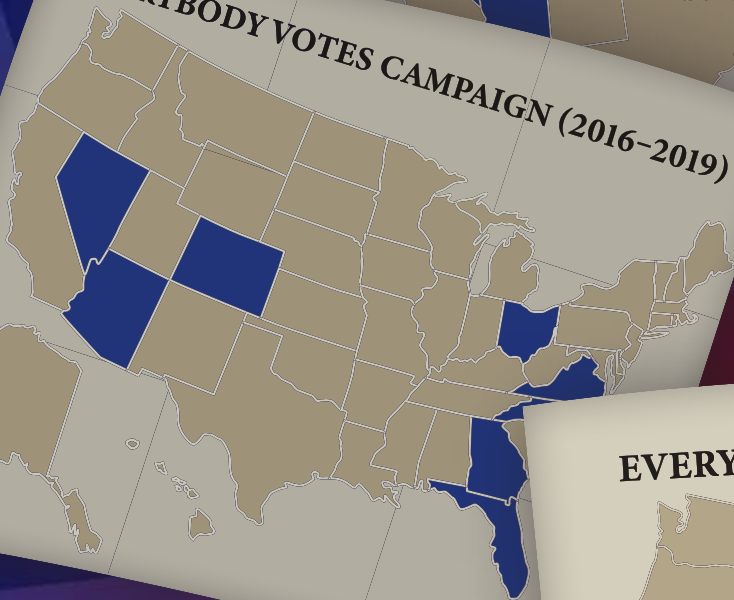




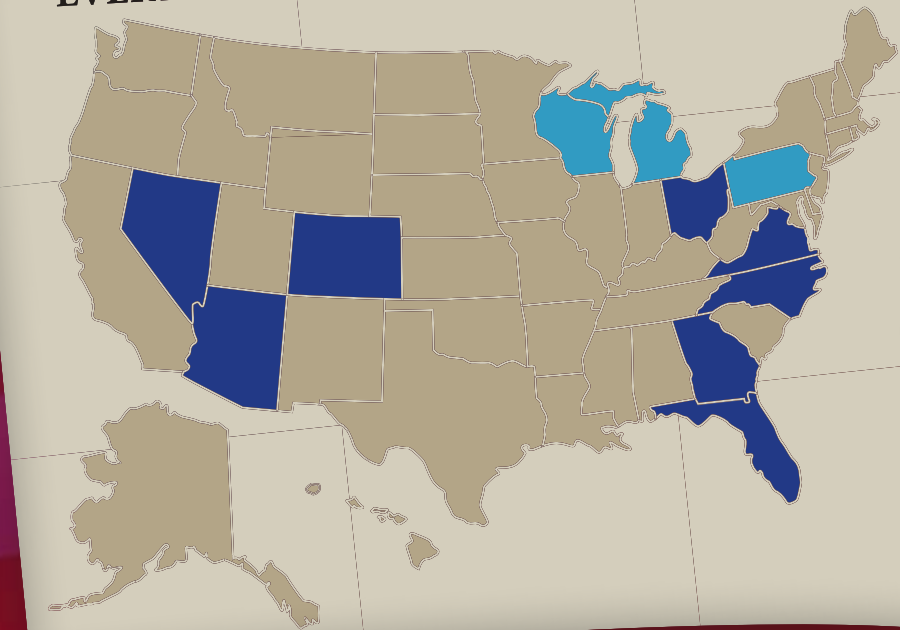
CORRIDOR PARTNERS PLAN (2015)



EVERYBODY VOTES CAMPAIGN (2016-2019)



EVERYBODY VOTES CAMPAIGN (2020-2021)



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*Capital Research* is a monthly publication of the Capital Research Center (CRC), a non-partisan education and research organization, classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity.

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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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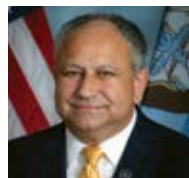


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CRC's Architects of Woke series takes aim at far-left post-modernist and Marxist thinkers and activists responsible for the spread of identity politics on college campuses and in society at large.

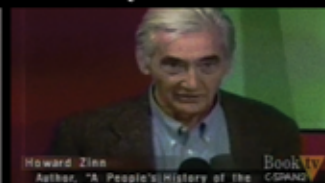
The series is hosted and directed by award-winning filmmaker Rob Montz, whose online documentary work has attracted millions of views and coverage in major outlets, including *The Economist*, *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and The Adam Carolla Podcast.

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://DangerousDocumentaries.com).**

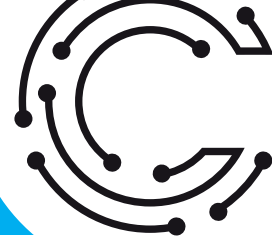


Howard Zinn, Hollywood, & the Fairy Tale of American Evil



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## CONSERVATIVE BUD LIGHT STRATEGY TAKES DOWN LEFTISTS WITH THEIR OWN “RULES”

*Companies shifted far left, so conservatives needed a strategy to rein in firms like Bud Light*

By Michael Watson

Since at least the mid-2000s, conservatives—especially social conservatives—have been utterly befuddled at how to approach an increasingly socially liberal business world. Woke capitalism, driven by a combination of a consortium of left-wing nonprofits, ESG investing, and professional-class ideological dynamics, has driven a wedge between conservatives and their longtime allies in business.

...

... Big Labor funds the liberal nonprofit institutional complex, helped invent contemporary ESG investing, and marches in lockstep with the most fervently woke professional-class ideological dynamics. With the classical “three Bigs” of Big Labor, Big Government, and Big Business arrayed against them, no wonder other conservatives speak of a wholly united left-wing “Regime.”

But a funny thing happened on the way to the Regime: Bud Light lost nearly one-third of its market share after doing what the Regime wanted. The brand partnered with transgender TikTok influencer Dylan Mulvaney, and its now-benched marketing lead, Alissa Heinerscheid, who vowed to end her predecessors’ “fratty, kind of out-of-touch humor” in favor of a younger, woke-er “campaign that’s truly inclusive.”

...

Conservatives boycotted, ordinary people joined in and made Bud Light a punchline, and now Anheuser-Busch

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*The possibility that Bud Light will not be alone—that the madmen might strike again and other products may suffer the same fate—can create general deterrence against brands.*



Credit: The Toold. License: Shutterstock

*Conservatives boycotted, ordinary people joined in and made Bud Light a punchline, and now Anheuser-Busch almost literally gives Bud Light away.*

almost literally gives Bud Light away. Bud’s rivals gained market share, to the point that the consumer shift now is putting strain on the beer supply chain.

This has a positive and culturally significant effect beyond any lessons Anheuser-Busch might learn for the future. The possibility that Bud Light will not be alone—that the madmen might strike again and other products may suffer the same fate—can create general deterrence against brands, especially brands that are relevant to conservatives’ lives, taking political stands outside their core business. ■

*This article originally appeared on FoxNews.com on June 7, 2023. For the full article please see FoxNews.com.*

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

*Michael Watson is Capital Research Center’s research director and managing editor for InfluenceWatch.*

**JULY 2021**

**EDITED BY  
HAYDEN LUDWIG**



# **RISE OF THE ECO-RIGHT**

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A few dozen lobbying, litigation, and activist nonprofits that identify themselves as free market or broadly right-of-center are attempting to rebrand environmentalism and global warming ideology as conservative values. The Capital Research Center broke the news that these “eco-Right” groups also are secretly bankrolled by liberal mega-donors.



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## AMAZON, GM, FEDEX, AND HOUSEHOLD NAMES HELPING BAN GAS STOVES FROM HOMES

By Ken Braun

Author and *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century*. The 2005 book wasn't advocating the agenda of the Flat Earth Society, and Friedman likely hasn't used the proceeds to help fund such a ludicrous group. But the charitable foundation he runs with his wife has done something almost as silly by giving money to the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), one of the nation's most radical anti-energy, left-wing nonprofits.

The Friedmans are not alone. General Motors, Fed Ex, United Airlines, Amazon, Bank of America, and dozens of billionaires, major corporations, and big foundations have become huge donors to RMI. In 2002, the Rocky Mountain Institute was a kooky, enigmatic group with just over \$5.1 million in total revenue.

A lot changed after that.

A December 2022 study published by the RMI asked a scary question: "What do secondhand smoke and gas stoves have in common?"

Just weeks later, in January of this year, a commissioner with the Consumer Products Safety Commission cited the RMI study and suggested the government agency might implement a federal ban. By the first week of May, New York notched the dubious distinction of becoming the first state to prohibit the installation of natural gas stoves and furnaces in new building and home construction.

Improbably, the once ignorable RMI has launched a legitimate policy war against natural gas, a low-carbon, abundant source of American-produced fuel.

For most of the prior 40 years, RMI's impact was difficult to notice. The CNN website search engine appears to hold stories at least as far back as 2011, and a June 2023 search



*In January of this year, a commissioner with the Consumer Products Safety Commission cited the Rocky Mountain Institute study and suggested the government agency might implement a federal ban.*

Credit: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Public domain.

for "Flat Earth Society" yielded only 11 references. A search for "Rocky Mountain Institute" revealed only 14 stories in the database.

But 11 of RMI's CNN references were from 2019 or later. The Rocky Mountain Institute's influence and budget have exploded in recent years. In 2007, the group reported almost \$9.7 million total revenue. Similarly, in 2012, the year before RMI first appears in the CNN search database, it reported total revenue of \$10 million.

Then, the money started flooding in, making huge leaps each year. RMI received almost \$16.5 million in 2013 revenue, was up to \$29.5 million for 2016, went past \$53.5 million in 2019, and topped \$115 million in 2021.

Since 2012, the nonprofit has grown from 50 employees to more than 600. In addition to multiple locations in Colorado, RMI now has offices in Oakland, California; New York City; Washington, DC; and Beijing, China.

*Ken Braun is a senior investigative researcher at CRC and authors profiles for InfluenceWatch.org and the Capital Research magazine.*

## Patient Zero: Amory Lovins

In 1982 the Rocky Mountain Institute was founded in Snowmass, Colorado, by physicist Amory B. Lovins and his former wife, Hunter Lovins. Amory remains chairman-emeritus of RMI, and his ideology still animates its policies. The RMI website hosts a page titled “Inside Amory’s Brain” that describes him as the “Einstein of energy efficiency” whose “earth-shaking ideas on energy security, efficiency, and renewables have changed the field for more than 40 years.”

Except for the dubiously flattering comparison, the rest of this is not inaccurate. Since at least the mid-1970s, Lovins has made it a habit to crank out crackpot ideas that hoodwink supposedly wise people.

The first of “Amory’s Classics” celebrated by RMI is “Energy Strategy: The Road Not Taken,” a 1976 essay he wrote for *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations. He wrote it as a representative of Friends of the Earth.

His central goal was to convince the industrial world to ditch its use of “hard” energy technologies—coal, natural gas, oil, and (especially) nuclear power—and choose instead



Credit: Rudolf Simon. License: <https://bit.ly/3PpL1Q9>.

*Since at least the mid-1970s, Amory Lovins has made it a habit to crank out crackpot ideas that hoodwink supposedly wise people.*

“soft” technologies, the so-called “renewables.” Ever since, Lovins and RMI have promoted that big picture point.

“Recent research suggests that a largely or wholly solar economy can be constructed in the United States with straightforward soft technologies that are now demonstrated and now economic or nearly economic,” he wrote, in one of many points that was unintentionally prophetic.

Nearly a half century later, “recent research” from similarly gullible sources continues to project economic viability for weather-dependent energy. Solar and its intermittent power wonder-twin, wind energy, regularly get re-subsidized to the tune of hundreds of billions more dollars in this nation alone.

These money gushers are shrouded in increasingly lofty lies, such as the “Inflation Reduction Act,” and the supposedly “soft” solar technology being built at hard-labor camps in China.

A critical feature of the wind and solar fable today (and probably back in 1976 as well) is a flawed measuring stick called the “levelized cost of energy” (LCOE). In simplified terms, LCOE divides the cost of obtaining power over the lifetime of the power source (construction, maintenance, fuel inputs, and so forth) by the amount of power produced.

LCOE is an imperfect but useful comparison for power systems that run on stored fuel that can be dispatched when needed. But LCOE is grossly misleading when used to compare these mostly reliable systems to those that run on weather-dependent energy.

The real value of a powerplant is not that it can generate low-cost electricity: a lightning bolt can do that exceedingly well. Instead, what makes an energy system truly useful is that it can generate that power when it is needed. Lightning bolts, the wind, and then sunshine follow the demand of Mother Nature and celestial mechanics, not consumer demand.

Even though the value of a watt is inextricably related to when it is created, RMI repeatedly misuses LCOE to sell the supposed superiority of non-reliable power.

“Higher amounts of variable renewable energy on the system also creates a mismatch between energy demand and supply, increasing the risk of renewable curtailment—the forced reduction in power output—when other inflexible generators like coal and nuclear are unable to ramp down during periods of high renewable availability,” wrote RMI researchers in a February 2018 report.



Translation: “The problem with reliable energy is that it’s TOO reliable and wants to keep working even when our weather-dependent princesses decide to wake up and help out.”

Imagine the Rocky Mountain Institute as a diner: “Due to their willingness to work for slightly less, we’ve hired some cooks who show up whenever they want to. But our labor market has been ruined by the more expensive, yet punctual and reliable cooks, who inflexibly refuse to punch out when the cheaper staff decides to come in.”

Nonetheless, they keep the faith.

A January 2018 RMI report asked: “Will 2018 be the year when solar power reaches so-called grid parity, providing a cost of energy over its operating life that is equal to or less than the cost of energy from existing conventional energy sources?”

Their dubious answer: “This levelized cost of energy (LCOE) comparison informs new grid investments and, as a result, the evolving resource mix of the grid. ... Looking across the energy landscape, there is reason to believe solar’s time truly has arrived.”

Yes, just as in 1976, solar is STILL the energy of the future! And ... always will be.

## RMI’s War on Energy

Of the main hydrocarbon energy sources that we use—coal, natural gas, and oil—natural gas is by far the lowest emitter of carbon dioxide. If cutting carbon emissions were RMI’s highest priority, then the group’s assault on gas-powered stoves and furnaces would appear senseless.

What makes far more sense is to assume RMI is simply opposed to energy use itself. For this, there is ample evidence.

Centralized energy production, wrote Lovins in his *Foreign Affairs* essay, “comes not from an understandable neighborhood technology run by people you know who are at your own social level, but rather from an alien, remote, and perhaps humiliatingly uncontrollable technology run by a faraway, bureaucratized, technical elite who have probably never heard of you.”

He suggested that “an affluent industrial economy could advantageously operate with no central power stations at all!”

Sure, and we could also grow all our own food in the back yard and build our cars and cell phones in the garage. His argument was against specialization and economies of scale, a critical input that makes an “affluent industrial economy” possible.



Credit: Steven L. Johnson. License: <https://bit.ly/42ND863>.

*By the first week of May 2023, New York notched the dubious distinction of becoming the first state to prohibit the installation of natural gas stoves and furnaces in new building and home construction.*

His hostility to centralized power extended even—and especially—to nuclear power.

“But fission technology also has unique sociopolitical side-effects arising from the impact of human fallibility and malice on the persistently toxic and explosive materials in the fuel cycle,” he wrote, in one of several misleading comments on the subject.

Nuclear energy was then and remains today the safest method of mass producing reliable on-demand power. But Lovins repeatedly wrote as if he thought Homer Simpson would end up running the Springfield nuclear plant and use it to build hydrogen bombs for Iran.

And beyond those overwrought worries, he wrote that even “if nuclear power were clean, safe, economic, assured of ample fuel, and socially benign per se, it would still be unattractive because of the political implications of the kind of energy economy it would lock us into.”

By that, he meant one in which centralized, low-cost, reliable power would fuel strong economic growth.

Any doubts to the contrary were cleared up in 1977, when an interviewer asked him about the potential for limitless energy from fusion reactors.

“If you ask me, it’d be little short of disastrous for us to discover a source of clean, cheap, abundant energy *because of what we would do with it*,” he replied (emphasis in orig-

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*Amory Lovins repeatedly wrote as if he thought  
Homer Simpson would end up running  
the Springfield nuclear plant.*

inal). “We ought to be looking for energy sources that are adequate for our needs, but that won’t give us the excesses of concentrated energy with which we could do mischief to the earth or to each other.”

We mostly didn’t heed these anti-human ravings and instead kept locating new sources of “abundant energy,” such as the rich domestic natural gas fields that the Rocky Mountain Institute now doesn’t want us to use.

What he predicted as “mischief” was instead experienced as prosperity and a lifestyle over and above what was available to us in 1977. This has included almost unimaginable medical advances, longer lifespans, the effective end of global famines, cell phones, the internet, on-demand video and music, low-cost air travel, and the list goes on and on.

These are the “excesses of concentrated energy” we were warned to avoid. Rather than “little short of disastrous,” it has been just shy of miraculous.

But it’s not too late to turn back!

## RMI’s Nuclear Freeze Movement

“Large, lumpy units, like coal and nuclear, make failures more consequential and require more elaborate and costly support—reserve margin, spinning reserve, and cycling costs—than a diversified, distributed portfolio of small, modular units, like modern renewables,” wrote Lovins in 2017, still beating his primitive drums against centralized electricity generation.

Nuclear energy is the largest source of carbon-free energy in the United States, and second largest zero-carbon energy provider on earth behind hydropower. A U.S. Department of Energy website reports that a 1,000 MW nuclear plant chews up one square mile of the environment, while a wind farm with the same potential output needs 360 square miles to do the job, and a solar farm needs 75 square miles.

That tiny land-use footprint is a conservation benefit provided by nuclear energy. Lovins sees this feature as a bug, apparently believing it preferable to scatter power generation systems all over a far larger chunk of real estate.

A nuclear reactor is unmatched and unmatched as a safe, reliable, clean, and environment-saving source of power. Lovins and the Rocky Mountain Institute continue to fight against them and advocate for unreliable, environment-clogging weather-dependent systems such as wind and solar.

“Accelerating the build-out of the new clean energy system is the only viable long-term solution to the double crisis facing Europe in terms of both energy security and the climate emergency,” wrote an RMI researcher in February 2022. “Instead of looking backward to domestic fossil or large-scale nuclear, European officials should prioritize the multiple clean energy technologies that are available to them today to cut both emissions and energy dependencies.”

The report even criticized France for planning new nuclear projects, arguing that the “price differential with renewables” would make nuclear more costly for the French.

The French generate almost 63 percent of their electricity from nuclear power and are by far the most nuclear-dependent major industrial power.

Germany, more than any other nation, followed the Lovins/RMI energy plan, literally shutting down their once robust nuclear energy plants and attempting a switch over to weather-dependent non-reliables.

Germans call it “Energiewende,” and Lovins loves it. In a wildly premature 2014 essay, he praised the recent denuclearization of Germany, writing that “French energy-intensive industries complain that they can’t beat their German competitors’ one-fourth-lower power prices.”

In 2022, according to Our World in Data, each unit of German-produced electricity emitted 352 percent more carbon than French-produced power. This was after hundreds of millions of dollars had been spent on Energiewende, a lot of it coughed up by the people least able to pay.

According to a February 2013 *Wall Street Journal* report, Germany’s big “energy-intensive industries” were exempted from the inevitable surcharges needed to subsidize Energiewende. This meant the cost was offloaded onto small businesses and households, a situation so dire by September 2013 that the German newsmagazine *Der*



## *Is it any mystery why France is adding nuclear capacity, rather than buying into the Rocky Mountain Institute's anti-energy snake oil?*

*Spiegel* ran this story: “How Electricity Became a Luxury Good: German Government Advisors Are Calling for a Completely New Start.”

A November 2020 report written by energy analyst Vaclav Smil for the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers examined the 20th anniversary of *Energiewende*.

Explaining that Germany had experienced all the predictable challenges with shutting down reliable energy in favor of intermittent sources, Smil wrote that Germany had accomplished functionally identical carbon reductions as the United States. This was despite the Americans not implementing the same draconian shutdowns of reliable power.

“It costs Germany a great deal to maintain such an excess of installed power,” wrote Smil. “The average cost of electricity for German households has doubled since 2000. By 2019, households had to pay 34 U.S. cents per kilowatt-hour, compared to 22 cents per kilowatt-hour in France and 13 cents in the United States.”



Credit: 360b. License: Shutterstock

*Frank A. Delle (“Eased”), Pierre Baigorry (Peter Fox), Demba Nabe during a concert of the band “Seed” at a demonstration for a change in energy policies in Berlin, Germany on May 10, 2011.*

This was more than a year before the Russian invasion of Ukraine squeezed Germany’s energy access even tighter.

“Amid an energy crisis, Germany turns to the world’s dirtiest fossil fuel,” read an NPR headline from September 2022, announcing that Germany would be keeping 20 coal-fired power stations operating, despite prior plans to shut them down. The NPR account blamed Russia for cutting off the natural gas but made no mention of Germany’s decision to shut off its own nuclear energy.

In 2022, according to Our World in Data, each unit of German-produced electricity emitted more carbon than electricity produced in Russia.

Is it any mystery why France is adding nuclear capacity, rather than buying into the Rocky Mountain Institute’s anti-energy snake oil?

## **Personal Awards and Foundation Rewards**

In 2016, Lovins was awarded the German Order of Merit, the German government’s highest honor, because of his influence on Germany’s energy policy.

Another ironic decoration came in 1993, when he became a MacArthur Foundation Fellow. Colloquially known as a “MacArthur Genius Award,” the fellowship stipend for the award winners was \$800,000 each in 2023.

The left-leaning **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation** is one of the largest grantmaking foundations in America. In addition to directly awarding Lovins as one of its geniuses, MacArthur has also been a generous recent benefactor of the Rocky Mountain Institute’s sustained war against prosperity and reliable, low-carbon energy. According to the charitable recordkeeping service Foundation Search, MacArthur gave more than \$9.7 million to RMI during the grant years 2018 to 2021, with \$6 million of the total granted in 2021 alone.

This is on-brand for MacArthur. A report in the February 2022 issue of *Capital Research* magazine revealed that MacArthur had given at least \$76 million since 2016 to nonprofits with anti-nuclear positions.

Recent multi-million-dollar annual donors such as MacArthur are a big reason for the Rocky Mountain Institute's booming bottom line.

Billionaire Michael Bloomberg's **Bloomberg Family Foundation** gave at least \$54 million in 2021 to advocacy groups opposed to nuclear energy, including the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), the Sierra Club Foundation, and 350.org. The Rocky Mountain Institute received \$13.1 million of this total.

The **Bezos Earth Fund** is a project funded by billionaire Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. The fund has given at least \$17 million to RMI in 2020 and 2021 grants, and over that period at least \$100 million each to the anti-nuclear NRDC and the Sierra Club.

Until shortly before his death in 2022, hedge fund pioneer Julian Robertson was a board member of the anti-nuclear EDF. His **Robertson Foundation** has granted at least \$16.5 million to RMI since 2019.

Billionaire Mark W. Heising is the current chair of the EDF board. His **Heising-Simons Foundation** (co-founded with this wife, billionaire Liz Simons) has given nearly \$2.3 million to the Rocky Mountain Institute since 2018.

The **Sall Family Foundation** has given at least \$6.7 million to Rocky Mountain since 2017. Co-founder Virginia Sall is also an EDF board member.

The **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation** has given more than \$6.6 million to RMI since 2018. Hewlett is also a multi-million-dollar annual donor to several of the anti-nuclear nonprofits already mentioned.

The **Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment** and the **Jeremy and Hannelore Grantham Environmental Trust** have given a combined \$10.1 million to Rocky Mountain Institute since 2015, and more than \$4.4 million since 2020. Both are affiliated with and funded by British investment manager Jeremy Grantham. In addition to funding RMI, the Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment gave at least \$2 million more in 2021 to opponents of nuclear energy such as Greenpeace and the Sierra Club.

The **Wellspring Philanthropic Fund** and the **Sequoia Climate Fund** are another pair of interconnected foundations that provide strong support to the Rocky Mountain Institute and other radical anti-nuclear climate policy groups. A February 2023 report from Inside Philanthropy identified Sequoia as a "new giant in climate change philan-

thropy," which had given out \$126 million during 2021, the first year the group filed IRS reports. According to the report, Sequoia is a spin-off of Wellspring. Both are affiliated with billionaire C. Frederick Taylor.

Together, Sequoia and Wellspring have given at least \$6.7 million to RMI since 2019. In 2021 alone, Sequoia gave at least \$2.4 million to RMI, and millions of dollars more to the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund and other anti-nuclear climate advocacy groups.

The **ClimateWorks Foundation**, the **Energy Foundation** are a pair of pass-through donors that fund left-leaning climate advocacy groups. The combined donations directed by these foundations to Rocky Mountain Institute since 2021 have exceeded \$2.9 million. Over the same period the pair has directed at least \$4 million in additional combined grants to other anti-nuclear climate policy groups.

Similarly, the **Climate Imperative Foundation** gave more than \$11 million to anti-nuclear advocacy groups in 2021, including \$1.1 million to RMI.

The 2022, 2021, and 2020 annual reports from the Rocky Mountain Institute also credit **Lyda Hill Philanthropies** and the **High Tide Foundation** with giving a minimum of \$1 million each year.

The **Rockefeller Foundation** (founded with the fortune of oilman John D. Rockefeller) and the **Rockefeller Brothers Fund** (one of several foundations created by the Rockefeller heirs) have together given at least \$5.8 million to the Rocky Mountain Institute since 2020.

The **Childrens Investment Fund Foundation** (CIFF) is credited by RMI with minimum \$1 million donations for 2022 and 2021. In January 2020, RealClearInvestigations reported that CIFF had transferred a nearly \$200,000 donation from CIFF founder Christopher Hohn to Extinction Rebellion (XR), a lawless left-wing climate group that engages in blocking streets and has threatened to fly drones near commercial air traffic. XR was profiled in "Unabombers Without Bombs," a 2019 report from *Capital Research* magazine.

## RMI's Humanity Hating Benefactor

The radical agenda of one RMI donor towers above the others.

Since 2005 the Rocky Mountain Institute has received at least \$76.9 million from the **Foundation for the Carolinas** (FFTC), with at least \$58.3 million since 2016. This



*They want all the nice things that the rest of us have, but America can't take all the poor people in the world.” —Fred Stanback*

donor-advised fund (DAF) is by far the largest foundation donor over those periods and possibly the biggest donor to RMI in its history.

In many instances, it is difficult to trace the origin of a grant from a donor-advised fund to an advocacy group, particularly a controversial advocacy group.

For example, the **Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund** is technically one of the largest charities in the nation. But in truth, Fidelity is a collection of more than 250,000 separate and unaligned charitable donors piggybacking on Fidelity's charitable tax status. Donors give their gifts to Fidelity, along with instructions regarding where the money should ultimately land.

From 2003 through 2020, the Rocky Mountain Institute received 50 separate grants from Fidelity, cumulatively exceeding \$5.1 million. More than a dozen of them were smaller than \$10,000, and more than half were \$25,000 or less. There is no requirement for Fidelity or RMI to publicly disclose who the original funders really were.

Similarly, since 2014 Rocky Mountain has received more than \$2.1 million from 13 separate grants sent through the **Schwab Charitable Fund**, another of the nation's large DAFs.

But the source of most and potentially all the \$76.9 million sent through the Foundation for the Carolinas DAF is not a mystery. In April 2018 the *Knoxville News* aptly introduced billionaire Fred Stanback Jr., as an “88-year old North Carolina heir to Stanback's headache-powder fortune and known proponent of anti-humanist environmentalism ... the belief that protecting the environment hinges on population control.”

In one single 2014 donation Stanback gave \$397 million to his donor-advised account with the Foundation for the Carolinas. FFTC has more than 2,500 clients, but this one donation from Stanback was more than half of total revenue in 2014 or any other year, and in many years exceeds FFTC's total revenue. In the quarter century through 2023, Stanback is likely responsible for well over \$500 million in FFTC grants, and maybe more than \$1 billion.

“Numbers of people affect the environment,” said Stanback in 2013. “They want all the nice things that the rest of us have, but America can't take all the poor people in the world.”

Promotion of abortion, opposition to energy, opposition to immigration, and a general hostility to humanity has been a common theme of Stanback's donations through FFTC. (“Anti-humanist Environmentalism,” a profile of Stanback, was featured in the 2019 issue of *Capital Research* magazine.)

Clues of how big he has been giving through FFTC pop up regularly in accolades from the ultimate recipients of the money.

A 2013 annual report from Planned Parenthood Health Systems credited “Fred and Alice Stanback” for a \$1.3 million gift.

In 2017, the president of NumbersUSA, an anti-immigration group, said Stanback had been “very supportive of our efforts because he sees there's no way to create sustainability in this country if we keep adding 2.5 or 3 million people a year.”

FoundationSearch records show Numbers USA received \$13 million from FFTC over an eight-year period through 2016. Total annual revenue received by NumbersUSA from 2009 to the present has rarely exceeded \$7 million.

Similarly, a 2020 report in the *Washington Free Beacon* identified Stanback with \$33 million in total donations to Population Connection, the group formerly known as Zero Population Growth. The group was founded by Paul Ehrlich, author of *The Population Bomb*, an alarmist 1970 book that predicted global starvation due to overcrowding.

The *Free Beacon* also tied \$200 million in total donations funneled through FFTC, from Stanback to the Southern Environmental Law Center, a public interest law firm that shares the Rocky Mountain Institute's hostility to domestic energy production.

A 2014 annual report from the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) also thanks the Stanbacks for a “\$100,000+” donation—the highest giving level listed that year. CBD is opposed to developing conventional energy from hydrocarbons, opposed to production of zero-carbon

nuclear energy, promotes male sterilizations and in 2021 equated abortion rights with “environmental justice.”

Sterilize people, abort them, starve them of energy—it’s nearly the entire Fred Stanback worldview in one spot. The Center for Biological Diversity received more than \$1 million from the Foundation for the Carolinas in 2021, the same year the Rocky Mountain Institute took in \$14 million.

Asking whether these and other 2021 FFTC gifts were from Stanbacks leads to another question: “which Stanbacks?”

Recent annual reports from RMI credits Fred and Alice Stanback with gifts of \$1 million or more. Bradford G. Stanback & Shelli Lodge-Stanback are also repeatedly credited with donations of \$500,000 to \$1 million.

Bradford is the son of Fred and Alice. Brad & Shelli might also be giving to RMI through FFTC. Fred is now more than 90 years old, but his pipeline of people pruning dollars to RMI may be set for a long time.

## Giving Away the Rope

The Stanbacks are credited as donors in Rocky Mountain Institute newsletters going back at least to Spring 1997. A small item in that newsletter, titled “Questioning Capitalism,” cheerily applauded leftist billionaire George Soros for “warning that unfettered capitalism has now replaced communism as the chief enemy of the open society.”

The aforementioned Thomas Friedman doesn’t appear to share this ideology. His 2005 book, *The World Is Flat*, both described and largely endorsed capitalist globalization. In a 2008 book he promoted a “crash program” to build more nuclear power stations and extend the life of the existing ones.

Nonetheless, Friedman has been one of many recent benefactors of the anti-nuclear, anti-growth RMI (albeit at nothing near the stratospheric levels of the donors profiled so far). As recently as 2021, the **Ann B. and Thomas L. Friedman Family Foundation** gave \$20,000 to RMI.

He is a good example of how perversely acceptable the peculiar Rocky Mountain Institute has become.

Total RMI revenue in 1996 was just over \$2.7 million, or about \$5.2 million in today’s dollars. A 2022 tax return reported total revenue had grown to nearly \$117 million. The RMI of 1996 was a logical home for Fred Stanback’s ideology. It remains a home for it today, but its influence—

measured strictly in monetary terms—has grown 22 times stronger.

In addition to the gusher of financial support from the billionaires and foundations previously noted, the RMI has grown rich and powerful from the largesse of corporate America.

Google, CBRE, Wells Fargo, Salesforce, IKEA, and Microsoft made the list of corporate donors forking over \$1 million or more to RMI since 2021. The lists of those giving \$100,000 or more include AT&T, Bank of America, Royal Bank of Canada, General Motors, Amazon, Citi, Boston Consulting, JP Morgan Chase, ING, Deloitte, TD Bank, and Goldman Sachs.

And these are the merely ironic corporate supporters.

There is a truly absurd list that includes voracious consumers of jet fuel. FedEx has been a \$500,000-plus annual donor to RMI. Alaska Airlines and United Airlines have each made



Credit: Michael Shellenberger. License: <https://bit.ly/3Xio1Va>

*Michael Shellenberger quoted a historian who wrote that Sierra Club member “Martin Litton hated people” and “favored a drastic reduction in population to halt encroachment on park land.”*

the \$100,000-plus list. JetBlue and Boeing have given at least \$50,000 each.

Predictably, RMI counts wind and solar energy firms such as Enel on its list of contributors. But there are even two oil companies on the \$500,000-plus list: Shell and BP.

What's going on there?

In *Apocalypse Never*, his 2020 book, environmental journalist Michael Shellenberger reported that big oil and gas firms have never been the natural enemy of radical climate groups such as RMI. He showed that the Sierra Club, NRDC and other big names on the climate advocacy Left have a rich history of raking in tens of millions of dollars from the fossil-fuel interests they supposedly oppose.

The hypocritical hostility to zero-carbon nuclear energy is the secret cement that binds them together. "Killing nuclear plants turns out to be a lucrative business for competitor fossil fuel and renewable energy companies," wrote Shellenberger. "That's because nuclear plants generate large amounts of electricity."

Solar panels ... do not. BP's bottom line won't ever be challenged by the build out of weather-dependent energy. But Thomas Friedman's "crash program" to build nuclear plants might do it.

Delving into the history of the environmental movement, Shellenberger wrote that even the Sierra Club was once pro-nuclear. "Nuclear energy is the only practical alternative that we have to destroying the environment with oil

and coal," said Ansel Adams, the nature photographer and former Sierra Club director.

What changed their mind was the agenda Fred Stanback had come to love.

Shellenberger quoted a historian who wrote that Sierra Club member "Martin Litton hated people" and "favored a drastic reduction in population to halt encroachment on park land."

According to Shellenberger, the heavy lifting to move the movement away from nuclear energy was done by none other than Amory Lovins.

"Lovins' basic framework of transitioning from nuclear to renewables was promoted by David Brower and Friends of the Earth and eventually embraced by Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the German government, Al Gore, and a whole generation of environmentalists," wrote Shellenberger.

From shutting off nuclear reactors to shutting off your gas stoves and furnaces, Lovins' Rocky Mountain Institute has grown to take its place among the heavyweights of the anti-energy, anti-growth Left.

Vladimir Lenin supposedly predicted capitalists would sell the rope on which they would be hanged. Today, the RMI's donor profile shows that the rope can also be given away. ■

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



# THE LEFT'S VOTING MACHINE

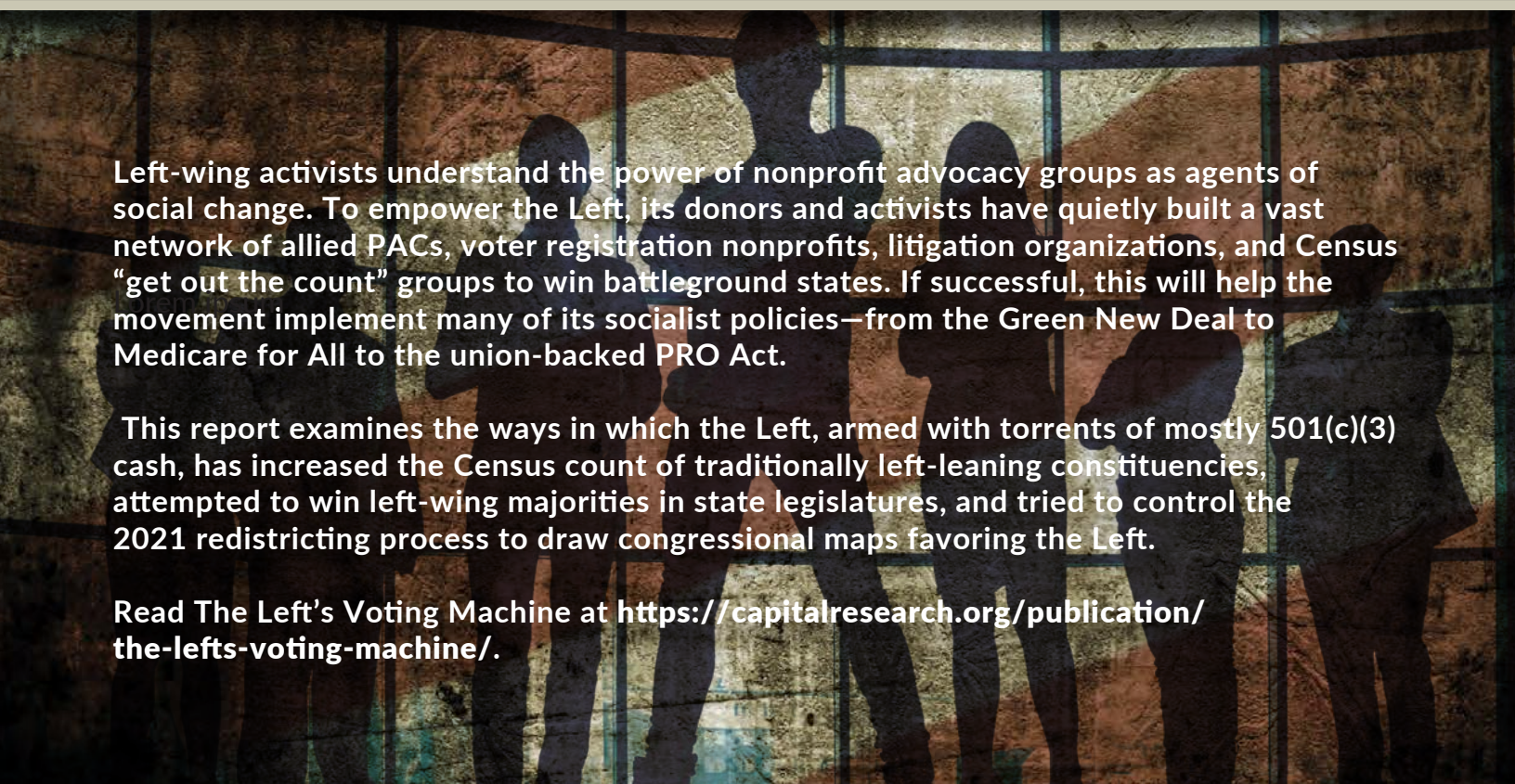


**CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER**  
AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK

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/>.







## HOW CHARITIES SECRETLY HELP WIN ELECTIONS

*Exposing a massive, hidden “nonpartisan” voter turnout scheme that is still helping Democrats win elections*

By Parker Thayer

**Summary:** *This investigation reveals the shocking true story of the Everybody Votes campaign—the largest and most corrupt “charitable” voter registration effort in American history—that may have decided the 2020 presidential election and could decide 2024. Commissioned by Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta, funded by the Democratic Party’s biggest donors, and coordinated with cut-throat Democratic consultants, the Everybody Votes campaign used the guise of civic-minded charity to selectively register millions of “non-white” swing-state voters in the hopes of getting out the Democratic vote for a 2020 presidential win.*

*It worked.*

On November 24, 2015, **John Podesta**, Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager, received an email from **Stephanie Schriock**, then-president of EMILY’s List, a powerful Democrat-affiliated political action committee (PAC). “Is this the registration program you were hoping for? Can I push it?” Schriock asked.

The email contained the blueprints for a voter registration program dubbed the **Everybody Votes campaign**. The program proposed using \$106 million in donations from “interested donors or [tax-exempt private] foundations” to fund voter registration drives in eight states over five years (Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, and Nevada).

The plan states, “The five-year program will register more than 6.3 million voters and generate close to 2.2 million net new registered voters in the electorate across the eight targeted states from 2016 through 2020.”

Later, in the lead-up to the 2020 presidential election, a leaked memo written by **Mind the Gap**, a Democrat-aligned Super PAC, came to light. It revealed that the Everybody Votes campaign described in the 2015 memo was still alive. Co-written by **Barbara Fried**, mother of the disgraced crypto-billionaire and Democratic megadonor Sam Bankman-Fried, the 2020 memo advised donors to give 90



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*Using sophisticated voter databases and Democrat-aligned microtargeting firms, charities like the Voter Participation Center have targeted “nonpartisan” voter registration drives toward demographics and localities where people vote strongly for Democrats.*

percent of their political cash to three nonprofits conducting “well-designed” voter registration campaigns, because that is “the most effective tactic” to score “additional Democratic votes.” One of the groups was Everybody Votes, “a national organization that funds and trains a consortium of 50+ local community groups across the country that do the actual registration work.” Everybody Votes, a tax-exempt charity, also checks “on the back end” that *every single registration* is filled out properly and that registrants end up on state voter rolls.

The memo also instructs Mind the Gap’s donors to keep Everybody Votes a complete secret. “In 2018,” Fried and her colleagues wrote, their Super PAC “managed to stay out of the news and as far as we know out of Republicans’ sight-lines. ... It will come as no surprise to Republicans—and be of little interest—that yet another organization is trying to fund voter registration in battleground states. But the magnitude of our efforts, the details of targeting, and the names

*Parker Thayer is an investigative researcher.*

## Major Players

**John Podesta.** Chairman of Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign. Leaked emails show that in 2015 he received multiple versions of a “nonpartisan” voter registration program he requested which would exploit charities to help Democrats win presidential elections in 2016 and 2020. This plan became the \$193 million Everybody Votes campaign that registered 5.1 million people by 2022.

**Stephanie Schriock.** In 2015 the president of EMILY’s List, a major Democrat-aligned political action committee. Schriock forwarded to John Podesta an email describing the Everybody Votes campaign and asked permission to send it to donors. Schriock wrote: “Is this the registration program you were hoping for? Can I push it?”

**Everybody Votes Campaign.** A scheme sent to John Podesta, head of the 2016 Clinton presidential campaign, by Democratic PAC leader Stephanie Schriock in 2015. It was a multiyear, \$100+ million plan to use charities to register non-white voters in eight swing states. The millions of newly registered voters would “change the electorate” as the plan succeeded in “registering more voters” than the “average ‘margin’ that separates winners from losers in statewide elections”—like the presidential race that Podesta was running. The scheme has evolved but remains in action. It claims that by 2022 it registered 5.1 million voters. It achieved that with \$193 million in donations, largely from private foundations and charities, which are legally prohibited from affecting election outcomes.

**Barbara Fried.** Stanford Law professor, mother of disgraced crypto-billionaire Sam Bankman-Fried and co-founder of the Super PAC Mind the Gap. Fried and her co-conspirators at Mind the Gap wrote a confidential strategy memo for the 2020 election that advised the group’s Democratic donors to give millions to the charity Everybody Votes, because “nonpartisan voter registration” by charities was “4 to 10 times more cost-effective” at “netting additional Democratic votes,” compared to giving to Democratic Party campaign groups. The memo also instructs donors to keep Everybody Votes a secret from Republicans and the media, while suggesting donors use private foundations and donor-advised funds to contribute to the scheme.

**Mind the Gap.** Democratic Super PAC urging 2020 contributions to Everybody Votes. (See also *Barbara Fried.*)

**Molly McUsic.** President of the Wyss Foundation, the private U.S. foundation of Swiss billionaire and Clinton ally Hansjörg Wyss, who has a history of illegal foreign interference in American elections. McUsic requested and received the Corridor Partners voter registration plan early in 2015 and forwarded them to Hilary Clinton’s campaign chairman, John Podesta, describing the Corridor plan as the “new c3 version” of a strategy they had discussed earlier.

**Corridor Partners.** A Democratic consulting firm that first drafted a massive voter registration plan to win Democratic election victories by using traditional, legal means—namely, political groups that are permitted to help parties achieve victory. Later, the plan was adjusted into a “new c3 version” that would instead make illicit use of charities to win partisan victories.

**Bill Roberts.** Principal consultant at Corridor Partners, a Democrat-aligned strategy firm; board member of the League of Conservation Voters; and former Democratic congressional staffer. Roberts used Corridor Partners to develop an ambitious \$100+ million “nonpartisan” voter registration scheme that was designed to weaponize funding from private charitable foundations to help Democrats win elections by generating two million new “non-white” votes in swing states by 2020.

**Voter Registration Project.** The secret identity of the Everybody Votes campaign. The project is a charity whose network has raised over \$193 million and registered 5.1 million voters to date. The Voter Registration Project paid activist groups and political consultants millions to register new voters. It also collected each new voter’s information. Recent job listings show the project was so successful in 2020 that it is hiring new employees to expand operations and register millions more voters by 2024, targeting Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.

**Grassroots Solutions.** A Democratic political consulting firm that developed a refined version of the Corridor Partners voter registration plan and dubbed it the Everybody Votes campaign. Co-founder Robert Richman emailed the Everybody Votes blueprints to Clinton campaign allies at the EMILY’s List PAC in late 2015. Then the PAC passed the scheme on to Clinton campaign honcho John Podesta for his approval. The “charity” that carried out the scheme—the Voter Registration Project (see above)—was housed at the Grassroots Solutions office from 2016 to 2018.

of the organizations we are recommending would be of great interest to them.”

What is the Everybody Votes campaign? Why did John Podesta care about some charity when he was busy with Hillary’s presidential campaign? Which mysterious donors were supposed to supply the \$106 million? Why was the whole thing kept top secret? Was this Everybody Votes campaign even legal?

For years, these questions have gone unasked and unanswered—until now.

## Prologue: Nonprofits in Elections

This investigation is largely concerned with nonprofits, and from its pages a reader may discover much of their character and a little of their history.

Nonprofits are complicated and exist in many forms, but for this story, it is most important to understand the 501(c)(3) variety. This nonprofit type is the only one for which donors receive a tax deduction when they contribute, because the beneficiary conducts charitable and educational work. The law divides 501(c)(3) nonprofits into two types: charities (such as the Salvation Army, Goodwill, and houses of worship) and private foundations (such as the Ford Foundation).

But these groups’ tax exemptions come with limitations. For example, 501(c)(3) charities and foundations are forbidden to engage in partisan political activity or to directly influence the outcome of elections. They are allowed, however, to engage in and fund voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives *if neither the drive’s intent nor its effect* helps a particular party or candidate. The IRS insists that any such election-related work must be strictly “conducted in a non-partisan manner.”

Despite this prohibition, not-really-nonpartisan voter registration campaigns—funded by private foundations and carried out by charities—have been a favored tactic of the Left since at least the 2008 elections. Using sophisticated voter databases and Democrat-aligned microtargeting firms, charities like the Voter Participation Center have targeted “nonpartisan” voter registration drives toward demographics and localities where people vote strongly for Democrats. As liberal reporter Sasha Issenberg wrote of the Voter Participation Center in his widely praised 2012 book, *Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*, “Even though the group was officially nonpartisan, for tax purposes, there was no secret that the goal of all its efforts was to generate new votes for Democrats.”

Over the years, registering people in demographics and localities more likely to vote for Democrats has developed into its own multi-hundred-million-dollar industry. These “nonpartisan” voter registration tactics have also allowed the Left to quietly access billions of dollars stashed in private foundations, which were once kept at arm’s length from politics by tax laws and IRS rules but are now effectively partisan megadonors as powerful as, say, Michael Bloomberg and George Soros. Conservative donors, by comparison, whether foundations or individuals like billionaire Charles Koch, have done far less “charitable” voter registration. This is perhaps because they fear a repeat of their targeting by IRS officials, as occurred in the Lois Lerner scandal that harassed and hindered conservative nonprofits in the 2012 election cycle. In short, Democrats have a nearly bottomless source of partisan election spending, while foundations and their billionaire patrons have gained immense influence over the Democratic Party. (See more here.)

It’s a perfect, tax-exempt, back-scratching circle, but for the first time ever our research has put the pieces together and lifted the “nonpartisan” fig leaf to expose one of the largest partisan voter registration drives in U.S. history. This story raises the most serious legal questions for the charitable sector in a half-century.

## Where Did the Everybody Votes Campaign Originate?

To recap, Hillary Clinton campaign honcho John Podesta received an email from a PAC in late 2015 that asked if he approved of the Everybody Votes campaign, a \$106 million project designed to last five years and generate 2.2 million new votes in eight states by 2020—a project Podesta had been “hoping for.” Now that we’ve explained how the left-wing “charitable” voter registration racket works, the Everybody Votes campaign should sound even more alarming than it initially did.

Above all, it’s clear that the “Everybody” in the Everybody Votes plan did *not* mean “everybody.” It meant allegedly “underrepresented”—and heavily Democratic—demographics like “African Americans, Latinos, unmarried women, and young people.” It’s also clear the plan sent to Podesta was scandalous in terms of violating the law governing charities’ involvement in elections, but the PAC’s email wasn’t even the first time such a “charitable” nonprofit scheme was sent to Podesta *that year*.

Earlier in 2015, Podesta received a plan for a “massive registration surge” described as a “new c3 version” from



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*It's clear the plan sent to John Podesta was scandalous in terms of violating the law governing charities' involvement in elections, but the PAC's email wasn't even the first time such a "charitable" nonprofit scheme was sent to Podesta that year.*

**Molly McUsic**, the president of the Wyss Foundation. The Wyss Foundation is the tax-exempt U.S. foundation of Swiss billionaire Hansjörg Wyss, a left-wing donor with a history of illegal interference in U.S. elections. The plan was developed by **Corridor Partners**, a for-profit Democratic consulting firm. The plan's creator is **Bill Roberts**, a principal at Corridor and also a board member of the "dark money heavyweight" League of Conservation Voters and its sister charity, the League of Conservation Education Fund. He indicated the plan was adapted from an earlier plan that was explicitly partisan and thus not legal for private foundations to fund or for charities to execute. But in its new, bowdlerized version that edited out references to explicit partisanship and election victories, it would be "consistent with the mission of any private foundation."

A side-by-side comparison of the Corridor Partners plan and the Everybody Votes campaign that the EMILY's List PAC sent Podesta reveals extreme similarities (See table below).

The PAC's Everybody Votes campaign is a nearly perfect copy of the Corridor Partners plan. This cleverly named final version of the scheme merely replaces the true-blue states of Illinois and New Mexico with the more enticing deep-purple targets of Ohio and Virginia.

If anyone wonders how partisan the plan was before the "notable changes from earlier versions" that Bill Roberts mentions in his email that was forwarded to Podesta, it is easy to discover. Ordinarily, those "earlier versions" would be lost to time, but a disastrous mistake by Roberts (he left Microsoft Word's "track changes" function turned on) caused a version of the original to be left behind.

That original version blows wide open the story of the Corridor Partners plan that became the Everybody Votes campaign.

The "new c3 version" of the Corridor Partners plan sent to Podesta by the Wyss Foundation's Molly McUsic was packed with language about "voter participation" and "under-represented citizens," but the original version was far less civic minded and far more partisan. At one point, three entire paragraphs were completely removed because they described Republican-won elections that might have been flipped to Democrats if only more "non-white" voters had been registered. Other edits included changing phrases like "alter the electoral balance" to the less partisan-sounding "change the composition of the electorate." A reference to changing the "outcome of an election"—something forbidden to charities and private foundations—was switched to changing the "competitiveness of an election."

Even though the verbiage in the "new c3 version" of the plan tried to camouflage its partisan goal of election victories for Democrats, the meat of the report—its voter data and funding recommendations—remained the same, and these elements became the Everybody Votes campaign. One particularly revealing data table estimates the number of additional votes that could be squeezed out of target states by 2020 with enough "non-white" voter registration. It then

Corridor Partners Plan	Everybody Votes Campaign
Emailed February 2015	Emailed November 2015
\$105 million price tag	\$106 million price tag
Six-year plan: 2015-2020	Five-year plan: 2016-2020
Eight focus states: AZ, CO, FL, GA, IL, NC, NM, NV	Eight focus states: AZ, CO, FL, GA, OH, NC, VA, NV
Projects 2.4 million new votes by 2020	Projects 2.2 million new votes by 2020.

Estimated Net Votes Generated by VRP in 2020 Election, by Race and Ethnicity

State	African-American	Hispanic-American	Asian-American	Other Non-White	Total Non-White	Vote Margin
Arizona	18,750	133,584	26,981	19,321	198,635	153,657
Colorado	13,219	59,779	15,846	3,989	92,832	67,520
Connecticut	18,837	17,831	8,460	2,595	47,722	87,281
Florida	51,666	83,860	27,713	9,444	172,684	110,701
Georgia	144,931	31,969	29,057	12,531	218,487	216,431
Illinois	94,483	104,866	33,684	3,219	236,252	149,779
North Carolina	72,498	21,214	6,880	15,485	116,077	74,926
New Mexico	3,411	53,904	2,438	17,872	77,626	53,381
Nevada	11,570	40,580	7,419	10,529	70,099	51,246
Pennsylvania	75,129	49,086	12,918	20,036	157,168	270,071
South Carolina	64,000	4,753	3,043	5,321	77,116	151,305
Texas	140,208	644,360	53,016	24,220	861,804	946,241
Virginia	26,974	10,354	15,272	6,828	59,427	111,566

compared these projected vote totals to “Vote Margin”—that is, the typical margin of victory in past statewide elections. This comparison clearly indicates how the plan’s strategists believed that “charities” that followed the plan would cause Democrats to win elections for president, governor, and senator (See table above).

A plan is just a plan, though. Did the Everybody Votes campaign even make it to 2020?

## Everybody Votes in the 2020 Election

Fast forward five years to January 2020, when the left-leaning media outlet *Vox* published a leaked copy of a confidential donor memo sent by Mind the Gap, a Democrat-aligned Super PAC that advises megadonors on their political spending. In the memo, Mind the Gap informs donors that “the most effective tactic” to win “additional Democratic votes” is “nonpartisan voter registration focused on underrepresented groups.”

Note how Mind the Gap contradicts itself by claiming its voter registration recommendation is “nonpartisan”—because that is required by law if private foundations and charities are to participate—yet it insists the same registration program will provide partisan donors with the most Democratic votes per dollar.

Mind the Gap warns, however, that voter registration must be “well-designed and executed,” so the Super PAC recommends that Democratic donors invest in only three voter registration groups. One group is Everybody Votes. This is clearly the same Everybody Votes campaign described in Podesta’s emails, just a few years more developed. As Mind the Gap explains,

Everybody Votes is a national organization that funds and trains a consortium of 50+ local community groups across the country that do the actual registration work. It also checks at the back end that every form was filled out in accordance with state requirements, and that every new registrant actually ends up on the voter rolls in advance of election day.

The 2020 Everybody Votes plan, in short, evolved from the scheme in Podesta’s 2015 email. No longer just a plan to fund voter registration, it has grown into a nationwide network that trains and funds local voter registration groups and collects each voter’s information at its shadowy headquarters, to be double-checked and added to voter databases for future use.

As this effort grew more complex it remained highly efficient. According to Mind the Gap’s research, on a pre-tax basis, “nonpartisan” voter registration drives “are 2 to 5

times more effective at netting additional Democratic votes than the tactics campaigns will invest in (chiefly, broadcast media and digital buys)” and “4 to 10 times more cost-effective” after taxes, because unlike normal political donations, these are tax deductible.

Let that sink in: A Democratic Super PAC told big donors who badly want to win elections not to waste their money by giving to candidates’ campaigns or to 501(c)(4) “dark money” nonprofits, but instead to give millions of dollars to *charities that are forbidden to be partisan or to intervene in elections.*

In a section labeled “Discretion” at the end of Mind the Gap’s memo, the Super PAC also told donors they must keep these voter registration efforts a secret. As we quoted earlier, Mind the Gap knew Republicans would have “great interest” in the “magnitude” of this scheme, “the details of our targeting, and the names of the organizations we are recommending.”

The memo then provides a brief paragraph that donors *are* allowed to share with other donors, but here “Everybody Votes” is omitted, even though the other groups that the memo recommends are named and contact information given. Clearly, Everybody Votes was being kept secret for a reason.

The Mind the Gap memo shows how, as the years passed, the Everybody Votes campaign became something entirely new. It evolved from an idea pitched to a Swiss billionaire’s private foundation to the clearly partisan “new c3 version”



Credit: Joseph Solmi. License: Shutterstock.

*Even though the Everybody Votes campaign was blatantly partisan, developed by Democratic consultants, and pushed by Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager, a charity did end up adopting and funding the project undetected.*

plan requested by John Podesta himself, until it became a major new organization with access to the voter registration information of millions of people—all while working deep in the shadows.

A search of IRS nonprofit databases, however, shows no organization by the name of “Everybody Votes” to match this description. Where has the project been hiding all these years?

## The Everybody Votes Campaign Becomes Reality

Even though the Everybody Votes campaign was blatantly partisan, developed by Democratic consultants, and pushed by Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager, a charity *did* end up adopting and funding the project undetected.

The charity that became the vehicle for the Everybody Votes campaign was previously a wing of the Barack Obama-era Project Vote, itself an affiliate of the notorious ACORN activist network that was involved in election law violations in multiple states before going bankrupt in 2010. This charity was originally called Voting for America, and it only just survived the scandals that closed many of its sister groups for good. It was entirely renovated when the Clinton campaign kicked off in 2016. Its board was entirely replaced, its finances were overhauled, and it was given a new, nondescript name, the **Voter Registration Project**. In addition to the new name, the group also opened two new affiliated groups: the Voter Registration Project Education Fund, also a charity, and Register America, a smaller 501(c)(4) nonprofit.

Since 2016, the Voter Registration Project has been extremely secretive, staying completely out of the public eye. Until recently, it had no website, and it has never spoken to the press or been covered in detail by any news organization.

This is probably because the whole operation was kept within a very tight circle. From 2016 to 2018, VRP reported on its IRS Form 990s that it shared a downtown Washington, DC address with **Grassroots Solutions**, the for-profit Democratic consulting firm that sent the Everybody Votes campaign plan to Podesta’s allies at EMILY’s List in the first place. Since 2016, VRP’s IRS filings show it has paid Grassroots Solutions millions in consulting fees, a reminder that this scheme not only brings political victories for the Democratic Party but also personal profits for the schemers.

Between 2016 and 2020, VRP and its affiliates raked in more than enough money to cover the campaign’s \$100



Credit: Adam Schultz. License: <https://bit.ly/3NLc1Z6>.

## VRP's Donors: A Who's Who of Left-Leaning Megadonors

From 2016 to 2021 (the most recent year available), the Voter Registration Project (VRP); its sister groups (the Voter Registration Project Education Fund, a charity; and Register America, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, received a combined \$193 million in revenue, mostly from grants made by private foundations, charities, and unions.

In the world of left-leaning philanthropy, VRP's donors are A-list celebrities. Yet no one has meaningfully reported on VRP's activities, and VRP has never taken to the streets to boast of its accomplishments. In fact, as shown by the Mind the Gap memo, it took measures to remain secret. Perhaps this secrecy arose because VRP and its donors, aware of the partisan nature and dubious legality of the Everybody Votes campaign, wanted to keep VRP's activities out of public view. Or perhaps they didn't fear the law at all, but simply didn't want their electoral opponents to learn of their best weapon for winning elections.

**The Billionaire Club.** Much of the VRP's funding came from the private foundations of some of the Left's most well-known billionaire donors. For example, the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, the private foundation of Berkshire Hathaway billionaire Warren Buffett, contributed over \$5 million, while Foundation to Promote Open Society, endowed by George Soros, himself the largest personal contributor to the Democratic Party in the 2022 cycle, gave VRP \$10.4 million.

Other grants came from less well-known but still influential billionaires. Register America, the VRP's 501(c)(4) wing, received \$2 million from the Civic Participation Action Fund, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit financed by former billionaire Chuck Feeney. The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation—named for its deceased billionaire founder—was also a major VRP supporter, giving \$5 million from 2016 to 2020. The JPB Foundation, the foundation of billionaire Barbara Picower and her late husband—who made their fortune with the help of Bernie Madoff's notorious Ponzi scheme and were forced to return \$7.2 billion to Madoff's victims—also supported the VRP with a total of \$4 million in grants. Then there is the Skoll Foundation, the private foundation of Canadian tech billionaire Jeffrey Skoll that contributed \$1 million to the VRP in 2020. And as recently as 2022, the Democracy Fund, a grantmaking entity tied to eBay billionaire Pierre Omidyar, contributed \$500,000.

Hedge-fund manager C. Frederick Taylor, one of three secretive billionaires behind the Wellspring Philanthropic

*On November 24, 2015, John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, received an email from Stephanie Schriock, then-president of EMILY's List, a powerful Democrat-affiliated political action committee. "Is this the registration program you were hoping for? Can I push it?" Schriock asked.*

million price tag and distributed these funds to dozens of state-based voter registration groups *almost exclusively* in the eight states from the Everybody Votes campaign summary.

Other evidence exists that VRP is the Everybody Votes group to which the Mind the Gap memo refers. Multiple grants to VRP mention Mind the Gap's partisan memo in the grant description. For example, the David E. Reese Family Foundation, the private foundation of David Reese, gave VRP \$20,000 in 2019 for the "Mind the Gap Project for Voter Registration." The San Francisco Foundation also gave the Voter Registration Project Education Fund \$190,000 in 2020, "In support of Everybody Votes. For MTG-related voter registration work." Meanwhile, the Horizons Foundation gave the VRP and the Voter Participation Center \$10,000 each and listed the purpose outright as "Support for Mind the Gap." Each of these entities should face serious questions from the Internal Revenue Service—and its congressional overseers—about their apparently intentional misuse of tax-exempt funds for partisan election purposes.

So, the Voter Registration Project *is* the Everybody Votes campaign, enjoying life as a tax-exempt charity. Although the Everybody Votes campaign has been lightly reported on, VRP's existence, and its connection to the Everybody Votes campaign, have gone undiscovered.



*The JPB Foundation of billionaire Barbara Picower and her late husband, who made their fortune with the help of Bernie Madoff's notorious Ponzi scheme, supported the VRP with a total of \$4 million in grants.*

Fund, is the likely source of a large share of VRP funding as well. Taylor is managing partner of the related Wellspring Advisors, where VRP's former VRP president Jeff Malachowsky and current president Ilona Prucha both worked as senior staff. Taylor's well-documented efforts to remain anonymous could explain both VRP's secretive behavior and also the \$28 million in untraceable grants that VRP and its sister organizations have received via the Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund, a donor-advised fund provider that Taylor's Wellspring Philanthropic Fund has used to conceal more than \$400 million of its giving.

The VRP has received large grants from *other* donor-advised fund providers and philanthropic pass-through groups as well, a practice usually decried as "dark money" when conservatives engage in it. Since 2016, VRP and its affiliate groups have received a whopping \$25 million from the Proteus Fund, nearly \$13 million from the New Venture Fund, \$7.8 million from the Hopewell Fund, \$3.2 million from the Tides Foundation, \$890,000 from ImpactAssets, and \$500,000 from NEO Philanthropy. These are all major players in the Left's "dark money" game, well-known for obscuring the original sources of donations that end up in "grassroots" left-wing activist groups. The New Venture and Hopewell Funds, in particular, are major parts of a "dark money" empire managed by Arabella Advisors, a for-profit consulting firm in Washington, DC. Arabella Advisors' in-house charities and 501(c)(4) nonprofits took in \$1.7 billion in 2020 alone, leading *The Atlantic* to say, "Democrats have quietly pulled ahead of Republicans in untraceable political spending" and Arabella "helped make it happen."

From 2019 to 2020, VRP also received \$7 million from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, another donor-advised fund provider for numerous left-leaning tech billionaires, including Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg (who has given the community foundation more than \$1 billion). It is impossible to say whether it was Zuckerberg that gave to the VRP through the Silicon Valley Community Foundation accounts, or anyone else for that matter, because donor-advised funds (DAFs) do not publicly disclose from whose account a donation originated from. Another prolific DAF provider, the National Philanthropic Trust, has sent the VRP a further \$9.3 million in untraceable cash.

**Big Labor.** Big Labor, which overwhelmingly donates to the Democratic Party, is also involved in funding this partisan scheme. Register America, the VRP network's 501(c)(4) activist wing, received \$1.5 million from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), while VRP itself received \$250,000 from the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The SEIU gives Democrats about 99 percent of its political donations, as does AFSCME.

**Environmental Activists.** Not to be outdone, environmental activists also generously supported the VRP network. Since 2016, VRP has received roughly \$15 million from the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, making the group one of VRP's biggest supporters. NextGen Climate Action, a 501(c)(4) climate-change activism group funded by hedge-fund billionaire Tom Steyer, also contributed \$500,000 to VRP in 2016.

All told, our research identified \$154.4 million in giving to the VRP network from 2016 to 2021, which is 80 percent of the network's total revenues. Only \$5.1 million of this money came from unions or 501(c)(4) nonprofits, which means at least 77 percent of *all* funding for the VRP network in its first six years came from private foundations and charities. The remainder presumably came from Democrat



*NextGen Climate Action, a 501(c)(4) climate-change activism group funded by hedge-fund billionaire Tom Steyer, also contributed \$500,000 to VRP in 2016.*

Credit: Gage Skidmore. License: <https://bit.ly/44g8K4g>



megadonors not savvy enough to use tax-deductible means to donate—or whose lawyers were careful enough not to let them do so.

## What Does VRP Actually Do?

VRP pays for voter registration—lots of it.

After working undetected from 2016 to 2020, the VRP began to use the name Everybody Votes publicly. At some point in 2022, the group created its first website, on which they bragged about registering *5.1 million* people, a bit fewer than the 6 million originally called for by the Corridor Partners plan. Of those 5.1 million people, the VRP website notes that 76 percent were people of color, 56 percent were women, and 47 percent were under the age of 35.

To do all this registration, tax records show that VRP and its sister groups have distributed \$127 million in grants from 2016 through 2021 to more than 80 different state and national left-leaning activist organizing groups. These grants paid for an unprecedented scale of “nonpartisan” voter registration work, with roughly \$56 million paid out during 2020 alone.

From 2016 to 2019, VRP followed the Everybody Votes plan to the letter, paying for voter registration in just eight states: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, and Nevada. In 2020 and 2021 their grantmaking expanded somewhat to other battleground states, including Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, and to one New York group.

The largest portion of VRP funding went to State Voices, a national charity that oversees a network of state “civic engagement” tables, which bring together a state’s left-leaning activist groups and help them coordinate their get-out-the-vote efforts. From 2016 to 2021, VRP and its sister organizations reported granting more than \$24 million to the State Voices headquarters in Washington, DC.

The VRP network also gave sizable grants to several of State Voices’ state tables as well—all of them charities forbidden to help a political party win an election. Blueprint North Carolina—which has a history of partisan attacks on Republicans—received \$2 million. The Colorado Civic Engagement Table received \$403,000; Ohio Voice, \$89,114; and ProGeorgia, \$2.5 million. In 2020, State Voices organizations in non-target states received VRP grants as well, including \$1.1 million to Minnesota Voice, \$1 million to Pennsylvania Voice, and \$548,000 to Wisconsin Voices. According to the “State Voices 2020

Post-Election Report,” the group and its state tables helped register 2.1 million voters in 2020 alone. Much, if not all, of that work paid for by VRP.

Although the VRP network’s funding for State Voices dwarfs its other grantmaking, it also gave generously to many other charities. The Voter Participation Center—a charity named in the Mind the Gap Super PAC memo to donors—received roughly \$10.6 million of VRP funding, and the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, one of the VRP network’s biggest donors received just over \$11.2 million. In addition, the Mi Familia Vota Education Fund, the Fair Share Education Fund, One Arizona, the Ohio Organizing Collaborative, and the New Virginia Majority Education Fund each received several million in grants from the VRP network from 2016 to 2021.

## Partisan Consultants for a “Nonpartisan” Campaign

Making grants to nonprofits wasn’t the only way VRP funded voter registration. In 2020, perhaps because COVID-19 made it more difficult to find volunteers, the group’s payments for professional consulting fees increased nearly twentyfold. In 2019, the VRP network paid roughly \$1 million in consulting fees, but in 2020, the network paid for at least \$18 million in “Voter Registration Consulting” done by just their five highest paid consultants.

The highest paid voter registration consultant was Fieldworks LLC, which received \$6.4 million. Fieldworks, based in Washington, DC, is a Democratic consulting firm that specializes in running canvassing, voter registration, and get-out-the-vote operations. During 2020, the group was also paid millions by Tom Steyer’s presidential campaign, Somos PAC, and other left-leaning, Democrat-aligned PACs.

Other consultants the VRP network paid in 2020 included the Outreach Team (\$4.7 million), New Ground Strategies (\$3.8 million), GBI Strategies (\$2.5 million), and Campaign Industries LLC (\$1.3 million). Each is a prominent Democratic consulting firm that specializes in canvassing and get-out-the-vote work for the Democratic Party. For instance, the Outreach Team was paid over \$1 million in 2020 for canvassing by the Democratic National Committee (DNC), GBI Strategies was paid millions for canvassing and voter outreach by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and Campaign Industries LLC was paid roughly \$2 million by the DNC as well.



*In short, the firms that VRP paid for “nonpartisan” voter registration work are fiercely partisan operations.*

In short, the firms that VRP paid for “nonpartisan” voter registration work are fiercely partisan operations, and these firms’ coffers are where most of VRP’s own spending went in the critical election year of 2020. That year, VRP’s total spending was \$74.9 million, but most of that, \$45.6 million, was passed on to other groups. Of the remaining 29.3 million “charitable” dollars it kept for its own work, VRP spent about \$18.7 million, or 64 percent, on its top five vendors, who were all Democrat-aligned political firms.

## Sophisticated, Planned, and Partisan

Assembled here for the first time, the evidence shows that the Everybody Votes campaign was, and is, the largest and most partisan “charitable” voter registration effort in American history.

It was requested by Hillary Clinton’s campaign chairman, designed by Democratic consulting firms, funded with over \$190 million from some of the Democratic Party’s biggest supporters, and coordinated with some of the Left’s largest activist networks and for-profit Democratic Party consultants. Nothing about it was charitable or nonpartisan. Yet somehow, Americans are supposed to accept that it was all above board because the partisans involved used soft-sounding phrases like “civic participation” and “underrepresented” to describe their aims.

## Did the Scheme Work?

Did this uncharitable, racially charged scheme actually work?

On its new website, VRP reports that during its existence it has registered 5.1 million persons. The Corridor Report anticipated that 37 percent of registrants would vote, but Pew Research found that roughly two-thirds of eligible voters cast a ballot in 2020. Using those two percentages gives us a reasonable range of 1.7 million to 3.4 million actual 2020 votes produced by the Everybody Votes campaign’s registrations.

Then there’s the question of the Democratic/Republican split among those votes. The VRP says that the persons it registered were (in overlapping categories) 76 percent persons of color, 56 percent women, and 47 percent under 35 years of age. (The fact that they kept such careful count of these statistics is telling.) The 2020 presidential exit polls found that Democrats received nearly 60 percent of the votes among VRP’s youth age bracket, 57 percent of women’s votes, 65 percent of Latinos’ votes, and 87 percent of African-Americans’ votes. So it seems a reasonable range of Democratic votes among VRP’s registrants would be 60 percent to 80 percent.

Combining these two ranges for actual voters and for those voters’ Democratic/Republican split, it appears VRP provided Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden between 1 million and 2.7 million votes. Biden received 81 million votes, so the VRP gave him somewhere between 1.3 percent and 3.3 percent of all the votes he received nationwide.

But the Everybody Votes campaign was never interested in “everybody” in America, only in winning swing states. So the proper way to consider the 1 million to 2.7 million Biden votes it achieved is as a percentage of Biden’s votes in the states explicitly funded. In the 13 states where VRP made grants in 2016–2020, those Biden votes were 2.9 percent to 7.8 percent of his votes. And six of these states—with 79 electoral college votes—had Biden margins of victory under 2.9 percent—the lower limit of VRP’s likely percentage of Biden voters.

Another way to estimate VRP’s partisan success would be to look at expected new votes in the plan’s target states. If those state projections held true in 2020 and assuming the new voters only voted 60 percent for Democrats, VRP produced more Democratic votes than the party’s margin of victory in Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, and Pennsylvania. Indeed, the margins in Arizona and Georgia would be over *10 times* the Democrats’ presidential victory margin. Together these four battleground states delivered Biden 53 electoral college votes, far more than his victory margin of 36 electoral votes. That’s an impressive return on the megadonors’ political investment.



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*The Everybody Votes campaign was never interested in “everybody” in America, only in winning swing states.*

No doubt VRP has far more precise numbers on its voters. The IRS and Congress should request all of them.

## How Can This Weaponization of Charity Be Stopped?

Until 501(c)(3) groups—both “charities” and private foundations like the Open Society and Buffett foundations—are barred from funding or engaging in voter registration work, these groups will continue to use the “nonpartisan” voter registration loophole to skirt IRS and campaign finance laws, collude with partisan actors, and give billionaire donors a tax break for boosting their political cronies. Nothing less than that legal change will make a difference because IRS bureaucrats will never fairly police the current fuzzy legal rules, and too much money and too many votes are on the line for Democrats to voluntarily give up their “most cost-effective” method for “netting Democratic votes.”

As if to prove the point, the Everybody Votes campaign is gearing up for round two. Job listings for Everybody Votes have appeared on its website announcing the campaign’s next chapter. As one listing states:

Everybody Votes Campaign (EVC) is a national non-partisan, not-for-profit coordinated civic engagement campaign active through the 2024 election cycle. The campaign aims to create a more representative democracy by registering millions of underrepresented voters across the country. This effort focuses on voter registration in a targeted fashion by conducting at-scale, effective, efficient, metrics-driven registration work.

This “nonpartisan” language is the same kind used to justify the campaign when it first began. Staying true to their roots, the EVC has again picked eight target states for 2024: a listing for “Training Logistics Consultant” describes voter registration training to be held in Florida, Georgia, Michigan,

Nevada, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin. The gears of the Left’s 2020 vote machine are already fully in motion in preparation for 2024.

## Astounding Hypocrisy

When people on the left such as Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) attempt to paint conservative “dark money” as the dominant corrupting force in politics, remember VRP.

Not only does the Left enjoy far more dark money than their foes, a fact even the *New York Times* acknowledges, but right-leaning 501(c)(4) groups—the type of nonprofit traditionally called “dark money” and the type legally *allowed* to engage in election work—can only dream of achieving the kind of partisan election victories that hang on the trophy walls of the Left’s 501(c)(3) “charities” and foundations.

Meanwhile there is *no* conservative equivalent. At most, a handful of scattered conservative charities spend a fraction of their budget on voter registration or get-out-the-vote efforts, but they don’t attempt anything resembling the sophisticated, centrally controlled, nine-figure-funded, high-tech operations of the VRP network, nor do the largest conservative foundations fund such work. The “charitable” voter registration racket, unlike most types of money in politics, exists on only one side of the aisle.

If it ever receives serious public criticism, expect the Left to meet the challenge with shrieks of “vote suppression” loud enough to wake the dead. ■

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*Note: The unabridged version of this report, including appendices with data tables and full documentation, will be published online at [capitalresearch.org/publication/](https://capitalresearch.org/publication/).*

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

# BLM

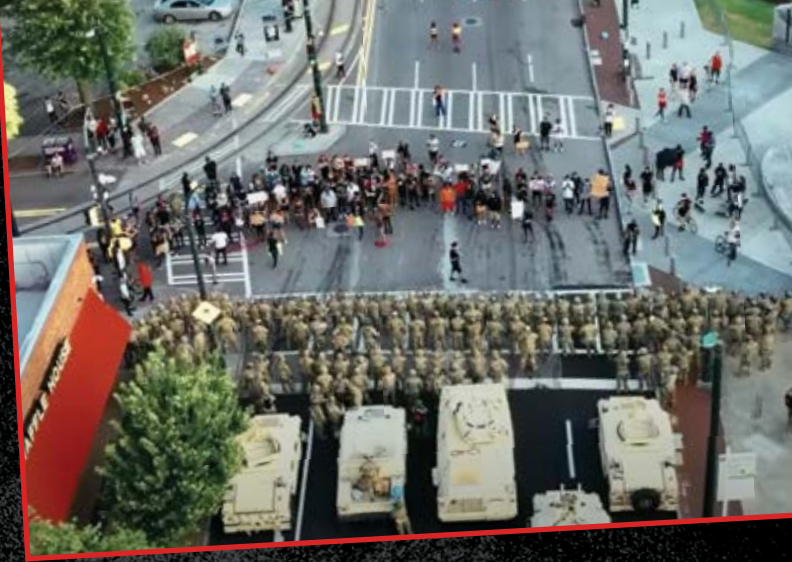
## AFTERMATH

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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## THE FIGHT FOR TRUE EDUCATION

By Kali Fontanilla

What is education? It is simply the process of teaching and developing knowledge and understanding in others. Education can come in many forms. It can be when a parent teaches a toddler to hold the parent's hand in a crowded parking lot for safety. Or when an employee watches training videos for their new job.

Yet what often comes to mind when we hear words like “education” and “educators”? I bet it is a classroom full of children with a teacher at the helm. We are most likely referencing our government-run K–12 public schools when discussing education. Sadly, public schools have become an increasing source of frustration and even despair for parents, students, and even teachers.

But there is still hope for education in America. Parents and teachers and their allies are fighting and increasing winning battles to break the teachers unions' monopoly on K–12 education, so that teachers can actually teach and students can learn.

### A Brief History

The concept of public education wasn't even considered on a wide scale until the 1830s, nearly 50 years after the founding of this country. Previously children were mainly taught at home, often as apprentices to their parents. A child's basic education was limited to their parent's knowledge. There were some church-supported schools, tuition schools set up by traveling school masters, and boarding schools for the



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*The concept of public education wasn't even considered on a wide scale until the 1830s. By the 1870s, 78 percent of children ages 5 to 14 were enrolled in public schools. (Photo 1920)*

wealthy, but for the most part, education was haphazard and certainly not controlled by our then-young government.

Then came Horace Mann, known as our country's father of public education. Mann, a Massachusetts legislator, advocated for creating public schools that would be universal, free of charge, and funded by the state. The goal was to teach the three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic, along with morals to instill civic virtues. Early public education proponents argued that having a unifying standard school-

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*Kali Fontanilla is a former public school teacher of 15 years. Her rebuttal statement to Proposition 16 in California helped to stop the push for legal reverse racism and a new extreme version of affirmative action in 2020. She is the co-founder of Exodus Institute, a K–12 online school with a nationally accredited program: [Thinkexodus.org](http://Thinkexodus.org).*

ing system would create a more literate nation with less poverty, crime, and other social problems.

By the 1870s, 78 percent of children ages 5 to 14 were enrolled in public schools. In recent decades enrollment has hovered around 90 percent until recently. In the three years since the pandemic, enrollment has shifted. Many parents no longer trust the public education system to teach their children the three Rs. Parents also have significant concerns about the morals (or lack thereof) taught in our public schools.

Many parents are reimagining what it means to educate their children and have begun thinking outside of the public education box. And when I say many, I am talking about upwards of 2 million parents. As of 2022, enrollment in public schools had dropped by 4 percent over the last two years, according to a new poll from *Education Next*, an academic journal on education policy. That 4 percent decline represents nearly 2 million students. Many of those parents are going back to the roots of pre-public education: homeschooling.

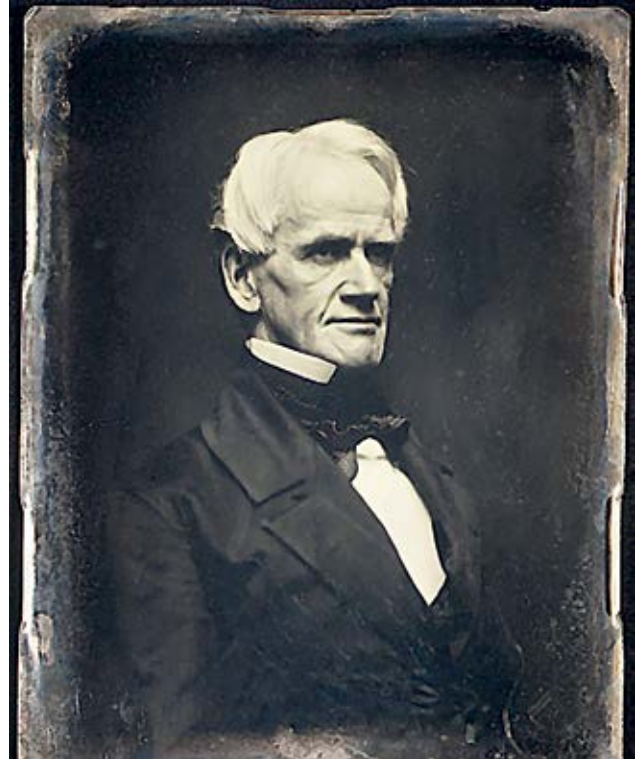
In 18 states, the number of homeschooling students increased by 63 percent in the 2020–2021 school year, with many parents looking at the online lessons being offered and deciding that they can do a better job themselves. Since the reopening of schools, that number has dropped slightly.

I spoke with homeschool parent and educational freedom advocate Michelle Huddleston. A mom of six, I asked her why she chose to homeschool her children:

We are not living in the same era as when we were in public school, and looking back on it, we also had our levels of indoctrination, but when you fast forward to today, the teachers are like night and day. Our teachers now, a lot of them, are more concerned about instilling their own personal beliefs and liberal ideologies. Even if this were not part of the curriculum, it would still be damaging to have their children sit under that for days and days, hours and hours, weeks and weeks.

On top of this, she explains how the ratio has flipped with the behavior types of children in the classroom:

Many of the kids are troubled children, and the teacher is distracted dealing with crazy behaviors. What are the students able to learn when the teacher has to deal with behavior problems all day?



Credit: Southworth & Hawes. License: <https://bit.ly/3qT0UVn>.

*Horace Mann, known as our country's father of public education, was a Massachusetts legislator who advocated for creating public schools that would be universal, free of charge, and funded by the state.*

I asked Michelle the greatest benefit her family has received from homeschooling:

The time that we have, we are blessed to be the dominant influence in our children's lives. We get to pick and choose what education looks like. We get to be there when our kids have their AHA learning moments. You don't realize what you take for granted until you have it. You can't take back those years. My mom, bless her heart—when I think about how much time I spent at school, the teachers got to see those amazing learning moments.”

After interviewing Michelle, I thought about all the parents who desire to have their children at home, pull them out of the public schools, and give them an education that aligns more with their values, but many feel stuck. They can't afford it. Both parents need to work, or they are single parents and have no other option but to put their children in public school.

## Academic Transparency

I want to give some hope to those parents. Despite major opposition from the two most prominent teachers' unions, education advocates are fighting for your kids in the public school classroom. At their urging, some states have enacted academic transparency laws.

I interviewed Joe Seyton from the Goldwater Institute about academic transparency laws:

We see academic transparency as about sunlight and empowering parents. Schools across the country are trying to push indoctrination on children. They're trying to teach them to hate America. They're trying to teach them lies about America's founding. And they're trying to do all of this in secret. They don't want parents to decide what's best for their children. They think that they can usurp the role of parents. Academic transparency puts power back in the hands of parents who know their children best. Academic transparency says that parents have the right to know what is being taught to their children in taxpayer-funded schools.

My message to parents is this: Fighting for academic transparency laws is the way to go if you want to take back your child's public education. These laws will cause curriculum writers to think twice about adding radical gender ideologies or critical-race-theory tenets to lessons. They will have to contend with the eyes of parents who now have open-book access to what is going on in the classroom. But these academic transparency laws aren't passed without fierce opposition.

"We've seen the teachers union apparatus, the public education bureaucrats, they don't want sunlight," Seyton explains.

They don't want parents to know what their children are learning. And the reason they don't wish to do that is that parents might voice outrage, and they might be upset. They might say I don't want my child to be learning about this. We've seen them claim that this is a concerted effort to hurt teachers. None of that is true.



*Academic transparency puts power back in the hands of parents who know their children best. —Joe Seyton*



License: Michelle Huddleston.

*I asked Michelle Huddleston, a mom of six and an educational freedom advocate, why she chose to homeschool her children.*

We know this because of the numerous laments of Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, America's second-largest teachers union. In a recent speech, she claimed that "attacks on public education are not new. The difference today is that attacks are intended to destroy." The attacks that she is referencing are the recent expansions of school choice in more than half of our states, academic transparency laws like those being written by the Goldwater Institute, and parents demanding that they should have the paramount choice in how their child is educated.

In fact, Randi Weingarten's speech on March 28, 2023, should testify to conservatives that there is hope for edu-

cation in that she is so fearful that she and her mostly left-leaning union members are losing their unfettered control of the classroom.

## School Choice

In her speech, she worryingly shares the rising statistics on school choice laws:

This year alone, 29 state legislatures are considering bills to either create or expand school voucher programs. This is on top of the 72 voucher and tax credit programs in 33 states already subsidizing private and homeschooling, costing billions every year.

The Goldwater Institute is a thorn in the teachers union side because they are behind the most sweeping school choice legislation in the nation, with the most recent school choice laws passed in Arizona with other states like Florida replicating their generous policies.

Our vision with academic transparency is that it works in tandem with school choice. We have been leading the nation on school choice. More than a decade ago, Goldwater Institute had the idea of education savings accounts. For every child that goes to a public school, money is getting spent on that

child's education. What if we took that money and you gave it to the parents and said look, you can do with this whatever you want in terms of educating your child the way that you think is best according to that child's needs? We expanded the states' school voucher program to every student in Arizona, more than a million students, and what is making it even better is that since we passed that law in Arizona, we have then gone and passed universal ESA's in 4 more states, Iowa, Utah, Arkansas, and Florida."

How does school choice work with academic transparency?

The end goal is that every parent knows exactly what their child will learn before deciding where they are going to send their child to school, and with school choice, they can make an informed decision about where they will educate their child. In essence, according to Seyton's logic, academic transparency laws will allow the parent to find the school that best fits their child and have the freedom and finances to enroll them in the school of their choice with school choice law.

## Signs of Hope

So now we have looked into homeschooling, academic transparency, and school choice laws being passed in red states to give some relief to parents who can't or don't want to homeschool. What about parents with children in blue states like California, where the prospects of school choice laws are bleak at best and where the California Teachers Association is a political powerhouse pushing its agendas into the schools? What hope can we offer to them in this fight?

In 2020, parents won a sweeping victory against the powerful teachers union. The union tried to capitalize on the heated emotion of the Black Lives Matter movement and the recent death of George Floyd by pushing a new law in California known as Prop 16. The ballot Proposition would have repealed Prop 209, when Californians voted in November of 1996 to amend the state constitution to prohibit state governmental institutions from considering race, sex, and ethnicity in the areas of public employment, public contracting, and public education. It was modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Prop 16 was trying to reverse all that. Yes, reverse the law modeled on the Civil Rights Act. Yes, allow for legal discrimination based on race, sex, and ethnicity.



Credit: Marc Nozell. License: <https://bit.ly/466z73D>.

*Randi Weingarten's latest speech testifies that there is hope for education in that she is so fearful that she and her mostly left-leaning union members are losing their unfettered control of the classroom.*





Credit: Ground Picture. License: Shutterstock.

*What often comes to mind when we hear words like “education” and “educators”? I bet it is a classroom full of children with a teacher at the helm.*

The California Teachers Association was one of the largest donors to the Yes side of the Prop 16 debate, with a contribution of 3 million dollars. “Voters have the historic opportunity to reinstate Affirmative Action in our state by voting Yes on Proposition 16,” their argument read. Their donation alone was nearly double the whole budget of the grassroots efforts of the No side of Prop 16, with a mere 1.7 million dollars vs. the total 23 million dollars given for the Yes campaign. “It’s David vs. Goliath,” said Wenyuan Wu, the executive director of Californians for Equal Rights, which was leading the No on Prop 16 fight.

The good news is that, despite the money, the power, and the emotional coercion, California voters rejected Prop 16 with a 57 percent no vote.

I was contacted to be one of the official rebuttal statements on the ballot guide for the no campaign. My statement read:

My father was a Jamaican immigrant, but I was raised in poverty by my single mother. My husband is Mexican/Puerto Rican: we are proudly multiracial. An honors multi-degreed University of California graduate, I tutored black students in Compton; now I help Latinos enter UC on MERIT (like I did), NOT quotas! Proposition 16, a giant step backward, would hurt the students we want to help. There is no need to lower standards! I love teaching, but Proposition 16 would totally disrupt K–12. Don’t divide us. Unite us. Vote NO!”

Imagine if Prop 16 and the teachers unions were successful! They would be able to legally discriminate in our public education system based on race, using excuses like “social justice” to pick and choose which races and individuals to favor and which to disfavor. Thankfully, that nightmare was blocked. So even in blue states, we see victories for education. Sinister agendas and left-leaning educational reforms can and are being stopped.

## Refusal to Deceive Parents

My last interview was with Jessica Tapia, a former California public school PE teacher recently fired for refusing to allow biological males in the girl’s bathroom and to hide pronoun changes from parents. Her story may seem like a bleak interview to end this article, but on the contrary, her story is one of hope, streams of support, and bravery.

She is a teacher that stood up to the push by school administrators, left-leaning human rights groups, and the teachers unions to keep parents in the dark about pronoun changes happening at school. “We can’t accommodate you for your religious beliefs and have decided to release you from your position,” were the words in the email she received from her district.

Students had reported her for Instagram posts about Pride onesies in Target, and those allegations ultimately led to her firing. Even though she was a union member, the union leaders left her alone. One union leader stated to her, “We know a lot of Christian teachers who make this work (the hiding of pronoun changes, etc.), just compartmentalize your beliefs for 8 hours that day.” The union leaders wanted Jessica to compromise on her religious beliefs and comply to the “gender-affirming” demands to keep her position. They certainly did not advocate for her rights in this fight.

As Tapia states, “The district and the union wanted to strip me of my religious beliefs that clash with their gender-affirming policies.” She explained that the union leaders wanted her to do a “three-way lie”:

Lying to students about who they were born to be, lying to parents if I had a student that came to me with confusion about their gender, and then lying to myself about what I believe to be good, right and true. All the union leaders did was sit with me in the meetings, and then when I was fired, they offered the union lawyer who literally said, ‘You might be better off at a Christian school.’”

Teachers like Jessica cannot rely on teachers unions to do the advocacy work paid for by her monthly union dues,



*Even though she was a union member, the union leaders left her alone.*

which is to be on her side. Instead, she was met with passive-aggressive guilt tripping to cave to her administrator’s demands. She chose to stand firm.

What gives me hope about her story is the amount of support she has received after her firing. The Pacific Justice Institute is representing her legal case at no cost to her; she has had several interviews with many different prominent conservatives to share her story, parents showed up at school board meetings to call for her reinstatement, and she has received thousands of dollars in donations so she can continue to provide for her family. Even though teachers are losing power over what they can and can’t do in their classrooms due to pressure from the radical left, there is still power in the people that will support them in their fight to stand up for their beliefs. Jessica Tapia’s story is one of bravery and victory.

## Hope for Education

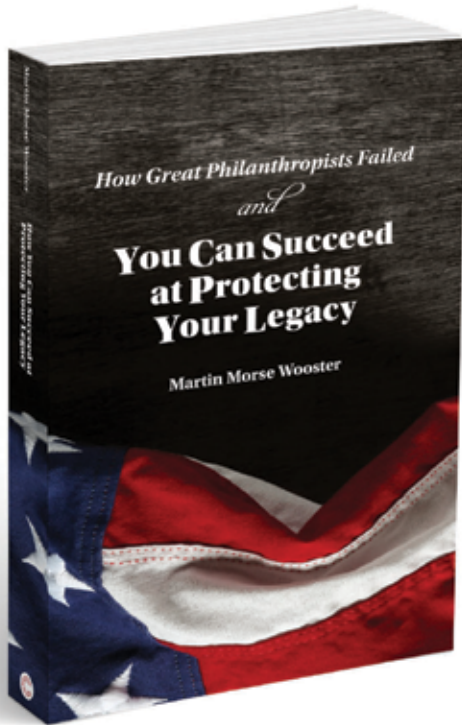
The fight for true education in America is not over; it has only just begun. There has been an awakening to the stranglehold the Left has had on the education of our nation’s children, and now it is time to reverse the damage that has been done. Our nation’s children are more depressed than ever, more illiterate than ever, and more out of shape than ever. If public education had a report card, the grade would be a D- on the verge of failure.

But there is still hope for education in America. Whether it is parents taking their child’s education into their own hands, nonprofits like the Goldwater Institute tirelessly fighting for academic transparency and school choice laws, or grassroots organizations like the Parents for Equal Rights defeating the well-funded Yes campaign to bring back legal discrimination in California. It’s also brave teachers like Jessica Tapia putting her tenured job at risk, then losing it because she would not comply with violating basic parental rights in the classroom. Instead, she is using her story to enact change and build an army behind her. Even the whining statements by the teacher-mafia leader, I mean union leader, Randi Weingarten is a sign of hope. My question to you is, what will you do to join this fight? ■

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

# Is Your Legacy Safe?

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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.

It is hard enough to give well when you're living. After you're gone, the odds of successful giving are stacked even higher against you. Entrepreneurial geniuses like Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Henry Ford were rarely tricked out of their money in business deals. But when they gave their money away, they failed to have their intentions respected.

This fascinating book covers the history of some of the biggest philanthropic mistakes and offers practical tips on how to protect your legacy. Everyone who wants to use their money to change the world needs to read this book.

**Find it on Amazon**



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# 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](http://www.ClimateDollars.org).



## THE GREATEST HEIST IN WORLD HISTORY: THE ART OF THE STEAL

By James Simpson

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**Summary:** *President Joe Biden has enlisted all federal agencies in pushing his climate agenda as a top priority. As a result, the United States will slowly abandon its vast conventional energy infrastructure. Energy costs will skyrocket, crippling the economy, and when government subsidies run out, the entire green energy infrastructure will collapse, just as it did under President Obama's Green Energy program. But this time there will be nothing to fall back upon because we will have left our carbon-based energy infrastructure fallow. Without reliable energy, our nation will be crippled.*

*While imposing this new, expensive, inefficient energy regime, the Left is opening the spigots of government spending once again to finance an unsustainable activity. To compete, companies are being forced to invest in the political market rather than their own markets and products. In essence, the Left is incentivizing corruption, luring private companies away from free market capitalism to crony socialism, and literally threatening the continued viability of our market economy, our standard of living, and perhaps even our survival.*

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In one of his first acts as president, President Joe Biden signed Executive Order 13990, which ordered all agencies to review any relevant regulation promulgated under President Donald Trump and rescinded those actions that enabled our nation to become energy independent for the first time since the 1970s. Following a lawsuit by many Republican-led states, a federal judge recently blocked implementation of Executive Order 13990.

But they have not relented. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro recently remarked that “I have made climate one of my top priorities since the first day I came into office.”

All federal agencies have been enlisted in pushing this agenda as a top priority. The end-of-the-world prediction by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) is now the basis for public policy, and the Biden administration has taken it to heart. The hilariously misnamed Inflation Reduction Act



Credit: U.S. Navy. Public domain.

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro recently remarked that “I have made climate one of my top priorities since the first day I came into office.”

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(IRA) and so-called infrastructure bill both include many elements of AOC's multi-trillion-dollar Green New Deal.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that Biden's IRA includes \$370 billion to transition the U.S. economy away from carbon-based energy. However, the CBO often wildly underestimates costs, as with its cost estimate for Obamacare. The actual cost of Biden's IRA will likely be closer to \$1.2 trillion, according to Goldman Sachs.

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

In any event, the IRA includes many tax credits for wind energy. The Renewable Energy Production Tax Credit, for example, provides a tax credit of 2.6 cents per kilowatt-hour (kwh) for 10 years. This significantly cuts the direct cost of wind energy to consumers, which still far exceeds the cost of traditional energy sources. A recent study by the Institute for Energy Research found that the cost per kwh for existing coal, natural gas, nuclear and hydroelectric plants was significantly less than the cost for new wind and solar plants: coal (\$0.041), gas (\$0.036), nuclear (\$0.033), hydroelectric (\$0.038), new wind (\$0.09), and new solar (\$0.089).

Offshore wind is extremely expensive. Constructing massive towers miles out to sea in deep water, with long cables to deliver electricity to the shore, requires a huge infrastructure investment. According to a Manhattan Institute report, the Energy Information Administration has estimated that the levelized cost of offshore wind (the lifetime cost when all investment factors are included), ranges from \$0.102 to \$0.155 per kwh, with an average of \$0.122 per kwh for wind farms operational in 2025. Supposedly costs will decline in the future, but the Manhattan report is skeptical that it will decline as much as forecast.

That skepticism is warranted. The massive turbines being planned are as high as 853 feet, with turbine blades longer than a football field. Construction of these behemoths at sea requires special ships, of which there are only 32 at present. And of that fleet, only 12 are big enough to install the newest (and tallest) generation of wind turbines. Rental costs for the smaller ships are \$180,000 per day, and purchase price is \$100 million or more. Claire Richer, director of federal affairs at American Clean Power Association, says, “It’s pretty insane.”

It is truly insane. According to the International Energy Agency, offshore wind currently provides 0.3 percent of world energy needs. That is expected to increase 15 times by 2040. In other words, for spending multiple trillions over decades to create an industry that would never, ever have even been contemplated without massive government subsidies, by 2040, offshore wind will contribute just 4.5 percent of energy needs!

Offshore wind turbines present hazards to shipping and aircraft, face threats from heavy weather, and incur astronomical maintenance and repair costs. Wind turbines may also have serious consequences for the environment. Wind turbines kill over 1 million birds per year according to the American Bird Conservancy, although others are quick to point out that cats and cell towers kill more. Grim comfort.

Fishermen along the East Coast are afraid these wind farms will destroy their way of life, calling it “a matter of survival.” They have partnered with industry associations and others to sue multiple federal agencies, which they claim authorized these wind farms illegally.

## Green Graft

Some environmental groups have also expressed concern that offshore wind farms and construction of windfarms are disrupting marine life and may be responsible for the unusual number of whales dying recently. Amid this growing concern, the Save Right Whales Coalition has produced a report detailing conflicts of interest in that offshore wind companies have made extensive payments to many environmental organizations. These include:

- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Net assets of \$385.7 million as of 2019. Accepted \$500,000 from Orsted Wind around 2018 and has supported offshore wind since.
- New England Aquarium Corporation. Net assets of \$55.4 million as of 2019. Received donations from three separate offshore wind companies—Vineyard Wind, Bay State Wind, and Equinor—between 2018 and 2020. Now supports offshore wind.
- Environmental League of Massachusetts. Net assets of \$1.5 million as of 2019. Received \$5,000–\$9,000 from Vineyard Wind in 2020. Has supported offshore wind since 2010.
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Net assets of \$243.5 million as of 2020. Has received \$100,000–\$499,999 from Avangrid Renewables and Apex Clean Energy in 2019 and 2020. Apex has promised to donate \$1,000 per megawatt of its commercial generating capacity. The foundation is silent on offshore wind.
- National Audubon Society. Net assets: \$585.2 million as of 2021. Has received monies indirectly from the Avangrid Foundation, associated with Avangrid Renewables, a large wind and solar firm. Audubon supports wind.
- The World Wildlife Fund. Net assets of \$375 million as of 2019. Received undisclosed donations from Orsted in 2019. WWF supports offshore wind.
- Other recipients include The Nature Conservancy, the Wetlands Institute, Blue Planet Strategies, Maryland Coastal Bays, Assateague Coastal Trust and others.



*Mainstream journalists are also being paid to promote wind and other “green” energy.*

U.S. Wind is building a major wind farm off the coast of Maryland. In late 2021, it announced “partnerships” with three Maryland organizations, to which it pledged \$250,000: \$100,000 to the Maryland Coastal Bays Program, \$100,000 to the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, and \$50,000 to the Assateague Coastal Trust Coast Kids program.

Mainstream journalists are also being paid to promote wind and other “green” energy. AP bragged that it had received \$8 million from philanthropists to hire over 20 “journalists” specifically to cover “climate” issues. Foundations donating this money included the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Quadrivium, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation.

Finally, some radical environmental groups have been supported by hostile foreign governments. The Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the League of Conservation Voters received a total of \$23 million indirectly from Russia to fight hydraulic fracking, according to a report by the Environmental Policy Alliance.

Fracking helped make America energy independent for the first time in decades under President Trump. The resulting decline in oil prices hurt the Russian economy, so this is one of the ways they fought back. The money was donated through the Sea Change Foundation, which received the \$23 million through Klein Ltd. Klein is a Bermuda-based shell corporation that acted as a passthrough for funds donated by Russian organizations.

The NRDC, which has strong influence on the Biden administration, also has direct ties to the Communist Chinese government. NRDC employees have worked in China since the 1990s, some directly for the Communist government, and Biden’s first Climate Czar, Gina McCarthy, was formerly NRDC president.



*(Photo of the climate strike and march in Pittsburgh on September 24, 2021.) Some radical environmental groups have been supported by hostile foreign governments.*

Credit: Mark Dixon. License: <https://bit.ly/3y4E7mc>

Another organization with ties to China is the Rocky Mountain Institute, which was behind Biden's proposal to ban gas stoves. Rocky Mountain received \$750,000 from the Biden administration to develop "charging corridors" for electric vehicles in California. This March, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA) called for investigation into foreign influences on U.S. environmental groups, now that the GOP holds the majority in the House.

With the trillions of dollars at stake for these energy companies and their political supporters, it is not surprising that they would enlist the help of environmental groups and attempt to buy off local communities, many of which are now starting to protest these massive, dubious projects? The point to all this is that so-called clean energy is neither clean nor marketable without substantial government subsidies, loan guarantees, and mandates. But the potential windfall to those who support it, including the companies that will temporarily make money (until the subsidies run out), is impossible to resist.

## Obama's Trial Run: The \$80 Billion Boondoggle

The Obama administration's \$80 billion green energy program was a small-scale trial run compared to the monies already enacted under the Biden administration, but it provided a window into the true motive. In his book, *Fake Invisible Catastrophes and Threats of Doom*, Patrick Moore writes:

You have heard the news on climate change that says human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide are going to make the world too hot for life. So now as you drive down the highway in your SUV, you are afraid that you are killing your grandchildren by doing so. As this makes you feel guilty and accountable, you vow to send a hefty donation to Greenpeace, or any of the other hundreds of "charities," selling you this narrative. It is a very effective strategy on their part, as stirring a combination of fear and guilt is the most powerful motivator to get people to open their wallets in an effort to help avoid this alleged disaster. And all this inevitable doom due to an invisible gas that is essential for life and even now is only 0.0415 percent of the atmosphere.

In his best-selling book *Throw Them All Out*, author Peter Schweizer compiled a partial list of Democrat financial supporters who donated a total of \$457,834 to either Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign or to the Democratic

Party. Companies run or invested in by these insiders subsequently received U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) grants and loans for \$11.3 billion—a payoff rate of 25,000 to 1.

Obama appointed former bundlers and campaign managers to run the DOE loan office. These people had solicited donations directly from individuals who later received loans. Sometimes those loan officers even arranged loans for their own companies. Obama mega-fundraiser Sanjay Wagle became the Obama administration's "renewable energy grants advisor." Wagle's company, VantagePoint Venture Partners, subsequently received federal loan guarantees. Table 1 lists fund recipients, their "green" projects, and their relationship to Obama and the Democrats. Their total take was almost \$19 billion.

Another Big Green winner in Obama's spending spree was Arvia Few, who promised to raise \$50,000–\$100,000 for his 2012 reelection campaign. Her husband, Jason Few, at the time was executive vice president at NRG Energy, which received a \$1.2 billion Energy Department loan to construct a solar farm in California.

Table 1 is incomplete. There are more loans and other politically-connected beneficiaries not mentioned here. The complete list would likely fill a book. What followed this \$80 billion boondoggle was 27 failures costing taxpayers at least \$8 billion. It spurred 1,900 investigations and about 600 convictions. And while the media has long since moved on, we have not seen the end of it yet.

Remember the "green jobs" Obama promised? Supposedly 125,000 people would be retrained for these jobs after losing their jobs in traditional energy businesses. Less than half, about 53,000, were actually trained, and only 8,000 got jobs. As Economist Steve Moore points out:

After more than \$100 billion spent on the first Green New Deal, by 2016 only about 1 percent American energy was coming from solar energy. Less than 2 percent of cars on the road were electric vehicles—even with the government offering thousands of dollars of cash rebates to buy the vehicles.

## How the Green Graft Works: One Example

The state of Maryland had a unique opportunity to fix Chesapeake Bay pollution in 2011—supposedly the big concern among Maryland's elite—but instead, it squandered the chance by focusing on pet ideological projects and/or wasteful boondoggles for then-Governor Martin O'Malley's political pals. The Chicago-based Exelon Corp. was plan-



**Table 1. Obama Supporters and Other Democrat Insiders**

Receiving DOE Grants and Loans			
Name	Democrat Connection	Loan/Grant Recipient	Amount (\$millions)
George Kaiser	Obama Bundler	Solyndra	\$573
Ted Turner	Major Obama donor	First Solar	\$4,700
Paul Tudor Jones	Obama Bundler	First Solar	
Michael Ahearn	Major donor & CEO	First Solar	
Bruce Heyman	Obama Campaign &	First Solar	
& David Heller	Goldman Sachs	Cogentrix	\$90
Heyman & Heller	>\$1 million donations	U.S. Geothermal	\$97
Ian Cummings	Obama Campaign/DNCC1	Leucadia Energy	\$3,460
Frank Clark & John Rogers	Obama Campaign Finance Committee David Axelrod consulted	Peco Energy Subsidiary of Exelon Energy	\$200
Louis Sussman	Obama fundraiser	Solar Trust	\$2,100
Elon Musk	Major Obama donor		\$465
Steve Westy	Obama fundraiser	Tesla	
Elon Musk	Major Obama donors	Solar City	\$275
Google executives			
Michael Froman	Obama WH/fundraiser	Solar Reserve	\$737
Pat Stryker	Major Obama donor	Abound Solar	\$400
Robert Gardiner & Angus King	Fmr Maine PBS chief Fmr Governor (D)	Record Hill Wind	\$102
Daniel Weis, Zeb Rice & George Soros	Obama Campaign Finance Committee	Powerspan	\$100
Bob Nelson	Obama Finance Committee	Sapphire Energy	\$135
Sanjay Wagle	Raised \$ millions for Obama	BrightSource	
Google executives	Major Obama donors	(Ivanpah Solar)	\$1,400
Joseph Kennedy Jr.	Kennedy family connection		
Jim Rogers	Major Democrat donor	Duke Energy	\$290
BP Oil Co.	\$71,000 to Obama campaign	Hydrogen Energy	\$308
David Shaw	Top Obama bundler		
CEO D.E. Shaw	Larry Summers consulted	First Wind	\$232
David Canning	Rahm Emanuel supporter		
Michael Polsky	Obama/DNC supporter	Vantage Wind	\$60
CEO Invenergy		Beech Ridge Wind	\$68
Eric Redman	Major DNC donor	Summit Energy	\$1,500
Laura Miller	Fmr. Dallas, TX Mayor	Summit Texas	
John Doerr	Major Democrat Donor	Fisker Automotive	\$529
Al Gore	On Doerr's board of Directors	Amrys Biotech,	\$24
Sen. Diane Feinstein	Democrat connections	Silver Spring Networks <sup>2</sup>	\$560
		MiaSole	102
Vinod Khosla	Obama campaign team	Coskata	\$250
	Democrat donor	Nordic Wind Power	\$16
		AltaRock	\$25
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$18,798</b>

<sup>1</sup> Democratic National Convention Committee

Source: Peter Schweizer, *Throw Them All Out*, Table 4.

<sup>2</sup> Silver Spring customers received these grants, not Silver Spring



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*My favorite was \$89–\$157 million for a new power plant fueled by chicken excrement.*

ning a merger with Maryland's Constellation Energy. Exelon owns the 100-year-old Conowingo Dam, which needs dredging. Every time a big storm comes along, the Dam spills massive amounts of sediment and nutrients into the bay, smothering the oyster beds, now almost nonexistent in the upper bay. The Conowingo is the greatest single source of Bay pollution, dwarfing all others.

To obtain approval for the merger, Exelon agreed to pay the state \$1 billion. No analysis of merger benefits or costs, just a big payoff. If O'Malley were truly interested in the environment, he would have demanded Exelon spent some of the \$1 billion cleaning up the Conowingo. But none, *zero*, was requested to address the sedimentation problem. Instead, O'Malley showered that \$1 billion on green projects that, just like Obama's program, guaranteed lots of green for the governor's friends, but saddled Marylanders with expensive, unsustainable, green energy.

My favorite was \$89–\$157 million for a new power plant fueled by chicken excrement. The idea was a favorite of O'Malley buddy and Attorney General Doug Gansler. As of 2021, when Gansler geared up for a second run for governor, he was still talking about it, but that's all it was; talk. What happened to the money?

Given that they agreed to this billion-dollar payment, Exelon wasn't interested in talking about dredging. Governor Larry Hogan suggested a \$250 million dredging project in 2015, with most of the cost absorbed by Exelon. They weren't buying. O'Malley missed a genuine opportunity to "Save the Bay" by using part of that \$1 billion he extorted to dredge. But he had better things to do with it.

About the same time, O'Malley's chief of staff and boyhood friend, Michael Enright, quit his job to take a position as managing director of Beowulf Energy, a firm looking to capture leasing rights for the offshore wind project being contemplated. Enright's move paid off almost immediately. In early 2011, Beowulf formed Maryland Solar, LLC, and won expedited approval for constructing a wind farm in two months, a process that usually takes two years.

By July, Maryland Solar had its license and leasing rights to build the state's then largest solar energy farm on 250 acres owned by the Maryland Correctional Institute (MCI)

near Hagerstown, Maryland. It was the only bidder for the lease, which is supposed to be a competitive process. The cost of this project was \$70 million and would power up to 2,700 homes, 0.1 percent of Maryland's 2.3 million residences. This \$70 million project would supplant current capacity, already adequate to handle new demand, so it was totally unnecessary.

Maryland Solar was to receive a \$24 million subsidy from the federal government. But here's the real kicker. The firm also secured a buyer for 100 percent of its electricity output once the facility was complete. FirstEnergy, a company that merged with Allegheny Power in February 2011, proudly announced its commitment to purchase all the output for 20 years and pay the state \$460,000 to lease the property for that period. FirstEnergy did this to fulfill "its renewable energy commitment pursuant to the negotiated settlement between FirstEnergy and the State as a condition of its merger with Allegheny Power."

Governor O'Malley secured commitments from FirstEnergy to do this as part of the merger agreement. Maryland Solar did not even have a website and when this story broke, Beowulf Energy's site said "coming soon."

FirstEnergy stated, "The agreement provides the Maryland Solar project the source of guaranteed revenue necessary to obtain financing for its construction." In other words, without Governor O'Malley's scheme forcing FirstEnergy to buy expensive solar power, the entire enterprise could never find anyone foolish enough to invest in it.

While the solar project bragged adding 125 temporary construction jobs in Maryland, long-term labor costs are low as inmates at MCI provide routine maintenance. U.S. taxpayers and Maryland citizens will be forced to cross-subsidize this boondoggle through higher taxes and electrical rates. Commenting on the fact that his friend put this whole deal together, O'Malley saw nothing wrong and merely commented, "Given the strides that this project will make to achieving our renewable energy portfolio, I only wish Mr. Enright had joined the private sector earlier rather than later."

It's amazing what you can do in the private sector when friends in government guarantee your success. Mr. Enright is no longer associated with the operation, very likely having cashed out early on. Maryland Solar is now Arevon.

Despite O'Malley's ambition to become known for green policies, he, his cronies, the state legislature, and the entire radical environmental movement they support seem to be much more concerned with the kind of green you can shove

in your pockets. His flagrant disregard for the existential threat posed by Conowingo sediment, and preoccupation with “green” energy boondoggles belie a stunning hypocrisy and systemic institutional corruption. The real-world consequences are further hemorrhaging of Maryland taxpayer dollars and continued environmental calamity that will delay if not doom the prospects for the Chesapeake Bay’s recovery. Today, solar and wind farms saturate the Maryland countryside, and county after county is battling further solar development:

Across Maryland, as clean energy advocates and the solar industry work to meet the state’s ambitious mandate of having at least 14.5 percent of the state’s energy produced by solar power by 2030, counties are battling what they see as an infringement of their longstanding control over land use and zoning.

As of December 2022, 197 companies were dealing with solar energy and 86 solar installations. Collectively, these installations provide a mere 4.85 percent of Maryland’s energy needs.

## Net Zero Is Unattainable

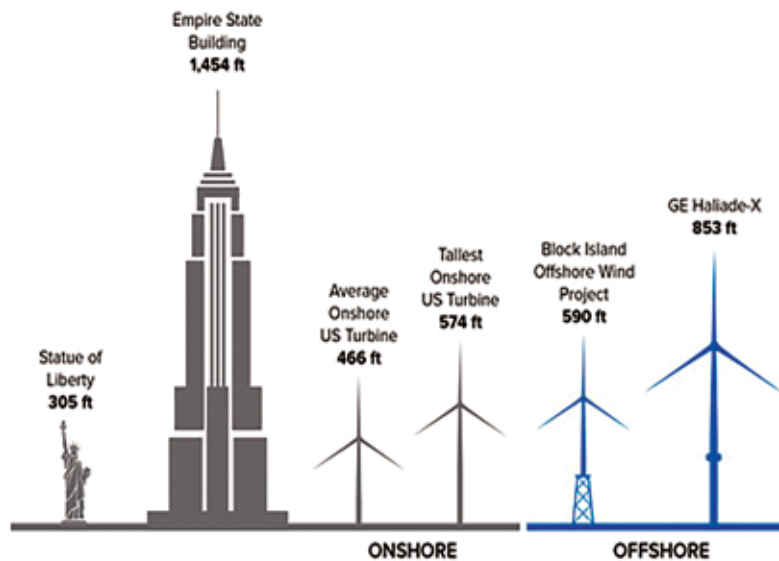
One of the Biden administration’s stated goals is to “deploy 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030 and achieve a net-zero carbon economy by 2050.” As already pointed out, this will only increase offshore wind’s contribution to 4.5 percent, and then only with massive government spending, loan guarantees, and mandates because *green energy, especially offshore wind, is not profitable.*

Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act has turbocharged the agenda, already well under way. But that is a drop in the bucket compared to a full implementation of the Green New Deal, estimated to cost between \$51 and \$93 trillion.

But could “net zero” be achieved, even with the spending envisioned by the Green New Deal? Non-carbon energy comes from four main sources: solar, wind, nuclear and hydroelectric. (There is also a modest amount of geothermal and hydrogen.) Existing hydroelectric dams in the U.S. are already being dismantled at an unprecedented rate, so constructing new ones will be unlikely. We are left with solar, wind and nuclear.



*The end-of-the-world prediction by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) (pictured on the left with Sen. Bernie Sanders (VT-I) in the middle) is now the basis for public policy, and the Biden administration has taken it to heart.*



Credit: New York State. License: <https://nys.gov/3XyqDSX>.

*The massive turbines being planned are as high as 853 feet, with turbine blades longer than a football field.*

Ignoring the fact that the Left will almost certainly oppose new nuclear plants, *it is literally not possible to construct enough “clean” energy plants, including nuclear, to achieve net zero by 2050 or even much further out.*

First, one must construct enough wind, solar and nuclear plants to replace all fossil fuel plants. Then one must construct enough to generate electricity for the switch to electric vehicles, ships, and aircraft. Finally, if carbon-based fuels like coal and oil cannot be used in industry, steel mills, for example, will need to rely entirely on electric power to replace blast furnaces, which usually use coal. It’s been compared to “using a toaster’s electric wires to melt steel ... instead of using a coal furnace.” Entirely new equipment will need to be invented to make this possible. Sweden has a pilot program using hydrogen in place of coal it hopes to bring to market by 2026, but it faces many hurdles, not least of which is cost.

To manage this change, total energy output will have to approximately double. According to analysis by Donn Dears, author of *Net Zero Carbon: the Climate Policy Destroying America*, to achieve net zero by 2050, the U.S. would need 995,141 new 2.5-megawatt (MW) wind turbines (35,551 units annually), 881 new nuclear plants (31 annually), and 3,918,996 MW of new solar production (139,954 MW annually).

For comparison, since 2000, the maximum annual construction of each kind of power plant is one nuclear plant, 5,680 2.5 MW wind turbines, and 21,500 MW of solar. This does

not include production of storage batteries, essential for wind and solar.

Another analysis conducted for Australia found that achieving net zero by 2050 in that nation alone would require:

- 354 new wind turbines installed every month, or *11.8 every day*, until 2050, at a cost of \$476 billion.
- 18,000 solar rooftop systems together with 67 solar farms installed every month at a total cost of \$326 billion.
- Carbon offsets for irreplaceable fossil fuel burning equipment: 17 billion trees/year, ultimately covering 50 percent of Australia’s arable land.
- A total cost of \$1.13 trillion.

This is insanity. So much so, that it is almost impossible to believe any policymaker would support it. But green speaks louder than reality for politicians, so-called “environmentalists,” and businesspeople.

The Geological Survey of Finland conducted an exhaustively detailed 1,000-page study of requirements to transition the U.S., European Union, and People’s Republic of China to net zero.

Included was an analysis of the number and weight of lithium batteries needed to replace diesel freight locomotives with electric motors. The analysis found that each locomotive would require a battery weighing 281.9 metric tons, and that battery could drive a standard freight load for 14.4 hours. It


estimated a total of 104,894 locomotives, with battery needs totaling 29.6 million metric tons (104,894 X 281.9 metric tons = 29.6 million metric tons) (32.6 million tons). Total global production of lithium in 2021 was 100,000 tons, and estimated global reserves are 22 million tons.

Lithium demand from electric vehicle (EV) cars, ships, or planes would dwarf requirements for locomotives. Table 2 below, reproduced from the Finnish study, estimates that

cars, trucks, busses, and motorcycles would need 282.6 million metric tons (311.5 million tons) of lithium-ion batteries (See Table 2).

Using data from the Finland Geological study, reproduced below as Table 3, let's look at the U.S. requirement alone for alternative energy production to meet net zero goals between 2023 and 2050. The world requirement is off the charts, and doesn't even account for essential growth in emerging econ-


**Table 2. Size of Required Electrical Vehicle Fleet for the Global System**

Vehicle Class 	Number of Self Propelled Vehicles in 2018 Global Fleet  (number)	Total km driven by class in 2018 Global Fleet  (km)	Electrical power to be generated, assuming a 10% loss in transmission between power station and charging point  (kWh)	Estimated Summed for Vehicle Class Battery Capacity to be Manufactured  (kWh)	Total Mass of Li-Ion batteries  (tonne)
Transit Bus + Refuse Truck + Paratransit Shuttle + Delivery Truck + School Bus	29,002,253	8.03E+11	1.60E+12	5.98E+09	25,988,541
Light Truck/Van + Light-Duty Vehicle	601,327,324	7.89E+12	2.99E+12	2.53E+10	110,181,094
Passenger Car	695,160,429	5.40E+12	1.55E+12	3.25E+10	141,450,035
Motorcycle	62,109,261	1.60E+11	2.65E+10	1.34E+09	4,968,741
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,387,599,267</b>	<b>1.43E+13</b>	<b>6.1584E+12</b>	<b>6.5188E+10</b>	<b>2.83E+08</b>

1.39 billion vehicles    14.25 trillion km travelled in 2018    6 158.4 TWh power generated to charge batteries    65.19 TWh of Batteries    Total Li-Ion battery mass 282.6 million tonnes

Source: Simon P. Michaux, *Assessment of the Extra Capacity Required of Alternative Energy Electrical Power Systems to Completely Replace Fossil Fuels*, Geological Survey of Finland, August 21, 2021, Table 26.4, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354067356\\_Assessment\\_of\\_the\\_Extra\\_Capacity\\_Required\\_of\\_Alternative\\_Energy\\_Electrical\\_Power\\_Systems\\_to\\_Completely\\_Replace\\_Fossil\\_Fuels](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354067356_Assessment_of_the_Extra_Capacity_Required_of_Alternative_Energy_Electrical_Power_Systems_to_Completely_Replace_Fossil_Fuels).

**Table 3. Number of Additional Non-Fossil Fuel Power Stations to Phase Out Fossil Fuels in the United States**

Power Generation System 	United States non-fossil fuel electricity production in 2018 (Appendix B & BP Statistics 2019)  (kWh)	2018 ratio percent of non-fossil fuel electrical power systems in United States  (%)	Expanded extra required annual capacity to phase out fossil fuels  (kWh)	Power Produced by a Single Average Plant in 2018  (kWh)	Estimated number of required additional new power plants of average size to phase out fossil fuels  (number)
Nuclear	8.50E+11	52.77%	4.36E+12	1.28E+10	341
Hydroelectric	2.89E+11	17.93%	1.48E+12	1.33E+09	1,118
Wind	2.78E+11	17.25%	1.43E+12	8.12E+07	17,549
Solar PV	9.71E+10	6.03%	4.99E+11	3.30E+07	15,088
Other Renewable	9.70E+10	6.02%	4.98E+11	7.70E+07	6,470

Source: Simon P. Michaux, *Assessment of the Extra Capacity Required of Alternative Energy Electrical Power Systems to Completely Replace Fossil Fuels*, Geological Survey of Finland, August 21, 2021, Table 26.12, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354067356\\_Assessment\\_of\\_the\\_Extra\\_Capacity\\_Required\\_of\\_Alternative\\_Energy\\_Electrical\\_Power\\_Systems\\_to\\_Completely\\_Replace\\_Fossil\\_Fuels](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354067356_Assessment_of_the_Extra_Capacity_Required_of_Alternative_Energy_Electrical_Power_Systems_to_Completely_Replace_Fossil_Fuels).

omies. Besides, we cannot control what the rest of the world does. China, for example, is pointedly ignoring the move to alternative fuels, although they are only too happy to be our primary source for lithium.

Thus, based on current average output and size of energy plants, to transition entirely away from fossil fuels, the U.S. would need to build **47** solar farms, **54** wind farms, **1** nuclear power plants, **3** hydroelectric dams, and **20** geothermal, tidal, or biowaste plants *per month until 2050*.

And this assumes the greens will allow nuclear and hydroelectric, which they will not. The absurdity of this agenda is beyond dispute. In the real world, as the Finnish study relates, “the incubation time for the construction of a new power plant can range between two to five years (or 20 years for a nuclear plant).”

Yet they are moving forward at breakneck speed. For example there are currently over 3,400 large ocean wind turbines being planned for the Atlantic coast. By imposing green energy, the global warming activists are forcing energy firms to invest in losing technologies, while abandoning existing successful, inexpensive, readily available, *and clean* sources. (Remember, CO<sub>2</sub> is not a pollutant.) The multiple billions of dollars already invested in cleaning up coal will be wasted as more and more coal plants go offline—unable to meet ever more restrictive greenhouse gas regulations.

Our vast conventional energy infrastructure will be slowly abandoned as companies driven by subsidies and mandates build more solar, wind, and other non-economical alternative energy facilities. Energy costs will skyrocket, crippling the economy, and when government subsidies run out, as they surely must, the entire green energy infrastructure will collapse, just as it did under President Obama’s Green Energy program. But there will be nothing to fall back upon because we have left our carbon-based energy infrastructure fallow. Without reliable energy, our nation will be crippled. *Our nation, indeed the world, requires abundant, cheap, reliable energy.*

By imposing this new, expensive, inefficient energy regime, the Left is forcing consumers to pay much higher utility bills while opening the spigots of government spending once again to finance an unsustainable activity. Furthermore, to compete, companies are forced to invest in the political market rather than their own markets and products. The Left is *incentivizing corruption*, luring private companies away from free market capitalism to crony socialism, and literally threatening the continued viability of our market economy, our standard of living, and perhaps even our survival. The global warming activists will destroy it all if we let them. ■

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



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## 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.



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