million came from a single redacted contributor—presumably Bloomberg.

Major left-of-center 501(c)(4) grantmakers are another source of political gun control funding. The Sixteen Thirty Fund gave \$100,000 to the Brady Campaign in 2021 and \$120,000 to Giffords in 2020, for example. More interesting, perhaps, are those 501(c)(3) nonprofits that give to

affiliated 501(c)(4)s. Such funds are still supposed to be used strictly for charitable purposes, but it underscores just how intertwined the world of nonprofit political-issue activism can be. The 501(c)(3) Everytown Support Fund gave more than \$4.4 million total to the 501(c)(4) Everytown Action Fund from 2016 to 2020. The 501(c)(3) March for Our Lives Foundation gave \$3.5 million to the affiliated 501(c)(4) March for Our Lives Action Fund in 2019, the year after both groups received their tax-exempt status from the IRS.

Charitable Gun Control: 501(c)(3) Funding. On the 501(c)(3) charitable side of the American gun control movement, donor-advised funds (DAFs) collectively constitute a major identifiable source of organizational funding—though that characterization can be a bit misleading. DAFs are essentially personal charitable accounts opened with DAF providers, which are themselves registered as 501(c)(3) charities. A donor may give money to the DAF provider through his or her account and take a tax deduction immediately. Later, that donor may recommend another 501(c)(3) charity to support, and the DAF provider will generally carry out this recommendation with funds from the donor’s account. The DAF provider is technically the entity making the grant, so it will report having done so on its Form 990 for that year.

This has the practical effect of turning DAF providers into extremely large grantmakers on paper. The popular DAF provider Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund disclosed \$35.2 billion net assets in 2020 while paying out a staggering \$7.3 billion in grants—almost \$14,000 per minute. Naturally, this includes substantial sums to gun control groups. During the two-year period covering 2019–2020, Fidelity provided a total of \$15,778,227 to the 501(c)(3) charitable arms of the country’s five largest gun control advocacy groups. Since 2017, it has given \$16,478,003 to the Everytown Support Fund alone.

Other DAF providers are major sources of gun control funding, too. The Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston granted a total of \$10,120,594 via DAFs to the Everytown Support Fund from 2015 to 2020. The Schwab Charitable Fund gave a combined \$2,535,301 to the five major gun control groups from 2019 to 2020, after having given \$2,499,535 to Everytown alone in 2018. The Silicon Valley Community Foundation gave \$2,027,475 total from 2019 to 2020, while the National Philanthropic Trust provided \$1,516,535. From 2020 to 2021, American Online Giving Foundation gave a combined \$1,463,874.

Gun control charities also receive significant funding from traditional private foundations and other nonprofit grantmakers. The largest donor collaborative on the issue is

CC — *Gun control charities also receive significant funding from traditional private foundations and other nonprofit grantmakers.*

the Fund for a Safer Future. Details regarding the group's financials are scant due to its status as a fiscally sponsored project of the New Venture Fund, but its website claims it has “made more than \$20 million in grants to reduce gun violence” since its founding in 2011, while its members have made an additional \$134 million in “aligned grants.”

Specific grantees have ranged from schools like Northeastern University to national and state gun control activist groups like the Giffords Law Center and the CT Against Gun Violence Education Fund to general liberal public policy think tanks like the Center for American Progress. While this money goes to fund everything from research to policy advocacy, a grant description from the MacArthur Foundation (which gave \$1.05 million to the Fund for a Safer Future from 2011–2016) notably explained that the fund was created in part “to enlarge the base of support for gun policies that prioritize public safety over the individual rights of gun ownership.”

As of 2023 the Fund for a Safer Future has 35 foundation and individual members. One of the most prominent is the Chicago-based Joyce Foundation, which has given out over \$34 million since 2018 under its “Gun Violence Prevention & Justice Reform” program, the director of which also serves as chair of the Fund for a Safer Future. Only a portion of this money appears to have funded gun control advocacy, but some of those grants were substantial: \$1 million to the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence and \$1.025 million to the CeaseFire Pennsylvania Education Fund, for example. And \$1.7 million was earmarked for the “gun policy project” at the Center for American Progress, which in turn promotes a variety of gun control laws.

Additional member foundations of the Fund for a Safer Future include the Jacob & Valeria Langeloth Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Lisa & Douglas Goldman Fund, and the Heising-Simons Foundation. The Kendeda Fund has given \$250,000 annually to the collaborative in recent years, and the head of Kendeda's gun violence prevention program serves as the group's vice chair. Through that program, the Kendeda Fund has also made grants to other pro-gun control nonprofits such as the Giffords Law Center, Guns Down America, and The Trace.

Other foundations and grantmakers that have given significant 501(c)(3) money to at least one of the five major American gun control groups include the Boston-based Aloha Foundation, which granted \$6 million total to Everytown from 2016 to 2019, and the Los Angeles-based Morf Foundation, which gave \$2.5 million over that same period. The Fullerton Family Charitable Fund gave a total of \$800,000 from 2018 to 2021, while the Ring Foundation has given at least that much since 2017. The Ford Foundation gave \$500,000 in 2018. All of this money went to Everytown.

The Sherwood Foundation—the private foundation of Warren Buffett's daughter Susan—gave \$505,120 to Everytown in 2019, the year after giving \$1 million to March for Our Lives (apparently via the Everytown Support Fund). The NoVo Foundation—the private foundation of Buffett's son Peter—gave an additional \$500,000 to Everytown in order to support March for Our Lives in 2018. The Lynx Foundation has given the Brady Center \$340,000 total since 2018, the same year it also gave the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation \$225,000. The Wellspring Philanthropic Fund gave \$200,000 to Brady in 2019, while the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation gave \$700,000 to Sandy Hook Promise from 2019 to 2020. The Alliance for Youth Organizing gave \$400,000 to the March for Our Lives Foundation in 2020.

Gun Control Philanthropy. These grants build upon a theme that arose in the first part of this series: the significance that 501(c)(3) philanthropic support plays in American gun control activism. The Capital Research Center has extensively studied political philanthropy and conducted studies that suggest it is far more extensive on the left than it is on the right. It certainly seems fair to say that gun control is a political issue and that gun control activists fundamen-



Guns Down America broadly seeks “a future with fewer guns,” while March for Our Lives has a specific goal of removing at least 30 percent of guns from circulation through buybacks.

tally seek political objectives. The financial support for this activism that flows via philanthropic foundations and other 501(c)(3) grantmakers would appear to represent a clear example of this phenomenon.

The Policies of Gun Control Advocacy

After having examined nonprofit gun control activist groups and their funding, the next question concerns the specific firearm policies that these groups favor. Such proposals must not only clear substantial political hurdles, but also survive a judicial environment in which courts have largely been settling once-lingering questions about the scope of the Second Amendment in favor of protecting Americans' individual right to keep and bear arms.

Not every form of gun control is politically controversial or constitutionally problematic. Laws preventing children or violent felons from acquiring guns attract precious few critics. The debate turns on more divisive policy proposals, and many of these fault lines are well established in the public discourse: concealed carry permit requirements, the prohibition of high-capacity magazines and so-called assault weapons, and the applicability of background checks to private gun transfers are commonly disputed issues.

However, many prominent gun control activist groups ultimately envision an even more restrictive legislative and regulatory framework. Despite often being couched in terms of “common sense” reforms, their comprehensive implementation would not only significantly curtail an enumerated constitutional right, but also fundamentally shift how American society has traditionally treated responsible gun ownership.

Pro-Gun Control or Anti-Gun? The essence of gun control advocacy is restricting civilian access to firearms, and the core objective for many advocates appears to simply be to reduce the raw number of guns possessed by Americans. Guns Down America broadly seeks “a future with fewer guns,” while March for Our Lives has a specific goal of removing at least 30 percent of guns from circulation through buybacks. The Violence Policy Center supports laws prohibiting various types of guns including certain inexpensive handguns and limiting the total number of firearms a citizen can legally possess in his or her home.

In addition to banning certain types of firearms and related accessories outright, activists also seek to significantly increase the legal barriers to purchasing, owning, and/or using a gun. Some common themes involve strict training and licensing requirements for gun owners, the registration of firearms



Credit: CJ Haney, License: Shutterstock

Everytown has gone so far as to call it a “myth” that “criminals are responsible for their crimes, not the gun industry.”

with law enforcement, expanding the categories of people prohibited from possessing guns, banning the open carry of firearms, making it more difficult to obtain a concealed carry permit, preventing those permits from being automatically recognized in other states, and sales restrictions such as waiting periods. Everytown for Gun Safety—the largest gun control activist group in the country—wants to require retailers to inform prospective customers of various risks it claims are significantly increased by owning a gun.

Some gun control activists have expanded their targets beyond the guns themselves. Giffords proposes regulating BB guns like real firearms. To supplement its gun control proposals, the liberal think tank Center for American Progress also promotes “bullet control,” by which it means requiring background checks on ammunition sales, prohibiting direct-to-consumer online sales, banning the lead-based ammunition commonly used for hunting and target shooting on public lands, doubling the federal excise tax on ammunition, and diverting proceeds away from existing conservation and hunter education efforts toward new federal programs “designed to reduce the impact of gun violence on U.S. communities.” Giffords has suggested a policy of requiring a government-issued license merely to possess ammunition.

Finally, certain groups have absorbed gun control advocacy into a broader (and rather radical) left-wing critique of American politics and society writ large. March for Our Lives laments how Americans supposedly “put guns on a pedestal and prioritize firearm access over access to human needs.” It claims that areas with high levels of gun violence have been “intentionally impoverished” by the government. The group argues that firearms enable certain Americans to assert their “armed supremacy” over others, which in turn allows “white supremacy and patriarchy” to survive. According to March for Our Lives, gun violence is as much a product of “our capitalist, white supremacist society” as it is the product of insufficiently restrictive gun control laws.

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March for Our Lives laments how Americans supposedly “put guns on a pedestal and prioritize firearm access over access to human needs.”

Targeting Business. Another strategy employed by gun control activists involves attacking the firearms industry itself. One law commonly targeted for repeal is the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), which Congress passed in 2005 with bipartisan majorities. Subject to certain exceptions, the law protects businesses in the firearms industry from civil liability if *somebody else* unlawfully misuses their products—for example, a criminal who uses a gun to commit a crime. The concept is intuitively fair, but the law became necessary after gun control advocates and sympathetic trial lawyers embarked on a dedicated litigation campaign aimed at undercutting the industry financially. Today, the PLCAA is often disingenuously spun as a special legal immunity that allows gun manufacturers and retailers to avoid “accountability.” Everytown has gone so far as to call it a “myth” that “criminals are responsible for their crimes, not the gun industry.”

To understand the PLCAA’s impact, consider the ongoing case of *Estados Unidos Mexicanos v. Smith & Wesson Brands, Inc. et al.*, in which the Mexican government has sued seven gun manufacturers and one distributor in U.S. federal court. The Mexican government claims that most guns recovered at Mexican crime scenes originated in the United States and that those companies should be held liable for contributing to Mexico’s significant gun violence problem. The district court dismissed the case in September 2022, largely on the basis that the PLCAA “unequivocally bars” such lawsuits, but the ruling has been appealed. Gun control activist groups including Everytown, the Giffords Law Center, March for Our Lives, and the Violence Policy Center filed an amicus brief supporting Mexico and urging the district court to deny the motion to dismiss.

Not every effort involves courts and legislatures. Echoing similar campaigns targeting the oil and gas industry, an effort called *Is Your Bank Loaded?*—sponsored by Guns Down America in conjunction with groups like the American Federation of Teachers labor union and the activist group Color of Change—calls for large national banks to cease doing business (among other things) with firearm and ammunition manufacturers. A group called Change the Ref promotes a Gun Safety Certified mark for businesses that agree to support a variety of expansive gun

control laws. The Violence Policy Center has criticized efforts to market firearms to racial and ethnic minority communities—arguing that “increased gun ownership can only increase death and injury among them”—and supports banning or heavily regulating firearm advertisements. The Alliance for Gun Responsibility has claimed that firearm sales are driven by a gun lobby “which regularly traffics in white supremacist messaging.”

Language and “De-Normalization.” Gun control is a perennially polarizing issue. From the expiration of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban in 2004 to the significant expansion of shall-issue and permitless concealed carry legal frameworks in the states to the landmark Supreme Court decisions in *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008), *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (2010), and *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* (2022), the story of at least the past two decades has been largely one of victory for gun rights advocates.

Gun control activists have adapted and reframed their advocacy accordingly. Indeed, they have largely abandoned the term itself, preferring instead to characterize their work as directed at facially uncontroversial “gun safety” or “gun violence prevention” objectives. This is even reflected in the names chosen by major gun control advocacy groups, such as Everytown for Gun Safety and the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence was once called Handgun Control, Inc., while the now-defunct Coalition to Stop Gun Violence was originally founded as the National Coalition to Ban Handguns.

The reality is that many advocates for gun control object not simply to the existence or absence of any given law or to the Second Amendment and the manner it is interpreted in any given case, but to the entire culture of (overwhelmingly responsible) gun ownership that is valued by much of American civil society.

Even putting aside the substantial constitutional obstacles, it will be exceedingly difficult for gun control supporters to enact much of their agenda so long as guns remain a common feature of ordinary American life. People are more likely to support restrictive laws if they don’t believe the restrictions in question will ever personally impact them. In addition to their direct legal effects, nearly all gun control policy proposals can be viewed through this long-term prism of firearm “de-normalization.” ■

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ARCHITECTS OF WOKE:

The 1619 Project's Fake History



STOKELY CARMICHAEL



& RACISM WITHOUT RACISTS

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK & THE ROMANCE OF REVOLUTIONARY TERROR



CRC's Architects of Woke series takes aim at far-left post-modernist and Marxist thinkers and activists responsible for the spread of identity politics on college campuses and in society at large.

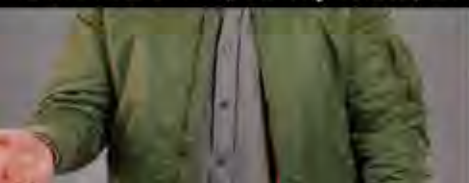
The series is hosted and directed by award-winning filmmaker Rob Montz, whose online documentary work has attracted millions of views and coverage in major outlets, including *The Economist*, *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and The Adam Carolla Podcast.

Subjects of the Architects of Woke include the fake history of the 1619 Project, the wildly popular radical socialist podcast *Chapo Trap House*, far-left political activist Howard Zinn, University of California at Berkeley feminist gender theorist Judith Butler, highly influential Marxist-Leninist philosopher Slavoj Žižek.

Watch the entire series at [DangerousDocumentaries.com](https://www.DangerousDocumentaries.com).

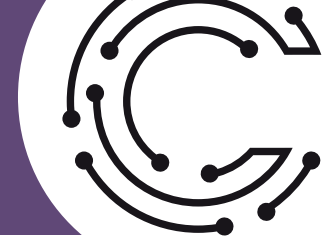


Howard Zinn, Hollywood, & the Fairy Tale of American Evil



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SOFT EYES FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOLUTIONS

By Ken Braun

Summary: *We have more people in prison per capita than almost every other nation, San Francisco is being overrun by thieves, and other big cities have recently set new records for total murders. Are Americans uniquely awful people, or do we have a severely flawed criminal justice system? Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year by more than a hundred policy groups advocating for their preferred answers to that question. Some wish to “defund the police,” while the others argue we should put even more people in cages. In between, there are many groups with softer eyes for solutions.*

The American criminal justice system spent \$300 billion in 2020 to incarcerate 2.2 million of us and pay the police to put them there, according to a report from the American Action Forum. This exceeds the annual global revenue of Alphabet, parent company of Google.

Criminal justice is a massive industry and so is the universe of advocacy groups working toward what they each believe to be “reform.”

Nonprofit Donations

In July 2020, the *New York Times* reported that nonprofits funded by billionaire George Soros, such as his Foundation to Promote Open Society (FPOS), would begin a five-year program of giving \$220 million to groups such as the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI).

EJI claims its goal is to “end our misguided reliance on over-incarceration” because “tough on crime” policies have caused “mass incarceration” that is “rooted in the belief that Black and brown people are inherently guilty and dangerous.” Current policies, according to EJI, do not reduce violent crime, but instead “makes these problems worse” because they use prisons improperly to address “poverty and mental illness.”

Soros is far from the only billionaire or large foundation pumping big money into this system.



Credit: Picrrider. License: Shutterstock.

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Just a partial list of institutional donors that have made at least large seven-figure total donations to criminal justice policy groups since 2016 include Open Philanthropy, the Ford Foundation, the Arabella Advisors network, the Public Welfare Foundation, the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the JPB Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Craig Newmark Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Advocacy, the Network for Good, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, and the Laura and John Arnold Foundation.

That *New York Times* report also revealed that the summer of 2020 protests had already led to “progressive groups, Democratic candidates and racial justice organizations” being “flooded with small-dollar donations,” allowing many of them to shatter previous fundraising records.

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

The Equal Justice Initiative is a perfect example. The non-profit's revenue for 2020 was \$216.2 million, a *thirteen-fold increase* and nearly \$200 million more than the group received in 2016. Since 2016, the Network for Good has given EJI more than \$15 million. An additional \$10 million came from a combination of the Soros-backed FPOS, Rockefeller, Ford, and JPB.

But the criminal justice reform movement is bigger than just so-called "progressive groups." There are right-leaning participants, libertarians, and a wide variety of opinions about what "reform" really means. Some believe police have too many restrictions and too much oversight; others believe police don't have enough oversight. Some think there are too many people in prison; others, too few people in prison.

As one example, qualified immunity is the legal doctrine that protects police from personal liability when they use force. Some would-be reformers argue this protection encourages abuses committed by bad cops and prison guards. But defenders of qualified immunity argue it protects good police from nuisance lawsuits and personal bankruptcy.

Another debate, involving similar issues, revolves around whether unions should exist for police and prison guards.

What Are They Fighting Over?

A complete picture of the growing, shifting, and frequently conflicting criminal justice reform players is likely impossible. What follows is a rough sampling of some of the agendas, the groups that promote them, and those that fund them.

According to 2021 data from the University of London's World Prison Brief, we locked up 629 people for every 100,000 Americans, a larger prison population per capita than any other nation on Earth. This was six times higher than Canada, and even 23 percent higher than Cuba, the planet's fifth biggest per capita jailer.

"The United States is sprinting in the opposite direction of other developed democracies," warns a policy statement from the Justice Collaborative (JC). "We do not believe that Americans are more dangerous or less deserving of freedom than the citizens of the rest of the world."

The JC and its advocacy arm, the Justice Collaborative Engagement Project, are sponsored projects of the Tides Center and Tides Advocacy Fund. The Tides Nexus is a little known but influential collection of left-leaning donor groups that collectively spend \$800 million per year.

As Americans, we like to believe that we're exceptional. Do we really need an incarceration rate that implies we're six times nastier than the Canadians? Do we need to cage each other at the same rate as communist Cuba?

Our annual murder rate, according to 2018 data used by the World Population Review, was five homicides per 100,000 people. This was almost three times higher than those peaceful Canadians, but still well to the low end on the international scale.

Sunny vacation spots popular with Americans and Canadians alike were far more murderous. Jamaica, with the third worst homicide rate on the whole worldwide list, was almost nine times more murderous than the United States. Even Costa Ricans, known to be some of the planet's happiest people, checked in at more than twice as homicidal.

More recent FBI data show an uptick in homicides in the United States, to 6.5 per 100,000 people in 2020. Not good, in comparison to those friendly Canadians, but like all other crime stats this was delightful compared to our historical bad old selves.

Murders per capita were 51 percent higher in 1991. Similarly, for all violent crimes, the FBI reported a rate of 398.5 incidents per 100,000 people in 2020, about where it had been for the prior decade, and far below the 758.2 incidents per 100,000 peak of 1991.

Property crimes per capita fell steadily almost every single year from 1991 through 2020, a 62 percent overall decline.

A Tale of Four Cities

Some big cities have recently become sharply worse, but the full picture is more complicated.

In 2021, records were set for total murders in 10 of America's 40 most populated cities. New York and Chicago weren't on the list, but for very different reasons.

Since 1996, New York City's murder rate per capita has been reliably lower than the national average.

The Big Apple had 468 murders in 2020, a 46 percent increase above 2019, but still low enough to leave the nation's largest city with a homicide rate per capita that was less than the national average, let alone the average of all cities.

Chicago, on the other hand, had a horrendous 2,267 people murdered in just the three years from 2020 through 2022. Despite having three times as many people to get the job

done, New Yorkers took most of the previous six years to slaughter as many of their neighbors as Chicagoans did in the last three.

Last summer, voters in San Francisco recalled controversial prosecutor Chesa Boudin over the perception that he was allowing lawlessness. It's definitely not an exaggeration to claim robberies, thefts, and property crime were rampant in the city during 2020—all far worse than the average of the nation's 20 largest cities.

Such clear failings could have animated the 55 percent of voters who pulled the lever to prematurely remove Boudin.

But oddly, while people's "stuff" wasn't safe at all under Boudin, the people—relatively speaking—generally were. The rates of homicide and aggravated assault in 2020 were far below that of the nation's largest cities. San Francisco's homicide rate in 2020 was even lower than the *national* average, which includes all villages, farms, forests, cities, suburbs, exurbs, ghost towns, and your town.

Washington, DC, has recently had its share of big city violent crime. The DC criminal code was written more than a century ago.

These two facts became needlessly ensnarled in a controversy involving the DC Justice Lab, a small local nonprofit that reported \$1.2 million in revenue for 2021. Among other

ideas in a proposed new criminal code for the city, DC Justice Lab supported giving out 12- to 24-year prison sentences for evildoers convicted of armed carjackings.

Locking away an armed robber for up to two dozen years may seem reasonable, but it became a bad idea to some because the current criminal code allows judges to hit carjackers with 40-year maximum sentences.

Never mind that a 2021 report from the DC Sentencing

Commission showed the average sentences for the offense had been 15 years. Many other sentencing changes in the proposed new criminal code were similarly criticized.

The DC mayor vetoed the proposal, but the city council overrode her veto. At this point DC might have implemented a controversial, yet not terribly extreme, revision to its criminal code. But the federal government had something to say about it.

Earlier this year Republicans in Congress introduced a resolution to block implementation of the misunderstood carjacker penalty and the rest of the new criminal code. Some Democrats and, most importantly, President Joe Biden supported the move.

There are groups with extreme—arguably silly and dangerous—criminal justice ideas that have been receiving huge funding increases over the past several years. Despite the national controversy, DC Justice Lab hasn't been in either the crazy or the money.

The Extremes ... and the Middle

For example, there is Color of Change.

"Police do not keep our communities safe, they are dangerous and have demonstrated over and over again an unwillingness to be held accountable," declared a recent petition campaign from the advocacy nonprofit.

All police?

The campaign advised activists to "Tell Congress: Defund the police now!"

The Color of Change political advocacy nonprofit received \$20.4 million for 2020, nearly eight times what the group took in during 2016.

Since 2016, Open Philanthropy has also given a combined \$4.5 million to Color of Change and the Color of Change Education Fund, its tax exempt educational arm. Other big donors during the era included Rockefeller Philanthropy and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, each granting more than \$2.5 million. Another \$3.8 million came through the combined efforts of the New Venture Fund (an Arabella Advisors controlled nonprofit), Wellspring, MacArthur, and Public Welfare.

The "#DefundThePolice" perspective is richly promoted by the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation. BLMGNF identifies as an "abolitionist movement" that believes "prisons, police and all other institutions that inflict



Credit: SFGoVTV. License: <https://bit.ly/3M6wYNY>.

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violence on Black people must be abolished and replaced by institutions that value and affirm the flourishing of Black lives.” The policy proposals promoted by the group include “decriminalizing recreational drug use & retroactively pardoning drug offenders.”

According to its first independently filed IRS Form 990, the Black Lives Matter GNF raised more than \$79.6 million for the year ending June 2021. Before that, it was a fiscally sponsored project of the Tides Nexus.

U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) shows how to overreact in the other direction. During a June 2021 speech, hosted by the free market Manhattan Institute, Cotton argued that “we don’t have an over-incarceration problem, we have an under-incarceration problem” and that “we must invest in our nation’s prison system.”

Similarly, a spring 2022 report in *City Journal*, a Manhattan Institute magazine, was titled: “Mass Incarceration Hysteria.” “Incarceration, appropriately applied, represents effective public policy, worthy of investment,” argued the *City Journal* co-authors, Matt DeLisi and John Paul Wright. They explain:

While some states and public officials tout a hard line against crime, the reality is that many serious, recidivistic criminal offenders rarely see the inside of a prison cell. When they do, most get released after serving time well short of their actual sentence. Incarceration is the proverbial revolving door. Nevertheless, the mass incarceration narrative remains potent and retains bipartisan support—but its historical and empirical foundation is weak.

The Manhattan Institute, with researchers who address many issues in addition to criminal justice, raised \$18.5 million in 2020—about \$60 million less than the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation.

An ostensible free market ally of Manhattan, the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) raised \$17.7 million in 2020. Millions were spent on TPPF’s Right on Crime initiative. Since 2016 the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Foundation has given \$2.5 million specifically to Right on Crime. Pew, Arnold, Tides and Public Welfare have given a combined \$3.5 million to the TPPF over the same period.

“Because government exists to secure liberties that can only be enjoyed to the extent there is public safety,” explains a Right on Crime policy statement, “state and local policy-makers must make fighting crime their top priority, including utilizing prisons to incapacitate violent offenders and career criminals.”

But these are tough on crime Texans who don’t play to stereotype.

“Prisons are overused, however, when nonviolent offenders who may be safely supervised in the community are given lengthy sentences,” says the next part of the statement. “Prisons provide diminishing returns when such offenders emerge more disposed to re-offend than when they entered prison.”

Right on Crime research shows that corrections spending collectively costs state budgets \$50 billion per year, with 1 in 33 American adults either incarcerated, on parole, or otherwise under criminal justice supervision. They compare this unpleasantly to when Ronald Reagan was president, when there was just \$11 billion in (inflation adjusted) state corrections spending, and only 1 in 77 adults in cages or being supervised by government.

For the limited government Texans, this is far too much government. They recommend that conservatives “address runaway spending on prisons just as they do with education and health care, subjecting the same level of skepticism and scrutiny to all expenditures of taxpayers’ funds.”

The Soros Prosecutors

A less nuanced approach is the political spending of George Soros. Since 2016, according to research tabulated by the Capital Research Center, the network of political committees funded by Soros have contributed \$35 million to the election of left-wing district attorney candidates, and at least 30 of them were still in office as of April 2023.

Color of Change PAC is a political committee loosely affiliated with the eponymous nonprofits. The PAC funds the campaigns of lenient district attorney candidates and received a \$1 million donation from Soros in 2022—the largest donation the political committee received during that



Credit: City Club of Chicago. License: <https://bit.ly/3M809y>

During Anita Alvarez’s final four years in office, Chicago averaged 521 annual homicides. In the first four years under Kim Foxx that leaped to 627 murders per year.

election cycle. According to CNBC, the Open Society Policy Center, a political advocacy nonprofit funded by Soros, also gave \$7 million to the Color of Change advocacy nonprofit in 2022.

Whether you count by total murders or murders per capita, prosecuting attorneys supported by Soros have presided over the rise of some of America’s most homicidal hometowns.

Exhibit A is Kim Foxx (D), the district attorney of Cook County, Illinois, the region that covers Chicago. In 2016 Foxx defeated incumbent DA Anita Alvarez (D) by promising fewer people in prison.

During her reelection campaign in 2020, a *Chicago Tribune* analysis revealed she had dismissed 30 percent of the felony cases presented to her during her first three years in office. This included 6.1 percent of aggravated firearm battery offenses, 8.1 percent of homicides, 8.1 percent of aggravated battery attacks on police, and 9.5 percent of felony sex crimes.

All of these were healthy increases in leniency over what her predecessor had allowed during a similar period. During Alvarez’s final four years in office, Chicago averaged 521 annual homicides. In the first four years under Foxx that leaped to 627 murders per year.

George Soros apparently thought the Windy City was blowing in the right direction, because in late February 2020 the Soros-backed Democracy PAC sent \$2 million to the Illinois Justice and Public Safety PAC. Within weeks the PAC spent almost \$1.9 million of the loot attacking Bill Conway, Foxx’s main rival for the Democratic nomination in the overwhelmingly Democratic Cook County.

Foxx won the four-way March 2020 primary and cruised to reelection in November. Over the next two years, through 2022, the homicide average sharply jumped again to 747 murders per year. More people were being killed in Chicago than any other large American city.

Similarly, in 2016 a Soros-funded PAC ran television spots supporting Kimberly Gardner (D) in her race to become St. Louis City circuit attorney.

Gardner won. By the end of her first four-year term in 2020, St. Louis had more murders per capita than any city in America, by far its highest murder rate per capita in at least half a century, and just a handful of total homicides short of its all-time highest number of souls slaughtered.

Gardner ran for reelection on this record in 2020 and faced a Democratic challenger in the primary. Soros pumped \$116,000 in to the Missouri Justice and Public Safety PAC, a committee supporting Gardner. She won again.

But she had competition of another sort ... in Louisiana.

In December 2020, New Orleans city councilmember Jason Williams won a runoff election for Orleans Parish District Attorney. George Soros gave \$220,000 to the Louisiana Justice and Public Safety PAC to use against Williams’s opponent, Democrat Keva Landrum.

According to NOLA.com, Williams had campaigned on being a “progressive prosecutor” who would make “a sharp break with the policies of his predecessor,” retiring DA Leon Cannizzaro. In his inauguration speech, Williams said he would be “more selective about prosecutions.”

A NOLA.com report in December 2019 found “the number of homicides recorded in New Orleans fell dramatically in 2019, bringing unlawful killings to their lowest level in nearly five decades.” This was the third consecutive year of declining murders for a city that had often had one of the nation’s highest murder rates per capita.

That ended two years after Williams replaced Cannizzaro, when New Orleans edged Kim Gardner’s St. Louis to become America’s per capita murder capital.

Status Quo Supporters

While it's easy to critique the outcome in some of the cities where Soros has planted new prosecutors, it's also easy to misinterpret his motives. Not without reason, he believes there are equally extreme attitudes in the criminal justice bureaucracies he's trying to overturn.

In June 2020 several years of steady increases in New York police spending came to an end when then-Mayor Bill DeBlasio (D) announced he wanted to cut the police budget by \$1 billion. According to Manhattan Institute research, real (inflation-adjusted) spending on police in New York City was lower in 2022 than in any year going back to 2008, and it represented a smaller percentage of the city budget than in any year since at least 1980.

Already with a low murder rate compared to the nation, New York City had even fewer homicides in 2022 than it did in 2020.

So, was it a good idea for New York City to cut the police budget?

Back in the summer of 2020, DeBlasio's proposal to take \$1 billion out of policing was met with predictably brutal reviews from the city's police unions. The president of the Police Benevolent Association said that "the Mayor and the City Council have surrendered the city to lawlessness," and the Lieutenants Benevolent Association president announced the city had already become the "Wild West."



Credit: rbfjmr. License: Shutterstock.

In June 2020 several years of steady increases in New York police spending came to an end when then-Mayor Bill DeBlasio (D) announced he wanted to cut the police budget by \$1 billion.

The president of the Captains' Endowment Association said the "elected officials have raised the white flag."

Last year was the worst year for overall felony crimes in New York City since 2006—up 23 percent over 2021. Despite a 10 percent decline in homicides, felonious assaults went up 15 percent, and rapes 17 percent.

Not a great development, but neither was it close to the "Wild West" and surrender to "lawlessness" predicted by the union bosses. Still one of the safest big cities in America, New York City spent much less on policing and didn't even get close to as bad as the mayhem happening in Chicago.

There are five unions representing the New York police, each differentiated by rank: policeman, detectives, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains. In 2020 their combined operations revenue was \$48 million.

According to a Ballotpedia survey, most states have police unions, as do most major cities.

Many also have prison guard unions. In November 2021, with the New York state prison population down sharply, Gov. Kathy Hochul (D) announced she would close six facilities, each operating under capacity, for an estimated \$142 million annual savings. The head of the New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association denounced the decision.

"Morale is very bad among our membership," said the NYSCOPBA president. "Violence has gone through the roof, continually, each and every year, with an ever-decreasing inmate population."

The 2020 revenue of the state prison guard union was \$19 million.

Like Big Labor bosses everywhere, these statements demonstrate that police and prison union leaders stridently advocate for the most money and jobs they can get for their membership.

Maybe violence in New York prisons really was as awful as that union chief said. Maybe it wasn't.

But imagine if all crime ceased to exist and every inmate had been set free. In that scenario it is barely an exaggeration to expect that police and prison union leaders would continue to predict Domsday and murderous mayhem over every nickel cut from their annual funding.

Just as private-sector unions organize in opposition to management, government unions organize in opposition to

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Not without reason, we don't permit the U.S. military to unionize.

taxpayers. And their agenda is about public policy as well as public finance.

Not without reason, we don't permit the U.S. military to unionize.

A November 2020 Reuters report analyzed police union contract renewals in 100 of the nation's biggest cities over the preceding five years. The general conclusion was that police unions were "keeping contract protections that make disciplining cops difficult" and that in "addition to retaining protections won in earlier contracts, police unions in some cities gained new ones in recent negotiations that are helping fend off reform efforts."

A recent report from the Illinois Policy Institute, a limited-government think tank, found that police union contracts in that state made it extremely difficult to discipline and remove abusive and problem officers and that "Illinois state law actually allows union contracts—including the provisions hindering investigations—to overpower other state laws."

The collective political and economic muscle amassed by the nation's police and prison unions makes them over-



Credit: TechCrunch. License: <https://bit.ly/3M4mHS0>.

FWD.us, and the FWD.us Education Fund, two criminal justice reform and immigration expansion nonprofits, are funded primarily by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Advocacy, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Donor Advised Fund.

whelmingly the most well-funded influencers over American criminal justice policy.

Then, there are private, for-profit prison firms such as GEO Group. Like police and prison union bosses, their bottom line is paid by the taxpayers.

GEO's 2020 revenue was more than \$2.3 billion. The firm contributed more than \$2.6 million to federal, state and local politicians in 2020.

GEO's political activity report carefully explains that the company has always promoted their role as a "trusted service provider" that has "never advocated for or against, nor have we ever played a role in setting, criminal justice or immigration enforcement policies, such as whether to criminalize behavior, the length of criminal sentences or the basis for or length of an individual's incarceration or detention."

As with police and prison unions, we can probably trust them without being told that they've "never advocated" for shorter or fewer criminal sentences.

Big Winners

Of the big gusher of criminal justice reform money flowing against this status quo since 2020, a lot of it has washed over the advocacy group FWD.us, and the FWD.us Education Fund, its educational arm. The pair of criminal justice reform and immigration expansion nonprofits are funded primarily by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Foundation, Chan Zuckerberg Advocacy, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative Donor Advised Fund. These are in turn the funding vehicles of billionaire Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan.

The FWD.us criminal justice program has produced reports encouraging "media to drop harmful labels such as 'felon,' 'offender,' and 'inmate' from their reporting" because this "perpetuates false and dangerous stereotypes, artificially inflates support for mass incarceration, and dampens the impact of much-needed critiques of the criminal justice system."

From 2018 through 2021, the funders associated with the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative awarded grants totaling more than \$227.8 million to the pair of FWD.us nonprofits—\$135 million of it since 2020.

Similarly, the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation reported total revenue of \$241.8 million in 2021, more than \$146 million higher than its 2016 revenue. Since 2016 the

ACLU Foundation has received nearly \$9 million from JPB, \$6.3 million from Wellspring, \$5.6 million from Robert Wood Johnson, \$4.8 million from Ford, \$3.5 million from Network for Good, \$2.8 million from MacArthur, \$2.5 million from Rockefeller, and \$1.9 million from the Arabella-advised Hopewell Fund.

The Vera Institute of Justice had total revenue of \$177.9 million in 2020, more than double its 2016 revenue.

“Vera is committed to dismantling the current culture of policing and working toward solutions that defund police and shift power to communities,” said the group’s president, in a June 2020 policy statement. “We need to support the outrage we’re seeing—in the streets, in our communities, and in the media—while investing in long-term solutions.”

Ford and FPOS have each individually given more than \$10 million to Vera since 2016. MacArthur and Arnold gave more than \$8 million each. JPB, Rockefeller, Robert Wood Johnson and Public Welfare were all good for at least \$1 million apiece.

One of the major issue areas of the William J. Brennan Center for Justice is headlined “End Mass Incarceration.”

“Mass incarceration rips apart families and communities, disproportionately hurts people of color, and costs taxpayers \$260 billion a year,” said the group’s policy statement on this point:

At the same time, crime continues to drop to 30-year lows—and harsh punishments aren’t the reason. The Brennan Center works to expose the huge social and economic costs of mass incarceration. We debunk false claims about rising crime. We fight for reforms to sentencing and bail.

In 2020, Brennan reported revenue of \$84.5 million, nearly six times more the group’s revenue in 2016. Big institutional donors since 2016 have included Ford (\$9.4 million), JPB (\$4.5 million), Foundation to Promote Open Society (\$4 million), Network for Good (\$2 million), Arnold (\$1.3 million), Arabella’s New Venture (\$1.2 million), MacArthur (\$600,000) and Wellspring (\$340,000).

The Leadership Conference Education Fund’s policing reform report began with the assertion that “hundreds of thousands of police officers report for duty every day, with a mission to keep us safe and protect us from harm” and “respond to violent crime, mental health and developmental disability crises, people with substance use disorders, interpersonal conflicts and intimate partner violence, mass

shootings, terrorist attacks, and other tragedies that afflict our nation.” The report included an acknowledgment that the authors are “grateful to the majority of these officers who carry out this mission with dignity and honor, and especially to those who give their lives to the cause.”

Some of the proposed reforms in the report included increased training for police and a greater focus on community policing (integrating officers closely with the people in the communities they patrol). The agenda of this left-leaning group is to smartly and thoughtfully fund the police, rather than defund them.

The Leadership Conference reported total revenue of \$46.6 million in 2020, more than four times the 2016 total. Donations from major criminal justice funders since 2016 have included \$11.9 million from Robert Wood Johnson, \$10.3 million from Ford, \$5.2 million from JPB, \$2.3 million from Wellspring, \$2.2 million from FPOS, \$1.8 million from New Venture Fund, and \$750,000 from MacArthur.

Similarly, the Alliance for Safety and Justice and its advocacy arm, the Alliance for Safety and Justice Action Fund, are subsidiaries of the Tides Nexus. Known funders since 2016 have included Open Philanthropy (\$17 million), Chan Zuckerberg (\$3.5 million), Ford (\$2.1 million), FPOS (\$1.8 million) and Public Welfare (\$1.1 million).

In a list of claimed successes, ASJ boasts of expunging the criminal records of six million people; restoring voting rights to one million; reducing the incarcerated, parolee, and pro-



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A restorative justice and rehabilitation model is also practiced as a Christian mission by the Prison Fellowship. The group was founded by the late Chuck Colson, a former Nixon White House counsel who served a prison sentence because of the Watergate scandal.

bation population by 300,000; bringing victim compensation and assistance to 500,000 victims; and redirecting \$1.5 billion “from prisons and punishment to safety solutions like victim services, violence prevention, mental health treatment, reentry and diversion.”

Soft Eyes for Solutions

A restorative justice and rehabilitation model is also practiced as a Christian mission by the Prison Fellowship. The group was founded by the late Chuck Colson, a former Nixon White House counsel who served a prison sentence because of the Watergate scandal. According to a 2022 annual report, Prison Fellowship raised \$61 million and introduced a new tagline: “Seek justice. Love mercy. Restore hope.”

For many years, the group has been supported strongly by Christian and center-right donors. Since 1998, it has received tens of millions of dollars from donors such as the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation and charities associated with their family, the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, the National Christian Charitable Foundation, God’s Gift, the Anschutz Foundation, the William E. Simon Foundation, and the Charles G. Koch Foundation.

The Chan Zuckerberg affiliates have given at least \$1.6 million to Prison Fellowship since 2019. The Ford Foundation gave \$300,000 in 2021. Since 2016, Public Welfare, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Network for Good have given more than \$600,000 combined.

Similarly, the R Street Institute is a right-center group with many policy areas and total 2020 revenue of \$12.6 million. It has received at least \$1.4 million in criminal justice reform funding since 2019 from the Chan Zuckerberg affiliates.

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) is an alliance of former police officers who advocate for an end to the War on Drugs, better training for officers, stronger drug treatment programs, early intervention to prevent crime, sentencing and bail reform, stronger community policing, body cameras, increased police transparency, and more. Speaking with the authority of those who have worn the badges, LEAP has at least one reform idea that should appeal to nearly any reasonable person.

The last IRS report available shows LEAP’s 2020 total revenue was \$1.6 million. The Soros-backed FPOS has given them \$820,000 since 2016. LEAP’s 2022 annual report shows total revenue of \$6.5 million.

In season four of *The Wire*, HBO’s excellent police drama, Det. Bunk Moreland advises his new partner to have “soft eyes” when examining a murder scene. “You got hard eyes,” warns Bunk, “you’re staring at the same tree ... missing the forest.”

Hard eyes look upon an incarceration rate that rivals communist Cuba and see an America overfilled with bad people that must be caged, rather than bad policy that should be changed. Hard eyes looking from the other direction demand “defund the police” because they see only the bad officers making bad news, rather than mostly good people quietly working under the same bad policy.

In between, groups and donors from all partisan persuasions (and none in particular) are doing good work, often the same work, because they’re looking at the problem with soft eyes. ■

Read previous articles from the Organization Trends series online at [CapitalResearch.org/category/organization-trends/](https://capitalresearch.org/category/organization-trends/).



THE LEFT'S VOTING MACHINE

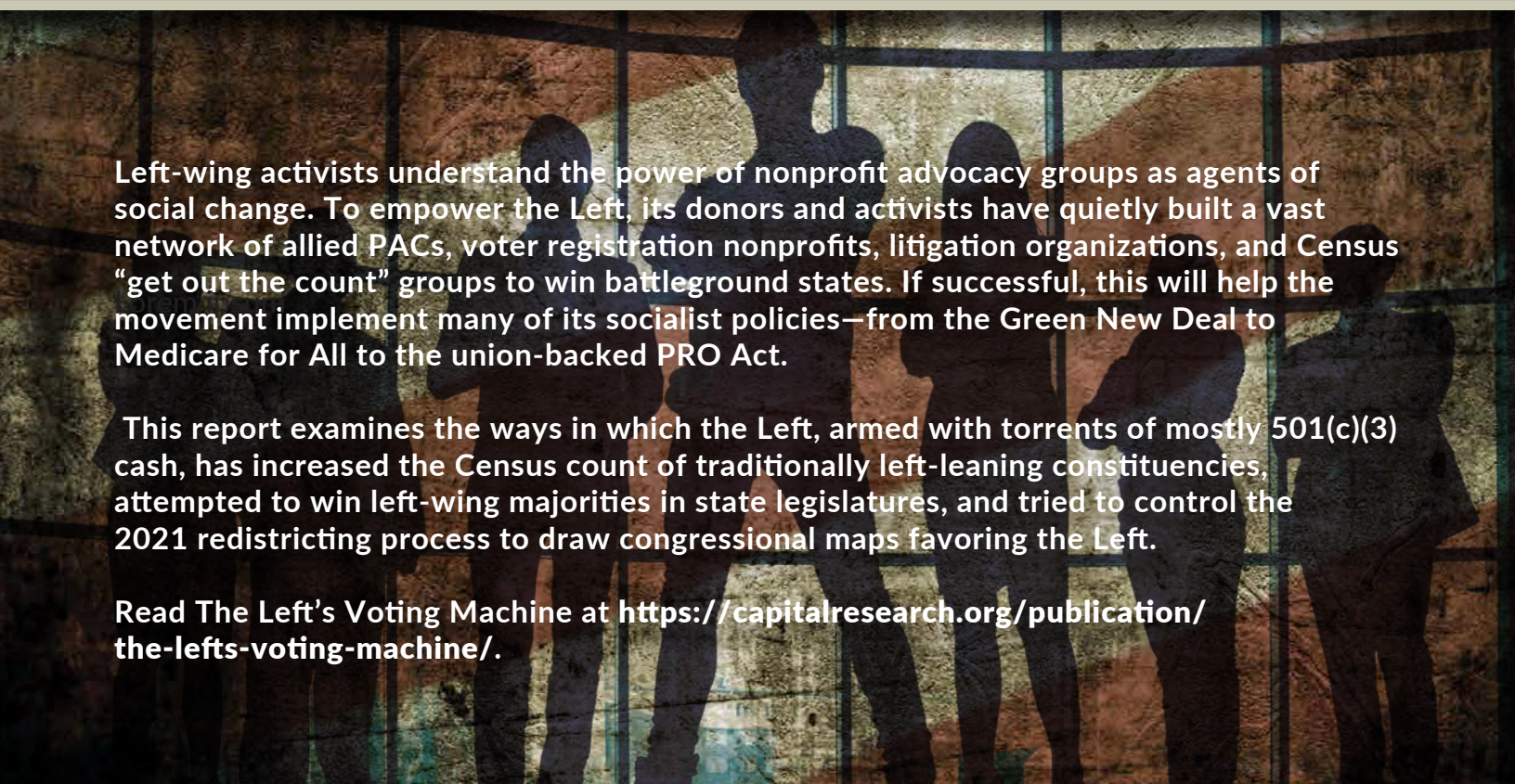


CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK

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/>.





A MANDATE FOR LABOR ERROR

By Michael Watson

Summary: For almost 80 years, the conservative movement and the Republican Party that has served as its imperfect electoral vehicle have sought to advance three goals related to labor relations: restoring voluntarism to union membership and participation; subjecting union operations, finances, and internal governance to government scrutiny; and protecting American consumers and the broader economy from the fallout from strikes and other industrial action. That approach has been wildly successful; few American workers face the choice of either funding fundamentally political groups with which they disagree or losing their jobs.

But a faction of conservatives heavily backed by left-wing, anti-free-market foundations like the Omidyar Network Fund and the Hewlett Foundation would open the door to bring Big Labor back into many workplaces where workers have rejected it. They are exercising their influence over Project 2025, the Heritage Foundation–led coalition that proposes a comprehensive, ready-made agenda for the next president.

It's understandable that many conservatives seek to reinforce ties with working-class Americans and to resist increasingly “woke” Big Business. But Big Labor is even more woke than Big Business and wields great political power that harms all Americans. Abandoning 80 years of successful policy approaches and enacting policy that would strengthen union bosses will not empower America's working families but channel funding and support to a key pillar of the left-wing movement, including by taking money out of conservatives' pockets.

Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise was produced by the 2025 Presidential Transition Project coalition organized by the Heritage Foundation, the longtime flagship think tank of conservatism. This document presents a comprehensive, ready-made agenda for the next president—just as Heritage has done every four years since the 1980 presidential election. This ninth iteration has grown into an impressive 900-page tome with detailed recommendations spanning the entire federal government, department by department, agency by agency. The recommendations draw upon expertise and experience from across the conservative movement.



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In Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise, presents a comprehensive, ready-made agenda for the next president—just as the Heritage Foundation has done every four years since the 1980 presidential election.

Inevitably, not every recommendation is supported by every conservative. Such policy disagreements and debates are a necessary and wise prerequisite of good government.

However, in its chapter on labor issues the *Mandate* makes troubling recommendations that would partially abandon a nearly eight-decade consensus conservative approach to labor relations. The most troubling of these are the endorsement of laws to encourage works councils and regulate the membership of corporate boards. Oren Cass and the non-profit he leads, American Compass, have long promoted these and similar policies, but if implemented, these works councils and board seats would almost certainly be captured by existing, staunchly liberal labor unions, becoming what I characterize as a “misguided Republican gift to Big Labor.” The *Mandate* also fails to urge repeal of federal laws

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that grant undeserved privileges to unionized contractors on federal projects—privileges that conservatives have long opposed—choosing instead to relegate criticism of these privileges to an “alternative view.”

Statism from the Right

Oren Cass’s American Compass has long advocated for creating works councils and mandating worker representation on corporate boards. Interestingly, American Compass has accepted funding from liberal Big Philanthropy as part of those philanthropies’ effort to replace free markets (well, *free-ish*-markets) as the dominant political-economic paradigm with a statist, administrative, left-wing model.

As its influence over the 2025 Presidential Transition Project coalition’s *Mandate* shows, American Compass’s vision of a statist right wing in American politics is gaining increased purchase. It claims allies in the Senate Republican Conference and even the conservative House Republican Study Committee. Populists understandably worry that Big Business has aligned with the radical Left—even Bud Light, the longtime chosen beverage of millions of red-blooded heartlanders, recently rejected their good will to partner with transgender TikTokers in a vain pursuit of “Zoomers.”

But Big Labor has long oppressed and abused workers in ways pro-union conservatives rarely consider, and Big Labor’s social policies are actually *more* woke than Big Business’s. To give power and influence to Big Labor is to give priceless aid to the institutional Left, which will come with a price tag for the millions of Republican and conservative workers forced to accept union representation in the 24 states lacking a right-to-work law. Were American Compass’s positions to gain more purchase, the errors could be consequential indeed.

To understand *why* the works councils, government dictates about membership of corporate boards, and government mandates for union-wage construction projects that American Compass advocates and Project 2025 endorses are errors, one must understand the paradigm that prevailed through the Trump administration’s labor agencies and still commands a majority or near-majority of elected Republicans. I call that paradigm the “Taft-Hartley consensus” after the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, a law that passed with a bipartisan majority over Harry Truman’s veto and is better known as the Taft-Hartley Act. It corrected many but *not all* of the political-economic errors of the New Deal-era National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

The Taft-Hartley consensus pursues three principles: voluntarism in union membership and union activities; public scrutiny and government regulation of labor unions’ exercise of the powers they’ve received from government; and protection of the American consumer, worker, and broader economy from the disruptions of mass industrial action like the strike wave of 1946 that helped the Taft-Hartley Congress get elected.

How the Right Got Here

Since the 1940s, the conservative movement and the Republican Party have mainly sought three goals in the government administration of labor-management relations:

- Restoring voluntarism to union membership by opposing laws that coerce workers to join unions and coerce union members to follow union leadership;
- Subjecting unions’ internal operations to the scrutiny and governance they deserve, given the coercive powers that federal law grants unions; and
- Limiting the potential damage that labor disputes can cause the broader economy and the American consumer.

These are fundamentally *moderate* goals. They arose because of the Democrats’ Wagner Act of 1935, which overrode then-prevailing constitutional separations of powers with the aid of the Supreme Court’s infamous “switch in time to save nine” ruling that established the modern federally administered private-sector labor-relations regime. When in response the Taft-Hartley Act passed in 1947, it only tweaked that regime around the edges, which did not stop Big Labor from denouncing Taft-Hartley as a “slave-labor law,” showing how little left-wing hyperbole has changed in almost a century.

Taft-Hartley was also passed only after the most destructive wave of labor disputes in American political history. It did not reverse the constitutional “innovations” of the original National Labor Relations Act by, for example, rejecting government sanction for collective bargaining or modifying the default assumption that a union would enjoy exclusive monopoly representation of all workers in a company, not just union members, with all to be governed by a union contract. Instead, the law simply granted states the power to end forced-dues arrangements, which was a lukewarm attempt to restore voluntarism by permitting “right to work laws.” It also subjected unions to certain reciprocal duties in collective bargaining (the first such effort after the NLRA to subject union behavior to federal governance), and it restricted



As the conservatives advanced their moderate aims in the post–New Deal era, Big Labor itself started radicalizing.

certain types of strikes, in response to the 1946 strike wave, which had left Americans sufficiently alarmed at union power to elect a Congress that would pass Taft-Hartley.

The work of the Taft-Hartley Congress was later supplemented by the work of the Eisenhower administration and by passage of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) in 1959. This law passed in response to investigations that exposed widespread corruption in labor unions (especially the Teamsters under Dave Beck and Jimmy Hoffa). It subjected union finances to the barest scrutiny and somewhat tightened the secondary strike regulations in Taft-Hartley (secondary strikes occur when a union tries to pressure its primary business target by striking against or boycotting other corporations that do business with the primary target). Scrutiny of union finances was later increased by the George W. Bush administration, when then-Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao directed that the financial disclosures required by LMRDA become more comprehensive.

Big Labor Radicalizes

As conservatives advanced their moderate aims in the post–New Deal era, Big Labor started radicalizing. As workers’ freedom not to join unions thrived under right-to-work laws led to stalled growth of union membership in the private sector, Big Labor’s membership numbers were buoyed by liberal programs to expand collective bargaining to workers in the government sector—a move so radical that even supporters of Big Government like FDR had strongly resisted it.

These government workers made the American labor movement increasingly socialist in outlook, and their muscle would be supplemented by a new labor leadership cadre that was blooded in activism against the Vietnam War and in the left wing of the civil rights movement through groups like Students for a Democratic Society. During the Cold War, American labor unions largely occupied the center ground on foreign relations and on many social policies, even as they hewed to the left economically. This positioning is best exemplified by the AFL-CIO’s refusal to endorse 1972 Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern, who was seen as the candidate of “acid, amnesty, and abortion.” After the Cold War, the rising socialist forces took over the

labor movement with the election of John Sweeney as leader of the AFL-CIO; future refusals to endorse Democrats would become unthinkable.

“From Meany to Sweeney: Labor’s Leftward Tilt,” a 1996 report by Heritage scholar James Phillips, describes how this process played out:

The AFL-CIO altered its moderate political stance as it moved beyond the shrinking manufacturing sector. As the union movement has grown more dependent on the public sector, it has moved squarely into the liberal camp, forging the very alliances that [AFL president Samuel] Gompers and [AFL-CIO president George] Meany had shunned.

In October 1995, public employee unions such as the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and Service Employees’ International Union (SEIU) spearheaded a successful rebellion to depose Lane Kirkland as president of the AFL-CIO. John Sweeney, head of the SEIU, became the first AFL-CIO president from a largely public-sector union, completing the federation’s transformation from a voice for workers in negotiating with management into one of the nation’s principal defenders of big government.

In the nearly 30 years since that change, the strength of so-called social justice unionism within the labor union movement has only grown. In late March 2023, a coalition of AFL-CIO-affiliated unions issued a series of demands for left-wing social-policy legislation that would expand abortion access and constrain the rights of religious dissenters from left-wing gender and sexuality orthodoxies—positions the authors of the *Mandate for Leadership* chapter explicitly oppose.

The Rise of an Intellectual Fad

Before addressing the union-curious fad that drives groups like American Compass, it is important to document that labor unions and labor unionists have done nothing that should dissuade conservatives from their long-standing skepticism of Big Labor or their commitment to the three goals enshrined in Taft-Hartley.

Labor unions continue to fund the institutional pillars of the Left. The Center for American Progress, the Left's direct counterpart to the Heritage Foundation, and its associated lobbying arm received \$675,000 from the SEIU, AFSCME, National Education Association, and Communications Workers of America just in those labor unions' 2022 fiscal years. Labor unions continue to press for left-wing social policy on issues ranging from critical race theory to sexuality and gender ideology to abortion access. The resources available to unions are massive: the Center for Union Facts calculated some years back the total dues paid at over \$10 billion per year, and total spending on political activities and external contributions at over \$1 billion per year. In the 2022 election cycle, OpenSecrets reports that the SEIU alone was a top-10 organizational donor in federal politics, giving 99 percent of its money to Democrats.

So what gives? One can trace three strands of thought driving otherwise sound conservatives to abandon 75 years of solid policy. First is the justified concern over the rise of “woke capitalism” and the desire to see socially conservative workers protected from what Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), one of American Compass's elected allies, called “management's latest ‘woke’ human resources fad.” Another thread is simple electoral calculation: After all, Donald Trump won the presidency in 2016 by ceding more union-skeptical Sun Belt electorates to win more union-friendly Rust Belt electorates. Finally, some conservatives have thrown in their lot with liberal mega-foundations like the William and Flora Hewlett

Foundation and Pierre Omidyar's foundations, who seek to “reimagine”—read “replace”—so-called capitalism, and American Compass is the most prominent group to cooperate with these left-wing donors' imaginings.

These strands can be addressed in turn. Regarding “woke capitalism,” conservatives *should* fear the rise of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing, the affirmation of ESG by Democratic-controlled governments, and the corporate managerial class's infatuation with left-wing social agendas at the expense of business success. See, for example, Alissa Heinerscheid, the Bud Light marketing executive who took a leave of absence after her controversial partnership with the transgender TikTok influencer Dylan Mulvaney led to customer pushback.

But would America's labor unions protect workers against “management's latest ‘woke’ human resources fad,” as Sen. Rubio has claimed they might? There is little evidence for that. Major labor unions fund the activist groups that *lead* woke campaigns. Their leadership strongly supports liberal social policy and has even demanded that private-sector employers carry out woke capitalist policies in support of abortion access when not campaigning for “free, safe, legal abortion on demand.”

Government-sector pension funds managed by politicians aligned with union agendas or by union representatives helped to originate ESG-style investing. California's Public Employees Retirement System has been taking ESG into account since at least 2000, when it introduced an environmentalist-aligned “Double Bottom Line” policy under union-backed State Treasurer Phil Angelides (D). Effects on the state's long-term fiscal outlook have not been the success the unions and their allies promised.

Unions Don't Bring Conservative Electoral Success

As for claims by some conservatives that embracing unions will drive electoral success, these notions arise from populist factions' overinterpretation of the 2016 election results and under-interpretation of elections since then. Many note that in his 2016 campaign, Donald Trump's efforts in the upper Midwest states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania were aided by his moderate stances on economic issues relative to the positions of prior Republican candidates like Mitt Romney. And this is generally true—but *not* on labor-relations issues.

President Trump's campaigns promised not to touch entitlements and promised trade protectionism, both public



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Pierre Omidyar, who founded the Omidyar Network Fund, may be familiar as a foe of conservatives through his funding of groups that targeted former president Donald Trump and his supporters associated with former Weekly Standard editor Bill Kristol and former de facto Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Evan McMullin.

policies from which I respectfully dissent but freely concede are quite popular. As for labor relations, Trump did not campaign on the issue much at all and appointed officials to the Labor Department and National Labor Relations Board who would have (and in some cases, had) served comfortably in previous Republican administrations. Trump's point man on labor issues at the White House was James Sherk, a Heritage alumnus. His last Labor Secretary was Eugene Scalia, son of Supreme Court Justice Antonin. The Trump administration was solidly committed to the Taft-Hartley conservative consensus.

Where union-curious "New Right" Republicans have run on the same ticket as ordinary Old Republicans, the results have not shown an electorate preference for the lunch-pail men. The most committed of the union-aligned conservative elected officials is probably Sen. J.D. Vance of Ohio; he won 53 percent of the vote while sharing a ticket with incumbent Governor Mike DeWine (R) in 2022. DeWine is a long-standing Ohio Republican elected official who has held nearly every major office in the state over a career ranging back to the 1970s. He is the definition of "generic Republican" in ideology. DeWine won 62 percent of the vote, or 9 points better than Vance.

But maybe that was caused by Vance being in an open seat and DeWine being an incumbent, or by Vance's opponent's fundraising prowess. Well, another prominent labor conservative senator was up in 2022: Marco Rubio, an incumbent in Florida who shared his ticket with controversial Governor



Credit: Gage Skidmore. License: <https://bit.ly/3HML3NB>.

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Ron DeSantis, who had battled his state's teachers' unions over COVID lockdown policies. While both Rubio and DeSantis ultimately cruised to re-election, *DeSantis*, the union skeptic, led the ticket with 59.4 percent of the vote, and Rubio, the appealing moderate, trailed with 57.7 percent. (DeSantis celebrated his victory in part by announcing an ambitious package of reforms to government-worker bargaining rules in Florida.)

While a handful of true moderates in the House of Representatives like Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ) are pro-union and politically successful, they are explicitly not models of conservative governance. Other candidates who have tried to walk the union-friendly line while affirming conservatism, like Arizona Senate candidate Blake Masters, failed to win election while being outpolled by both Trump-like populists and conventional old-school Republicans despite having the support of a major financial benefactor.

Meanwhile, the "last survivor" Republican holding a statewide elected office in Wisconsin, Michigan, or Pennsylvania is Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI). Far from a union sympathizer, Sen. Johnson has co-sponsored the Employee Rights Act, legislation advanced by Congressional Republicans to promote the Taft-Hartley consensus.

Strange Bedfellows

So, if the electoral benefits of rhetorical and practical appeasement of labor are at best inconclusive and labor's social policy remains as left-wing as it has been for the past generation or two, why might some conservatives be pushing ahead with union-empowering policy advocacy anyway? Here one must note that Big Philanthropy—the liberal institutions that shovel billions of dollars into left-wing advocacy and culture—has provided major funding to American Compass. And American Compass is the leading institution involved in developing and promoting union-sympathetic conservatism.

The two largest known Big Philanthropy contributors to American Compass, the Omidyar Network Fund and the Hewlett Foundation, provided that funding explicitly as part of projects the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* characterized as aiming to "transform the economic system" away from what Heritage calls the "principles of free enterprise, limited government, [and] individual freedom" that direct its own mission.

Omidyar Network Fund's "reimagining capitalism" project has provided American Compass with \$500,000 in "current

investments” as of April 2023, according to the Omidyar Network’s grant list. Pierre Omidyar, the eBay founder who founded the Omidyar Network Fund and its related constellation of nonprofit and for-profit philanthropic groups, may be familiar as a foe of conservatives thanks to Omidyar’s funding of groups that have bitterly targeted Donald Trump and his supporters. These efforts are connected to former *Weekly Standard* editor Bill Kristol and former de facto Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Evan McMullin. But the Omidyar Network’s “call to reimagine capitalism” is even more radical.

A reading of Omidyar Network’s manifesto makes clear that the “capitalism” the philanthropy (and presumably its grantees) would build is profoundly left-wing in its social principles and statist in direction, if not outright socialist. The second of its “five pillars” is “Build an Explicitly Anti-Racist and Inclusive Economy,” which opens with the following ideological affirmation:

America cannot divorce itself from its legacy of human exploitation, anti-Blackness, and slavery. It is deeply embedded in our economy. As a result, the current economic system exacerbates many of the inequities that rip at the fabric of our society and the well-being of our people: racism, classism, and sexism—to name a few.

Structural racism has led to codified and continuous disenfranchisement, as the original sin of slavery present at the birth of our nation gave way to the era of Jim Crow and decades of redlining, employment discrimination, and mass incarceration.

Another pillar proposes “inalienable rights”—not to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—but rather to “a humane standard of living and social protection systems that help people who are struggling survive crises and shocks find employment, and access healthcare and education, as well as . . . protect the aging, the disabled, and the young.” The liberal desire to take good things like healthcare and education and turn them into “rights” to be provided by the taxpayer is not new. It would be familiar to Sen. Robert Taft (R-OH) of Taft-Hartley fame or to former Senate Republican Leader Everett Dirksen (R-IL), who led the opposition to Lyndon Johnson’s statist Great Society and led the filibuster that defeated legislation that would have abolished right-to-work laws.

Another pillar makes veiled demands for ESG investment and corporate management rules (“When incentives in securities and corporate law prioritize shareholders above all others, we embed a too narrow set of priorities”), tax increases, increased administrative power (“government must be funded with appropriate revenue and the capabilities to execute on these mandates”), and central planning (“govern-

ment must drive innovation, growth, and investment”). The Heritage Foundation and conservatives in general have long opposed just such statist policies.

Other “reimaginings” target the hot-button issues of today. In addition to the anti-racism inspired by Ibram X. Kendi described earlier, Omidyar’s call asserts, “We also must urgently address our warming planet and environmental degradation, including how current economic theory incentivized depletion and is actively failing—and worsening—our environment.” Even a somewhat squishy Republican like the more partisan than ideological Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) would not let that pass without dispute, much less Heritage scholars and donors.

The listed acknowledgments to Omidyar Network’s “Call to Reimagine Capitalism” shares a name with the acknowledgments of the Project 2025 *Mandate* chapter on labor issues: Oren Cass, the head of American Compass.

But Omidyar Network is not the only left-wing philanthropy funding American Compass as part of a program to promote the abandonment of what passes for free enterprise in the contemporary era. According to the grant list on its website, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has provided American Compass with nearly \$1.5 million, much of it explicitly related to development of “alternatives to neoliberalism.”

To conservatives used to loathing anything “liberal,” that might seem unobjectionable on its face. But when one looks deeper, one sees that this funding is part of a larger campaign, backed by a foundation commanding \$13 billion



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The listed acknowledgments to Omidyar Network’s “Call to Reimagine Capitalism” shares a name with the acknowledgments of Heritage’s Mandate chapter on labor issues: Oren Cass, the head of American Compass.

in assets and spending up to half a billion per year on its programs, to replace “principles of free enterprise, limited government, [and] individual freedom.”

To prove this we can consult a 2018 manifesto-memorandum by Hewlett Foundation president and legal scholar Larry Kramer. (Notably, Kramer also signed the release bond for disgraced Democratic mega-donor, “effective altruism” advocate, and cryptocurrency billionaire Samuel Bankman-Fried.) In 2018, Kramer wrote to the Hewlett board outlining his theories on how Milton Friedman and F.A. Hayek’s free-market, low-regulation economic philosophies (which he termed “neoliberalism,” a sobriquet that almost all Friedman’s followers would reject) became the governing paradigm of American political economy. He then proposed how leftists like himself could create an intellectual network to foster a new, statist regime that supposedly aligns with the times.

While that manifesto did not detail what the new regime would look like, it set out the model to develop a “successor ideology” that would replace free enterprise with state control.

Coming to Policy at Last

Having considered the history of conservative labor-relations policy, the Sirens calling some conservatives away from that historically grounded approach, and the strange bedfellows funding key contributors to Project 2025’s direction for labor policies, we now turn to the policies themselves.

Importantly, Project 2025 did not fully abandon the policies of the Taft-Hartley consensus. The document rejects the Biden administration–Big Labor approach to expanding union power and membership as espoused in the Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 20/S. 567) and the administration’s regulatory program. For example, unions and their allies seek to redefine joint employment so as to make national branding companies (e.g., McDonald’s) liable for the mistakes of independent franchises, to restrict independent contracting relationships, and to greatly assist union organizing by allowing unions to bypass secret-ballot elections and substitute “card checks.” Card checks enable union organizers to pressure workers to sign cards of approval. All these tactics would make it easier for unions to involuntarily unionize larger portions of the American workforce.

In contrast, the *Mandate’s* recommendations reject these union-sought policies and uphold principles of voluntary union membership by preventing unions from coercing new workers into dues-paid membership.

The document also carries forward the Taft-Hartley consensus view of labor union supervision when it calls upon the next

administration to adopt regulations that will expand required financial disclosures to include union-controlled “trusts” and intermediate bodies, as the Trump administration proposed.

But driven by ideological incoherence perhaps generated by the “help” of American Compass’s Cass, the chapter makes two grave errors. The first is a clear violation of the Taft-Hartley consensus principle of union voluntarism: The document fails to condemn “project labor agreements” or call for repeal of the federal Davis-Bacon Act, which largely requires them. Instead, it relegates criticism of project labor agreements to an “alternative view.” In a Twitter thread hailing his influence over what would be conservative labor policy, Cass praised the chapter’s defense of Davis-Bacon.

Project labor agreements grant privileges to unionized contractors in government projects by setting “prevailing wage” levels at the union rate. This disadvantages “merit shop” contractors who are non-union, even though the “merit shop” industry is a key supporter of the conservative movement and the Republican Party that gives it political force. Its leading trade group, the Associated Builders and Contractors, is almost exclusively a supporter of Republican candidates.

But the worst proposal in *Mandate* does not merely leave a bad policy alone. It recommends adopting a policy imported from the European social democracies that will, despite its being advertised as “non-union worker voice and representation,” empower the labor unions that fund Democratic campaigns and liberal advocacy.

Specifically, Project 2025 proposes adopting Sen. Rubio’s TEAM Act from the previous Congress. When it was introduced, I characterized the legislation as “a misguided Republican gift to Big Labor,” and so it remains. The TEAM Act would allow the creation of “employee involvement organizations” (EIOs) modeled on continental Europe’s works councils, which are collective forums that petition employers on working conditions, are informed of proposed changes to working procedures, and engage in formal labor-management dispute resolution.



The “merit shop” industry is a key supporter of the conservative movement and the Republican Party that gives it political force.



Credit: Kheel Center. License: <https://bit.ly/3NPNqMdW>

I call that paradigm the “Taft-Hartley consensus” after the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, better known as the Taft-Hartley Act, that corrected many but not all the political-economic errors of the New Deal—era National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

While the TEAM Act’s organizations would start out as optional at the employer level (thus arguably not violating the Taft-Hartley consensus principle of voluntarism), it would be extraordinary if they stayed that way. Germany’s works council system may be the prototype works council system in the developed industrial world: Its councils, governed by the 1972 Works Constitution Act passed under the government of Social Democratic Chancellor Willy Brandt, are very much *not* voluntary. If workers petition for one, it must be created and administered pursuant to the act. Its membership is elected, and the trade unions that exist parallel to the works council have the right to nominate candidates for the council.

If the TEAM Act is adopted, it is easy to imagine a future administration that more openly supports Big Labor enacting German-style changes to increase the power of unions within the employee involvement organizations. On that day, a conservative writer who backed an EIO for protection from ideological censorship might find his works council governed by a majority from the NewsGuild, which has a history of campaigning for radical-left ideological purity in the workplace in the name of “safety.” The conservative would not be protected from woke ideological fads enforced by union activists.

The TEAM Act contains an even more troubling proposal than its works council provision. For years, liberal politicians have sought to meddle with the composition of corporate

governing boards, usually on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) grounds. But some pols have endorsed another European import—the union representative on the corporate board. And so does the TEAM Act.

Of course, TEAM Act’s supporters don’t call it a “union” representative. Instead, they call it a “worker” representative chosen by the works council/employee involvement organization. But as with works councils themselves, a cursory review of the European experience shows that these representatives are frequently if not nearly exclusively union-affiliated. American labor observers should recall the United Auto Workers’ various unsuccessful campaigns to create a works council-inspired labor union arrangement with Volkswagen in Tennessee. What was a driving force behind the company’s self-emasculating neutrality toward those efforts to boost union power? IG Metall, the social-democratic German labor union allied with the American-liberal UAW, which holds a “worker” seat on Volkswagen’s board in Germany.

At non-union companies with an EIO, the offer of even a nonvoting board seat would create additional incentives for union “salting,” the practice of securing employment for union activists who then conduct organizing from within a company. When TEAM was first proposed, populist *Washington Post* columnist Henry Olsen praised the powers that even the nonvoting board representative would have:

Groups formed in larger businesses gain an additional advantage for their workers: a seat on the corporation’s board of directors. Although that worker-director would be nonvoting, the company would have to share with them all information provided to voting directors. Knowledge is power, and access to it would likely improve workers’ leverage within the corporate structure.

A union organizer would *love* to exploit that information to conduct both traditional shop-floor organizing and coercive “corporate campaigns” that target businesses’ names and public reputations. The TEAM Act would help the organizer obtain it. Thus, the TEAM Act could lead to more Republican workers forced to pay union dues to labor unions that fund transgender activism, abortion advocacy, and DEI programming.

The American Compass types who think that their views should control labor-relations policy in a future Republican presidency hope to fundamentally break the Taft-Hartley consensus. Ostensibly to empower workers, they would also break a corporate-management precedent that liberal activists across policy issues have sought to break, and in doing



The TEAM Act could lead to more Republican workers forced to pay union dues to labor unions that fund transgender activism, abortion advocacy, and DEI programming.

so they would almost certainly open the door to organized labor's left-wing cadres, who will pay no heed to conservative workers' views.

Conclusion

Lest anyone think I am making mountains out of a molehill, American Compass's influence over labor policy in a Heritage Foundation-led coalition (and, if the coalition gets its way, the next president of the United States) merely shows how deeply its statist-funded errors have become embedded in formerly free-enterprise institutions.

How has it come to this? The Taft-Hartley consensus—making union membership voluntary, subjecting unions to government oversight, and protecting consumers and the economy from labor strife—*worked*. It apparently worked so well that conservatives forgot why they supported it. Most American workers will never face the prospect of being compelled to pay dues to a functionally political organization whose politics they oppose to get or keep a job—a prospect made even more remote by the Supreme Court's 2018 decision *Janus v. AFSCME*, which made the entire government sector functionally right to work.

The Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act and anti-crime legislation have made substantial gains in combating union corruption and subjecting union activities to public scrutiny in exchange for their government-granted benefits. And while private-sector strikes today lack the power to cause the economic disruptions of 1946, to the great benefit of consumers and workers, public-sector strikes and de facto strikes, like teachers unions' contemptible refusal to return to in-person work during COVID-19, are another matter.

The Taft-Hartley consensus served the factions who make up the conservative movement. For as long as it has been an identifiable thing, the conservative movement has represented the workers and owners of the small business world. It is not for nothing that the National Federation of Independent Business, a major trade group for small businesses, gives overwhelmingly to Republican candidates.

This has not changed in the post-2016 era except on the margins: The vast majority of Republicans voted both for Mitt Romney in 2012 and for Donald Trump

in 2016 and 2020, and Trump won every state that Romney won in 2012 in his first campaign. He would lose Georgia and Arizona in 2020, but both only narrowly. Claims of a fundamental, mass realignment of the proletariat to the GOP and the small business/managerial sector to the Democratic Party are not borne out by electoral evidence. At most, such shifts are subtle and marginal. And where the Taft-Hartley consensus has been weakest—among Congressional Republicans from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and other highly unionized forced-dues states like Reps. Smith and Fitzpatrick—deviation from it has rightly been seen as a moderate's concession to a liberal electorate, not an upholding of conservative principle.

While conservatives have mostly stayed the same, Big Labor has changed in the 75 years since Taft-Hartley, becoming *less* hospitable to social conservatism and the market economy. Causes include the growing power of government-worker unions within the union movement, the rise of 1960s radicals to positions of union office, the nationalization of popular union-backed policies like the 40-hour workweek, the rise of overseas competitors after they rebuilt from World War II, and the end of the Cold War results in the kneecapping of labor's centrist faction.

Seeking to improve workers' lot is noble, and credit is due to those seeking to do that, even when they're in error. But the game of politics and policy is zero-sum. That means that any action that strengthens union bosses hurts independent businesses and their workers, and aids conservatism's adversaries. The American Compass types have not presented a plausible legislative path either to getting unions out of politics or getting them out of the hands of woke activists—which would be difficult, if the difficulty of extracting the Mafia from the 20-century labor movement is any indication.

For the sake of American workers and businesses, the next president should not follow the course laid out by American Compass.

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

A project of Capital Research Center



CLIMATE DOLLARS

HOW ONE FLAWED STUDY FOOLED THE MEDIA AND
POISONED THE DEBATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In a widely cited 2014 study, sociologist Robert Brulle purportedly exposed a “climate change counter-movement” of center-right groups “distort[ing] the public’s understanding of climate change.” He calculated that from 2003 to 2010, these nonprofits recorded revenues averaging “just over \$900 million” annually—a number that led to media claims that “Conservative groups spend \$1bn a year to fight action on climate change.”

A Capital Research Center study cuts Mr. Brulle’s calculations down to size: Not only is Brulle’s assessment off by 93 percent, the resources of environmentalist groups and government agencies overwhelmingly dwarf those of skeptics. To learn more about the climate debate, visit www.ClimateDollars.org.



THE GREATEST HEIST IN WORLD HISTORY: THE GLOBAL WARMING SCAM

By James Simpson

Summary: *In 1974, the media began broadcasting warnings of an impending ice age. Today, we are supposedly being threatened by end-of-the-world catastrophic global warming. Which end-of-the-world scenario should we believe? Or should we believe any of it? Anyone who questions the current climate change narrative is vulnerable to being vilified, cancelled, or worse. In America, indeed the entire Western world, we have been lied to so persistently, so overwhelmingly, so convincingly, that the lie has worked its way into almost every aspect of our lives. Yet the science—the actual observational data—does not support the climate change narrative.*

One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back.

—Carl Sagan

In November 1974, the *Guardian* published an article with this breathless conclusion: “The facts have emerged, in recent years and months, from research into ice ages of the past. They imply that *the threat of a new ice age must now stand alongside nuclear war as a likely source of wholesale death and misery for mankind.*” (Emphasis added.) Two years earlier, Walter Cronkite had reported on the same thing. Today, we are supposedly being threatened by end-of-the-world catastrophic global warming.

Each scenario forecasts an end-of-the-world calamity at polar opposites. What are we supposed to believe? Should we believe any of it? Carl Sagan's quote describes exactly where America, indeed the entire Western world, finds itself today. We have been lied to so persistently, so overwhelmingly, so convincingly, that the lie has worked its way into almost every aspect of our lives.



Credit: Michal Bednarek. License: Shutterstock.

We all have seen the iconic pictures of a lone polar bear floating on a small piece of ice, implying that the bears will drown as polar ice receded due to global warming.

Nearly every institution of society—industry, finance, government, the education establishment, news media, and entertainment—has been saturated in the lie and has turned its attention to promoting as well as demanding we underwrite its alleged “cost.” And we participate because our pride tells us we couldn't be stupid enough to fall for such a massive lie. Our leaders couldn't be lying to us, could they? Especially if they are the ones we voted for. And as the lie becomes more apparent, we double-down out of fear of being seen as fools if we admit the truth.

Anyone who questions the climate change narrative is liable to being vilified, cancelled, fired from their job, and possibly even threatened with death—the usual punishments for daring to question any of the Left's pet narratives.

*James Simpson is an economist, businessman, investigative journalist, and author. His latest book is the Amazon bestseller *Who Was Karl Marx? The Men, the Motives and the Menace Behind Today's Rampaging American Left.**

The Lie

Well, let's look at that, because we are rushing to implement a massive change in how we produce energy, that most critical sector that fuels the modern age. Will global warming really end life on earth in 12 years, as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (D-NY) claimed? It all sounds pretty absurd, yet they are doubling, tripling down on it anyway. In January at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, Al Gore said:

We're still putting 162 million tons [of greenhouse gas] into [the atmosphere] every single day and the accumulated amount is now trapping as much extra heat as would be released by 600,000 Hiroshima-class atomic bombs exploding every single day on the earth.... That's what's boiling the oceans, creating these atmospheric rivers, and the rain bombs, and sucking the moisture out of the land, and creating the droughts, and melting the ice and raising the sea level, and causing these waves of climate refugees.

Climate refugees? Where? 600,000 Hiroshima-class bombs every day? Where? Boiling the oceans? Are we supposed to believe such lunacy? Al Gore has been wrong on virtually all of his predictions since beginning his crusade following publication of his 2006 book and movie *An Inconvenient Truth*. The number of errors is too long to list here. For a more thorough treatment, see: "Al Gore's 30 Years of Climate Errors: An Anniversary Analysis."

But one simple example illustrates the point. Figure 1 reproduces Gore's famous "hockey stick" graph, which Gore contended shows world temperatures changing with changes in CO₂ concentrations. But changes in temperature on this chart precede changes in CO₂. It is difficult to see this from the graph, because the data cover 600,000 years.

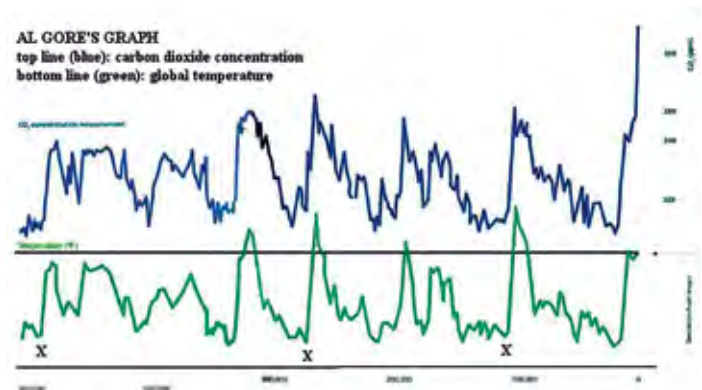
Furthermore, the graph shows that many of the prior spikes in temperature were higher than the most recent one, yet CO₂ concentrations were not as high. In fact, a 1999 study of Antarctic polar ice cores published in *Science* magazine noted that changes in temperature precede CO₂ concentrations from 200 to 1,000 years. Yet other studies based on Northern Hemisphere ice cores show CO₂ leading changes in temperature. How can one draw any conclusions from that?

Al Gore's graph is based on "Global-Scale Temperature Patterns and Climate Forcing over the Past Six Centuries" a 1998 *Nature* article by university professors Michael Mann, Raymond Bradley, and Malcolm Hughes. In 2003,

Stephen McIntyre and Ross McKittrick published a rebuttal to the Mann study in the journal *Energy and Environment*. They identified numerous errors and omissions in the original Mann study. Figure 2 shows the original data as presented in the Mann study compared to the corrected data provided by McIntyre and McKittrick.

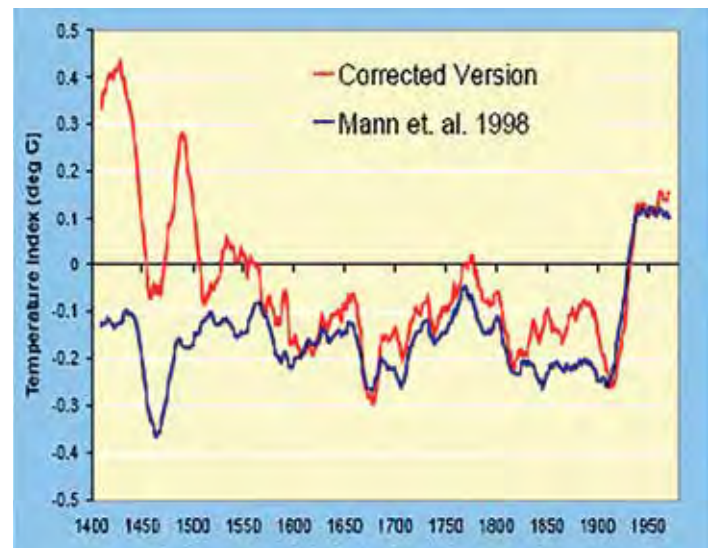
Of course, Mann et al. claimed in a subsequent report that even corrected data support their initial study. Mann claimed that a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) study confirmed his results, but that was only partly true. McIntyre and McKittrick published a second rebuttal to

Figure 1: Al Gore's "Hockey Stick" Graph



Source: Habitat21, "Al Gore's Graph: Carbon Dioxide and Temperature," <http://www.habitat21.co.uk/energy86.html>.

Figure 2: Mann Data vs. Corrected Data



Source: McIntyre & McKittrick, "Corrections to the Mann et al. (1998) Proxy Data Base and Northern Hemispheric Average Temperature Series," *Energy & Environment*, 14, no. 6 (2003): 766, Figure 8.

Mann in 2005, where they again discredited his methods. While the NAS report agreed with Mann's findings on recent temperature increases, McIntyre told the Daily Caller,

The NAS report did not vindicate him, it said his methods were biased, and his results depended on faulty bristlecone pine records that shouldn't be used by researchers...

The NAS panel also cautioned against conclusions about warming more than 600 years back and said uncertainties were being underestimated."

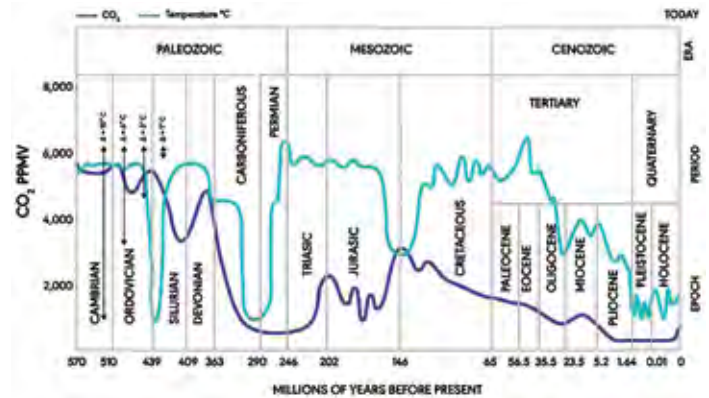
But there is much more. Figure 3 is a chart tracking temperature and CO₂ levels over a much longer period in earth's history. It is reprinted from *Fake Invisible Catastrophes and Threats of Doom*, by Dr. Patrick Moore, former Greenpeace co-founder and founding director of the CO₂ Coalition based in Washington, DC.

Figure 3 suggests no correlation between rising temperatures and rising CO₂ levels. Indeed, Moore states:

Advocates of the climate-catastrophe narrative want us to ignore the record of carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere before 1850 so they can make it look like 415 ppm is "high" compared to the pre-industrial level of 280 ppm. But the little uptick on the far right of the graph, indicating our contribution, shows that CO₂ levels are still at one of the lowest levels it has ever sunk to during the past 570 million years. The alarmists want the public to be conditioned into thinking that the past 170 years tells us everything we need to know about CO₂. As can be seen from the graphic above, there is much more to it than that.

The fundamental question is whether or not the claim that carbon dioxide is the "control knob" of global temperature is valid. The chart [Figure 3] shows very clearly that CO₂ and temperature are out of sync more often than they are in sync. This does not support the claim that there is a strong cause-effect relationship between CO₂ and temperature over the long-term history of the Earth; in fact, it rules against this conclusion. We are being told that the correlation between carbon dioxide and temperature both rising concurrently over that past 170 years, out of 570 million years of Earth's history, proves a cause-effect relationship. It does not, and the historical record indicates the opposite....

Figure 3. Geological Timescale: Concentration of CO₂ and Temperature Fluctuations



Source: Patrick Moore, *Fake Invisible Catastrophes and Threats of Doom* (Comox, BC, Canada: Ecosense Environmental, 2021).

The simultaneous rise of carbon dioxide and temperature over the last 170 years in no way supports a strong cause-effect relationship, in fact it is sufficient to reject that conclusion.

In an interview with *Conversations that Matter*, Dr. Moore explained that, if anything, we need more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, not less. Moore published a 2015 piece titled "The Positive Impact of Human CO₂ Emissions on the Survival of Life on Earth," in which he asks:

The most important question facing a species on Earth today is how long would it have been in the absence of human-caused CO₂ emissions until the gradual depletion of CO₂ in the atmosphere fell to levels that began to decrease biomass due to starvation, thus signaling the beginning of the end of life on Earth?

Dr. Moore concludes that prior to the latest boost in CO₂ from the industrial age, if CO₂ had fallen much further, it would have snuffed out all life on earth.

During the last glacial maximum, 20,000 years ago, CO₂ fell to about 180 ppm, only 30 ppm above the level where plants begin to die from CO₂ starvation.... This is not a very desirable outcome as it would threaten the survival of every living species on Earth. One might think this would have been noticed by those who claim there is "too much" CO₂.

Dr. William Happer, a climate expert and Princeton Professor, agrees. He says that we are actually experiencing a "carbon drought, and that more CO₂ in the atmosphere would be a good thing."

Carbon Is Not a Poison

More to the point, the fact rarely heard among the climate fanatics is that *carbon is the basis for all life on earth*. And the source of carbon is carbon dioxide (CO₂) taken from the atmosphere. *Plants require carbon dioxide to survive. Carbon dioxide is plant food*. Greenhouses raise CO₂ levels as high as 1,000 PPM to encourage plant growth.

Plants take CO₂ in from the atmosphere and, using the energy of the sun, combine it with water (H₂O) to make sugars in a process called photosynthesis. All sugars are multiples of the basic formula CH₂O. That is one carbon atom (C), two hydrogen atoms (H) and one oxygen atom (O). In its most basic formula, the chemical reaction can be expressed:



The “waste” product released into the air from this chemical reaction is the oxygen (O₂) we breathe. The sugar actually produced in this process is glucose (C₆H₁₂O₆), which is used by plants to function and grow. Animals then eat the greens and fruit produced. Carbon dioxide is essential to life on earth, and it comprises a mere 0.04 percent of the atmosphere. In speaking of the critical role of CO₂, Moore has said:

All life is carbon-based. And the carbon for all that life originates from carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. All of the carbon in the fossil fuels we are burning for energy today, was once in the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, before it was consumed by plankton in the sea and plants on land. Coal, oil and natural gas are the remains of those plankton and plants that have been transformed by heat and pressure deep in the earth’s crust. In other words, fossil fuels are 100 percent organic and were produced with solar energy...

If there were no carbon dioxide in the earth’s atmosphere, the earth would be a dead planet, period. Talk about catastrophic climate change. Take away CO₂ and you’d have it. And yet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has deemed this essential ingredient for life a pollutant.

Dr. Moore stated, “Oil has produced our longevity, our prosperity and our personal freedom.... Is that evil?” He answers, “Apparently so.”

Dr. Moore explains that he left Greenpeace when it went from being humanitarian to being “anti-human, basically,



The true motive for the switch away from carbon-based fuels is the usual motive for corrupt governments: greed and power.

and saying that humans are the enemy of the earth.” He called the climate agenda, “A huge convergence of interests among the elites, that is driving the political agenda today.”

And therein lies the rub. Why are the global elites of the World Economic Forum, the United Nations, and the world’s “progressives” pursuing this blatantly insane agenda with such abandon? As the saying goes, *follow the money*. The true motive for the switch away from carbon-based fuels is the usual motive for corrupt governments: greed and power.

Extreme Climate Leftists

Despite these facts, or perhaps because of them, Al Gore’s rants have only grown more maniacal as time progresses. But they are only one example. The Left is demanding that something must be done *right now* to avoid catastrophic climate change.

In early March, the *New York Times* cited a recent report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), with the headline, “Climate Change Is Speeding Toward Catastrophe”:

Earth is likely to cross a critical threshold for global warming within the next decade, and nations will need to make an immediate and drastic shift away from fossil fuels to prevent the planet from overheating dangerously beyond that level.

Commenting on the report, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said:

The climate time bomb is ticking. But today’s IPCC report is a how-to guide to defuse the climate time bomb. It is a survival guide for humanity...

This report is a clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every time frame. In short, our world needs climate action on all fronts, everything, everywhere, all at once.

Climate time bomb? One would think this should be cause for genuine alarm. However, note that the IPCC website has a disclaimer. It says: “*IPCC endeavors to ensure, but cannot and does not guarantee the accuracy, accessibility, integrity and timeliness of the information available on its Website*” (emphasis added). How many websites have a disclaimer regarding supposed “facts,” the accuracy of which cannot be guaranteed—especially on such an important topic? Yet “immediate and drastic” changes to the entire world economy are necessary?

The IPCC was caught in a massive lie by the *Wall Street Journal* in 1996 when it deleted conclusions contained in the report *The Science of Climate Change 1995*, approved for publication. The deleted lines read:

- None of the studies cited above has shown clear evidence that we can attribute the observed [climate] changes to the specific cause of increases in greenhouse gases.
- No study to date has positively attributed all or part [of the climate change observed to date] to anthropogenic [man-made] causes.
- Any claims of positive detection of significant climate change are likely to remain controversial until uncertainties in the total natural variability of the climate system are reduced.

There are many more lies, too numerous to count. But one in particular should be mentioned. We all have seen the iconic pictures of a lone polar bear floating on a small piece of ice, implying that the bears will drown as polar ice receded due to global warming. For years the Canadian government has fought activist efforts to declare the polar bear a threatened species because the Canadian government knows better. Bear populations are not declining, they are growing. As of 2021, polar bear populations are the highest they’ve been in 60 years. Past estimates have ranged from 26,000–31,000 bears, but the actual population could be as high as 58,000. Susan Crockford, a zoologist with 40 years of experience studying arctic animals, concludes: “There is no existential emergency for polar bears or any other Arctic sea mammals due to declining summer sea ice, despite continued messages of doom from remorseless experts.”

Save the Planet?

CO₂ is a greenhouse gas in that its molecular structure tends to absorb and re-release heat, trapping some of it in the earth’s atmosphere. But does it contribute to global warming? The historical evidence suggests not. But let’s grant the

global warming fanatics their day in court and assume they are correct. If so, what will our actions to reduce atmospheric CO₂ actually accomplish?

The global warming fanatics often show pictures of smokestacks billowing black smoke to suggest massive air pollution from CO₂. Another lie. Never mind that technology has significantly reduced smokestack output of unburned hydrocarbons and other byproducts. The facts, as usual, are radically different. Carbon dioxide is a colorless, odorless gas which currently comprises a little over 400 parts per million (ppm), that is 0.04 percent of all atmospheric gasses—an infinitesimal amount. CO₂ concentration has increased by about 40 percent or 120 ppm (0.012 percent of atmospheric gasses) over the last 200 or so years. During that time, world mean temperature has increased by about 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit).

Let’s generously assume that all of the CO₂ increase since colonial times was caused by man’s activity and that the 1.8°F temperature increase was entirely attributable to CO₂. The U.S. has contributed less than 20 percent of that. (The U.S. contributed 15 percent in 2014, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).) But we’ll use the 20 percent figure to keep the math easy. So if we buy the Left’s argument entirely, the United States—the imperialist destroyer of the global environment that promiscuously burns carbon fuels to satisfy its insatiable appetite for warmth, air conditioning, and automatic dishwashers—has raised global temperatures over the past 200 years a whopping 0.36°F (1.8 x 0.2).

But it gets even more absurd. Using the Left’s assumptions, since colonial times, the U.S. has added a total of 24 ppm of CO₂ (120 x 0.2). Let me repeat that, 24 *parts per million* or 0.0024 percent—an almost immeasurable amount.

In 2014, the Obama administration heroically announced its intention to reduce coal plant carbon emissions 30 percent by 2030. Obama was thankfully stopped, and the coal industry (and our nation) got a temporary reprieve. But what would success have looked like? According to the U.S. Department of Energy, in 2014 coal-burning power plants were responsible for about 29 percent of manmade U.S. CO₂ emissions. See Table 1.

Under the Obama proposal, total U.S. CO₂ emissions would have been reduced by about 9 percent (0.29 x 0.3). This equates to a CO₂ reduction of about 2 ppm (0.0002 percent), for a temperature reduction of 0.03°F. So using the Left’s assumptions, if the average global temperature in 2014 was 58.24°F, it would have been reduced to 58.21°F. And the Obama administration was willing to destroy an entire

Table 1. U.S. Carbon Emissions 2014

By Source			By Sector		
	MMT ¹	%		MMT ¹	%
Coal			Electric Power		
Powerplants	1,560	29%	Coal	1,560	29%
Industrial	150	3%	Gas	444	8%
Total Coal	1,710	32%	Oil	37	1%
Oil	2,260	42%	Total Power	2,041	38%
Natural Gas	1,440	27%	Transportation	1,830	34%
Total ⁴	5,410	100%	Industrial	962	18%
			Commercial	232	4%
			Residential	341	6%
			Total ²	5,406	100%
¹ MMT = Million Metric Tons					
² Differences due to rounding					
Source: U.S. Department of Energy					

industry to accomplish this! The same result will obtain with the effort to switch to electric cars.

In the real world where the rest of us live, to suggest that such miniscule CO₂ reductions could have any impact strains credulity. Indeed the EPA admitted at the time that its rule would have had no measurable effect on temperature.

Biden has promised to cut greenhouse gas emissions 50 percent by 2030. Thankfully the Supreme Court ruled the EPA has no authority to unilaterally impose such draconian rules without congressional approval. But a similar argument can be made here. If we generously take the Left's assumptions as fact, and we have contributed a total of 0.36°F to the global warming that has occurred so far, Biden's plan would cut temperature by 0.18°F, reducing current average global temperature from its current 57.52°F to 57.34 °F.

While these people are setting off alarm bells about the dangers of rising CO₂ levels, the biggest polluters in the world don't seem to have received the memo. China has the worst carbon footprint by far of any nation in the world and is rapidly building new coal-burning power plants that will equal to total current U.S. capacity. This will negate any efforts we make. Nonetheless, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm stated publicly in March that we can learn from Communist China's example about their investments in

"clean energy." Granholm's statement is simply bizarre for its tone-deaf ignorance.

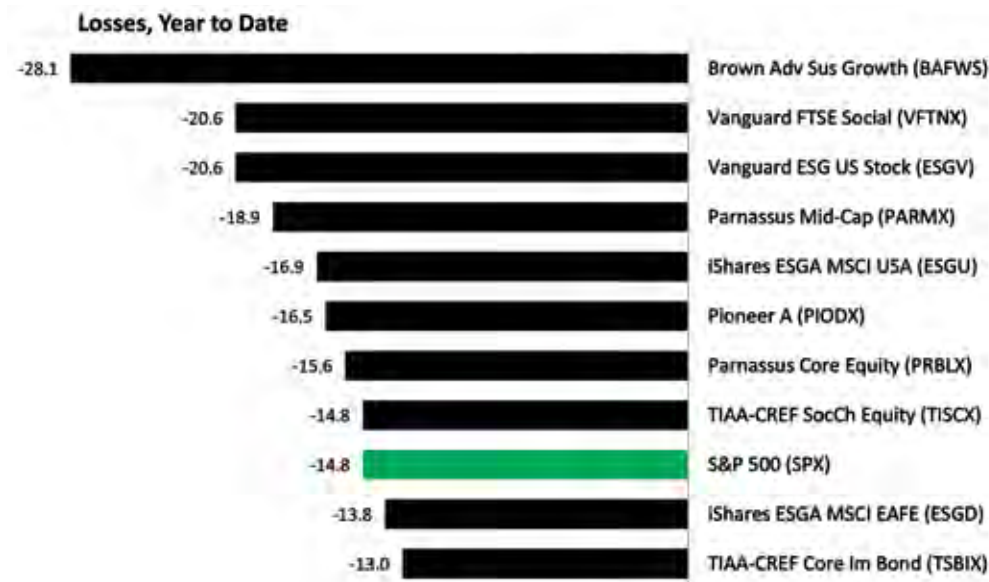
Is there a method to this madness? Czechoslovakia's famous leader Vaclav Klaus has called global warming a religion, whose motivating ambition is greed and power. In a 2009 Fox News interview, he said:

We'll be the victims of irrational ideology. They will try to dictate to us how to live, what to do, how to behave. What to eat, travel, and what my children should have. This is something that we who lived in the communist era for most of our lives—we still feel very strongly about.... Some of them are really just rent seekers who hope to get some money either for their businesses or for their countries. Some of them are really true believers.

Marc Morano of Climate Depot writes:

A prescient government-funded report by five universities in the United Kingdom (Cambridge, Imperial College, Oxford, Bath, Nottingham, and Strathclyde) titled Absolute Zero, released in November 2019, envisions what a society locked down for the sake of the climate would look like. "Stop doing anything that causes emissions regardless of its energy source.... Stop eating beef and lamb.... Either use 60% fewer cars or they will be

Figure 4. Performance of Large ESG Funds in 2022
Majority of top 10 funds by assets underperformed S&P 500 index



Note: Data through December 5, 2022.
Source: Bloomberg.

60% the size,” urged the report.... By 2050, “All remaining airports close.... All shipping declines to zero.” According to the report’s executive summary, there is no choice but to follow this draconian path because it is “the law.”

Morano also observed:

Canadian banker Mark Carney, a climate advisor to both UK prime minister Boris Johnson and Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau, has a plan to financially lockdown businesses that don’t adhere to the dictates of the climate agenda. “Carney’s Brave New World will be one of severely constrained choice, less flying, less meat, more inconvenience, and more poverty: ‘Assets will be stranded, used gasoline-powered cars will be unsaleable, inefficient properties will be unrentable,’ he promises,” wrote Peter Foster, columnist for the National Post and the author of *Why We Bite the Invisible Hand: The Psychology of Anti-Capitalism*.

The agenda’s objectives are in fact already being enforced, not primarily by legislation but by the application of non-governmental—that is, non-democratic—pressure on the corporate sector via the ever-expanding dictates of ESG (environmental, social, and corporate governance) and by ‘sustainable finance,’ which is designed to

starve non-compliant companies of funds, thus rendering them, as Carney puts it, ‘climate road-kill.’ What ESG actually represents is corporate ideological compulsion. It is a key instrument of ‘stakeholder capitalism.’

We covered ESG and “stakeholder capitalism” (i.e., socialism) in my most recent report. Pensioners, as well as investment funds, are already paying the price for ESG. Figure 4 shows what losers these funds are when compared to the S&P 500 index:

In 2021, the *Guardian* blared: “Equivalent of Covid emissions drop needed every two years.” The article claims, “Carbon dioxide emissions must fall by the equivalent of a global lockdown roughly every two years for the next decade for the world to keep within safe limits of global heating, research has shown.”

Current Biden Climate Czar, John Kerry, was enthusiastic back in 2009 when the recession caused a 6 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Kerry wanted to see a 20 percent reduction, which would have required a recession almost four times worse. The cumulative effects of successive Covid lockdowns would be magnitudes worse, and literally destroy the world economy. ■

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

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,
President and CEO, The Daniels Fund

No, your legacy is not safe.

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