



GUN-FREE ZONES AND THE RISE OF SCHOOL SHOOTINGS: A FAILED EXPERIMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Save the Earthlings from Earth Day

By Ken Braun

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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Parker Thayer

Cover: Drug Free and Gun Free School Zone sign in Dallas, Texas, United States

Credit: Philip Lange. License: Shutterstock.

To understand the 2024 presidential election you must understand Arabella Advisors

Scott Walter, Author
Arabella: The Dark Money Network of Leftist Billionaires Secretly Transforming America

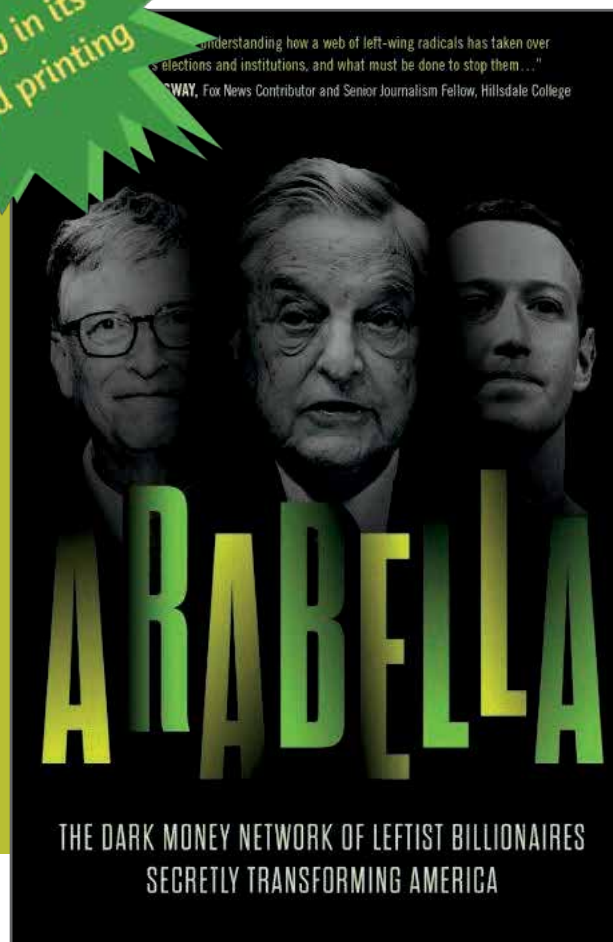


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2nd printing



Reviewed by Mollie Hemmingway
Fox News Contributor
Editor-in-Chief, The Federalist

“A handful of left-wing billionaires—including one who’s not even an American citizen—have so much power they can demand the Democratic party do their radical bidding. As a result, riots, crime, racial and sexual grievances, attacks on the Supreme Court, and open borders dominate our politics. In *Arabella*, Scott Walter presents a compelling, deeply researched book that rips the mask off the billion-dollar “dark money” operation subverting America. Scott Walter and the Capital Research Center are invaluable for understanding how a web of left-wing radicals has taken over America’s elections and institutions, and what must be done to stop them from destroying the country.”



What people are saying



Michael Lee
U.S. Senator (R-UT)

“This book is a crucial expose of the myriad ways these groups interplay with left-wing “dark money” to shape the political landscape. Essential for those seeking to understand power and money dynamics in modern politics.”



Tucker Carlson
Political Commentator,
Tucker Carlson Network

“Ever heard of Arabella Advisors? Probably not. And that’s strange, since they’ve done a lot to destroy the world you grew up in. You should know, so read this book.”

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SAVE THE EARTHLINGS FROM EARTH DAY

By Ken Braun

Every great cause begins as a movement, becomes a business, and eventually degenerates into a racket.

—Eric Hoffer,
The Temper of Our Time (1967)

The annual Earth Day will occur on April 22. Earth Day Network, the nonprofit that manages the event, has selected this as their theme: “OUR POWER, OUR PLANET, inviting everyone around the globe to unite behind renewable energy. . . .”

In the spring of 1970, the editors of *Ramparts*, a now-defunct New Left publication, predicted that the inaugural Earth Day would become “the first step in a con game that will do little more than abuse the environment even further.”

Earth Day Network has fulfilled the prophecy.

The photo of mountains posted above is used by multiple Bureau of Land Management websites to promote BLM’s programs for filling up public lands with so-called “renewable energy.” The picture accurately shows weather-dependent power systems must chew up far too much of what is decidedly not renewable: Earth’s landscapes.

Alternatively, a typical natural gas power plant needs just 0.2 acres to operate. That’s roughly the land needed for a modest suburban homesite, and it doesn’t need to sit in front of windy—and otherwise pretty—mountains. To get equivalent power from wind turbines requires 370 times as much land use, with—as shown in the photo—turbines towering 300 feet into the sky.

Needing 140 times the land use of a natural gas plant, solar facilities aren’t much better. Google up “Taihang mountains solar panels” to see multiple images of previously beautiful green hills in China now totally covered in black panels.



This photo of mountains is used by multiple Bureau of Land Management websites to promote BLM’s programs for filling up public lands with so-called “renewable energy.”

Credit: U.S. Bureau of Land Management. License: <https://bit.ly/3Esb4G5>.

The material progress of our species is directly tied to increasing our energy density. Using much less of the Earth to get a whole lot more power from it is how we advance. Humans nearly hunted whales to extinction so we could obtain tiny trickles of oil from them, and we once deforested vast hunks of wilderness just to create fire.

Switching to land-devouring wind and solar energy would be a giant leap backward.

Nuclear power, America’s largest source of carbon-free electricity, is a functionally miraculous alternative. To get the energy embedded in 17,000 cubic feet of natural gas or 120 gallons of oil requires a uranium pellet no larger than the end of a small adult’s thumb. A nuclear power plant is almost as gentle on land use as a natural gas power station, but is the most reliable source of power we have and one of the safest.

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



Trees, turtles, and elephants are creatures that are now conserved because we use plastic instead.

But don't attend Earth Day to hear this good news because the Earth Day Network hates nuclear power. In 2021 the nonprofit co-signed a letter sent to President Biden that made this request: "Phase out nuclear energy as an inherently dirty, dangerous and costly energy source."

Last year's Earth Day theme—"Planet vs Plastics"—also portrayed environmental progress as a problem. The Earth Day Network's website for the event proclaimed they were "unwavering in our commitment to end plastics for the sake of human and planetary health."

Trees, turtles, and elephants are just the start of a long list of creatures and resources that were once consumed with reckless abandon but are now conserved because we use plastic instead. Innumerable plastic health and safety devices save and prolong human lives every day. We waste less food, and pay less for it, because low-cost plastic keeps it fresh. Most household consumer products, from toothbrushes to televisions, are made with plastic.

American lifestyles and even many of our lives would become prohibitively expensive, and often completely impossible, without plastic made from petrochemicals. Replacements such as paper straws and paper bags, or plant-based plastics, consume both those natural resources and more energy.

Michael Shellenberger, founder and president of Environmental Progress and one of *Time* magazine's "heroes of the environment," has aptly noted that the best way for us to preserve our natural world is to use artificial plastic replacements.

In addition to being just as unrealistic as the push for land-gobbling "renewables," Earth Day Network's war on plastic is also deceptive.

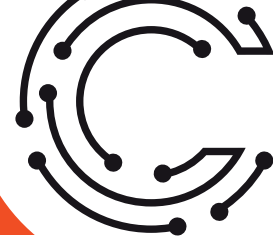
According to Our World in Data, "mismanaged plastic waste"—that which isn't landfilled, incinerated, or recycled—isn't a real problem for wealthy nations. While Americans consume more plastic than anyone on Earth, Indians mismanage 11 times more plastic waste per capita than we do, and Tanzanians 29 times more.

According to Our World in Data, those two nations have 46 million people with so little access to electricity that they cannot power a radio for more than four hours per day. Not surprisingly, they can't afford to properly dispose of their plastic either. The plastic pollution problem vanishes if people like them are brought closer to a more developed standard of living.

Some 90 percent of the fuel powering American prosperity comes from uranium, coal, natural gas and petroleum. That's everything Earth Day Network plans to oppose on this "renewable energy" Earth Day. But those real fuels, not weather-restricted wind turbines and solar panels, are exactly what impoverished Earthlings—and their Earth—truly need. ■

This article first appeared in RealClearEnergy on April 18, 2025.

Read previous articles from the Commentary series online at capitalresearch.org/category/commentary/.



HOUSING AND THE AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

By Robert Stilson

KEY POINTS

- The vast majority of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation's nearly \$2.3 billion in annual revenue comes from pharmacy operations that are subsidized through the federal 340B drug pricing program.
- In 2024, voters in California narrowly passed Proposition 34, which requires 340B program participants to spend at least 98 percent of their associated revenue on direct patient care.
- The AIDS Healthcare Foundation has become deeply (and controversially) involved in housing, including operating low-income multifamily housing units for the homeless and spending over \$100 million to bankroll three separate ballot measures to expand rent control in California.
- The AIDS Healthcare Foundation is one of a number of advocacy groups that view homelessness through a left-of-center ideological lens, which may limit the effectiveness of their efforts to address the issue.



Credit: Kirkam. License: Shutterstock.

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation is the self-described “largest provider of HIV/AIDS medical care in the world,” serving more than two million patients globally.

In 2024 voters in California narrowly approved a complex ballot initiative dealing with an obscure federal pharmaceutical program. As written, the measure appears applicable to only a single charity—the AIDS Healthcare Foundation—whose forays into low-income housing and (especially) associated public policy have become highly controversial within the state. The passage of what was known as Proposition 34 provides an opportunity to examine how federal funding and programs intersect with left-wing activism, against the broader backdrop of the country's ongoing homelessness crisis.

Pharmaceuticals and Propositions

California is well known for its struggles with homelessness. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimated that 187,084 people were homeless in 2024 in the state, two-thirds of whom were

considered unsheltered. That same year, the department awarded \$10 million to the Los Angeles-based AIDS Healthcare Foundation, alongside a partner group located in Massachusetts. The money was to be sub-awarded over a two-year period to “approximately 30 eligible tenant advocacy organizations...with the goal of building the capacity of tenants as active partners in the preservation of affordable rental housing for low-income residents.” These funds could be used for “training tenant organizers and technical assistance to tenant organizations, as well as legal services to establish and operate tenant organizations.”

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation is the self-described “largest provider of HIV/AIDS medical care in the world,” serving more than two million patients globally. But as the

Robert Stilson is a research specialist at CRC who runs several of CRC's specialized projects, including a series on federal grants and nonprofits.

federal funding indicates, it has recently become deeply involved in low-income housing and homelessness—two issues that it sees as inextricably linked. It may seem like a strange undertaking for a health care provider, but the AIDS Healthcare Foundation is no ordinary provider. For one, it is enormous, with total revenues in 2023 of nearly \$2.3 billion. Over 92 percent of this came from its extensive pharmacy operations. The foundation ended the year with just under \$1.15 billion in net assets.

These massive pharmaceutical revenues are largely a function of the foundation's extensive participation in the federal 340B Drug Pricing Program, which allows certain health care providers to purchase discounted medications directly from manufacturers,

charge insurance the full price when distributing the drugs to patients, and keep the difference to help fund their operations. A 2017 *New York Times* profile of the foundation and its “ex-Trotskyite” president Michael Weinstein described the 340B program as “a roundabout way of subsidizing health care for the poor,” but also observed that it “subsidizes [the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s] expansion and advocacy as well as the group’s political activities.” Reportedly, only about 70 percent of the foundation’s 340B program revenues are spent on direct care for patients.

Those “political activities” have conspicuously centered on housing, to such a degree that *Politico* recently characterized Weinstein as having “cast himself as an anti-MAGA progressive savior who can singlehandedly reshape the rental economy through the ballot box”—a reference to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s repeated efforts to expand rent control in California via state ballot measures. Weinstein believes that rent should be regulated like public utilities. According to Ballotpedia, the foundation spent over \$113 million total (in both cash and in-kind contributions) to bankroll three separate rent-control ballot measures in 2018, 2020, and 2024—none of which came close to passing. Indeed, each was rejected by a progressively larger margin of voters.

That is a tremendous amount of charitable resources to expend on an unpopular left-wing public policy initiative that even voters in one of the bluest states in the country clearly oppose. What’s more, the great irony—at least for a group that believes that homelessness is directly linked to a lack of affordable housing—is that rent control has consistently been found to depress housing supply. This supply/demand imbalance is in turn one of the chief drivers of high housing costs. In 2017, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation

virtually singlehandedly backed proposed Measure S, an unsuccessful city ballot initiative that would have restricted the construction of new high-density housing developments in Los Angeles, and it has filed lawsuits to block large residential buildings near its Hollywood headquarters.

Much of this could soon change dramatically. In a development that *Politico* termed Weinstein’s “nightmare scenario,” California voters narrowly passed Proposition 34 last year, which requires—under very specific circumstances—340B

Drug Pricing Program participants to spend at least 98 percent of their associated revenue on direct patient care. Failure to do so could risk the loss of state tax-exempt status and certain health care licenses. The proposition’s

conditions were such that the AIDS Healthcare Foundation is seemingly the only organization to which it will apply. If Proposition 34 survives legal challenges, it could ultimately prove to be “equivalent to [the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s] death warrant.”

Housing the Homeless?

Proposition 34 explicitly applies only to health care providers that spent at least \$100 million on anything other than direct patient care over a 10-year period and *also* operated multifamily housing units with at least 500 combined high-severity health and safety violations. This is an allusion to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s significant (and controversial) low-income housing operations. Through its Healthy Housing Foundation, it has purchased and converted at least 18 properties—generally former hotels—across five states (mostly in Los Angeles) into cheap, typically single-room occupancy housing for the homeless. Rent varies by property, but can range as low as \$400/mo.

Such conversions are known as “adaptive reuse,” which the foundation argues is “a much faster, much less expensive way of getting people off the streets” compared to new construction. There is certainly logic to this: a private room indoors—even a very rudimentary one—is a major improvement over a tent on the sidewalk. That said, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s approach has been criticized, most notably in a *Los Angeles Times* investigation from late 2023. That article detailed how the foundation had simultaneously “transformed itself into one of the nation’s most prolific funders of tenants’ rights campaigns and one of Skid Row’s biggest landlords.” It also revealed poor and even dangerous conditions at several of the charity’s properties.



The AIDS Healthcare Foundation had total revenues in 2023 of nearly \$2.3 billion.



Credit: lofti photography. License: Shutterstock.

California is well known for its struggles with homelessness. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimated that 187,084 people were homeless in 2024 in the state, two-thirds of whom were considered unsheltered.

According to the *Times*, even though many of its formerly-homeless tenants have “severe disabilities, drug addiction and mental health problems,” the AIDS Healthcare Foundation does not directly provide any support services—arguing that the costs of doing so would reduce the absolute number of people it could house. The problem is reportedly serious. As of late 2023, the *Times* wrote that at least 50 people had died in the foundation’s buildings, most commonly from drug use. Dozens have also been evicted, mostly for unpaid rent. The local news outlet Knock LA published an investigation that found there had been nearly 2,100 calls placed to 911 from five of the foundation’s buildings between October 2019 and December 2022—more than 12 per week on average. The overall picture painted is one of troubled and/or vulnerable residents living in an environment that is far from conducive to stability.

In response, the foundation has countered that its adaptive reuse approach and its policy of keeping resident eligibility requirements to “a drastic minimum” allows it to offer rooms at very low rents and provide basic housing to people who otherwise would be living on the streets. The foun-

dation calls its properties “the low hanging fruit to house people immediately” and criticizes what it views as “making the perfect the enemy of the good.” It called the *Times* article “profoundly unfair” and lamented that such investigations provide “fodder for the corporate real estate industry to fight our initiative for rent control.”

This reflects both the specific policy priorities and the broader ideological worldview from which the AIDS Healthcare Foundation approaches homelessness, and housing more generally. It operates an activist campaign called Housing is a Human Right, through which it pushes for what it calls “equitable housing legislation and policies.” This has prominently included rent control, but the foundation also supports restrictions on new higher-density housing developments in urban Los Angeles through maintaining extensive single-family zoning. For an excellent explanation of how both rent control and restrictive zoning drive up the cost of housing—and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation’s role in backing them—see James S. Burling’s 2024 book *Nowhere to Live: The Hidden Story of America’s Housing Crisis*.

Homelessness, according to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, is largely the product of greedy developers and corporate landlords who are forcing people onto the streets. Its Healthy Housing Foundation lists four reasons people become homeless: unemployment, lack of affordable housing, a personal financial or health crisis, and lack of a support network. No doubt these are all genuine factors, but they are also not exhaustive. The foundation does not mention substance abuse or mental illness, despite high rates of each among the homeless population broadly and (reportedly) at its own properties. Indeed, it dismisses their impact, claiming that while “politicians and the media often blame the worsening homelessness crisis on drug use and mental health issues,” the real reason is “unfair, inflated rents charged by predatory landlords.”

The Ideology of Homelessness

It is worth briefly discussing the “Housing First” approach to homelessness to which the AIDS Healthcare Foundation adheres. Long the predominant public policy framework,



Homelessness, according to the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, is largely the product of greedy developers and corporate landlords who are forcing people onto the streets.

Housing First emphasizes providing permanent housing immediately without any preconditions or requirements with respect to sobriety, mental health treatment, or other criteria. The idea is that stable housing must act as an essential precursor to everything else.

Some have questioned Housing First's effectiveness as a one-size-fits-all solution to homelessness at the societal level, as well as its ability to address the serious personal conditions that often precipitate and/or accompany homelessness. Christopher Rufo, in a 2020 report on Housing First, pointed to a University of California survey from 2019—which had important acknowledged limitations—finding, among other things, that roughly half of unsheltered homeless adults reported that physical health (46 percent), mental health (50 percent), or substance abuse (51 percent) problems had contributed to their loss of housing. “Any effort to reduce homelessness,” Rufo wrote, “must address addiction, mental illness, and social pathologies—not just physical housing, lack of which is frequently a reflection of deeper problems.” The Manhattan Institute's Stephen Eide has also written extensively on Housing First and its shortcomings.

It is also worth noting that some national advocacy groups—including those that prominently support Housing First—tend to situate homelessness (and what to do about it) within a broader left-wing public policy agenda, which can serve to politicize the issue in ways that are anathema to conservatives.

Consider the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Despite being characterized by the *New York Times* as a group “with bipartisan roots,” a cursory look at its website reveals stark ideological biases. The alliance believes that “homelessness is primarily the result of structural drivers,” blaming it in part on “systemic racism and discrimination of marginalized groups.” It contends that extensive “decommodification” of the housing sector is required—such as through rent control and social housing—to the point where homes are treated “as a basic right, not a commodity.” It also rather remarkably claims that climate change is a significant factor contributing to homelessness and argues that “climate justice” must be prioritized in any public policy solutions.

Major funders of the National Alliance to End Homelessness in recent years have included the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation (\$3.15 million from 2021 to 2023) and the Melville Charitable Trust (\$1.08 million from 2021 to 2023). Jeff Bezos is also listed as a \$500,000+ donor in the alliance's annual reports each year from 2020 through 2022.

There is also the National Coalition for the Homeless, which has the similar view that “the housing crisis is a symptom of structural inequity, based largely on institutionalized poverty



Credit: Michael Fleishman. License: <https://bit.ly/42L5rbE>.

America does indeed need more affordable housing—and a lot of it—particularly in the expensive coastal urban centers where homelessness is most acute. The question is how to get there?

and racism.” Accordingly, it believes that homelessness can only be addressed through “system-wide resources, policy change, and government funding for affordable housing programs.” It equivocates on the contributory impact of substance abuse, claiming that “the relationship between addiction and homelessness is complex and controversial” and only becomes clear in the context of attendant poverty.

Through their shared commitment to the Housing First approach and shared opposition to clearing homeless encampments, the National Coalition for the Homeless began partnering with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation in 2022. The coalition even announced that it would be opening its West Coast office at the foundation's headquarters in Los Angeles. The AIDS Healthcare Foundation is also a partner in the coalition's Bring America Home Now campaign, which declares that “homelessness is inextricably linked to systemic racism” and argues that the ultimate solution essentially lies in a drastic expansion of the government regulatory and welfare state apparatus.

The National Coalition for the Homeless has received significant funding from the Melville Charitable Trust (\$407,800 from 2021 to 2023) and the Network for Good (\$362,173 from 2021 to 2023). Other notable recent donors have included the National Football League Foundation (\$100,000 from 2023 to 2024), the Arabella Advisors-managed New Venture Fund (\$50,000 in 2023), and Arc of Justice (\$20,000 in 2022). Arc of Justice was formerly known as the Benjamin Fund and is the private foundation of Medea Benjamin, the radical-left co-founder of Code Pink.

Thoughts and Questions

Proposition 34 was a referendum on the AIDS Healthcare Foundation's activism. While the details of its implementation will play out over the coming months, the bottom line is this: Using vast proceeds from a federal drug program, the foundation spent over \$100 million in ostensibly charitable dollars to bankroll three futile (and distinctly political) ballot measures pushing rent control. California voters decided that they'd had enough, and that they'd prefer that health care charities focus on providing health care. For those concerned about the role the charitable sector currently plays in our politics, this is an entirely understandable and welcome outcome.

On top of that, there is a general economic consensus that rent control makes the very problem that the foundation says it is trying to solve even worse, especially in the long run. America does indeed need more affordable housing—and a lot of it—particularly in the expensive coastal urban centers where homelessness is most acute. The question is how to get there? Some on the left such as Weinstein and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation broadly see the answer in stricter government constraints: restrictions on rent, restrictions on new developments, etc. The real solution, of course, is to do exactly the opposite: remove these (and other) regulatory impediments so that the market is free to build according to housing demand.

Putting aside Proposition 34 and the public policy questions precipitating it, the foundation's vast spending on rent

control ballot measures also carries an opportunity cost. For instance, could that money have helped fund needed social services for the residents of its low-income housing projects? Homelessness is a complex issue with multiple contributing causes, and the charitable sector certainly *should* be trying to find innovative and effective ways to house the unhoused—especially when the local government's efforts are an unaccountable disaster. This is the very purpose of civil society. That said, mental illness and substance abuse are the dual elephants in the room. Any approach to homelessness (whether under the Housing First banner or otherwise) that does not incorporate service interventions for those who need them would seem to be setting itself—and more importantly, the people it is trying to help—up for failure.

The rhetoric of some prominent national homelessness advocacy groups tends to speak of the issue as a systemic societal harm inflicted upon the unhoused, generally with private-sector capitalism as the chief villain. This is consistent with the worldview of a left-progressive activist, but it minimizes the individual personal struggles that are (by all indications) significant contributing factors to the very problem these groups are trying to solve. Acknowledging this disconnect is not about assigning blame or “stigma” for someone's homelessness, it's about understanding the best way to help. ■

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Rejecting hijacking of K-12 education by the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers.

CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER SENIOR FELLOW

KALI FONTANILLA

Serving as CRC's Senior Fellow for Education, Kali Fontanilla focuses on topics related to K-12 public education and teachers unions. With 15 years of experience as a credentialed educator working in public and Christian schools, she brings hands-on classroom and teachers' union experience. She authored a guide to counter Critical Race Theory in the classroom and is the founder of the Exodus Institute, a fully accredited K-12 grade online school seeking to redefine education by joining technology with traditional values. She has been featured in newspapers across the country including the Washington Post, Epoch Times, Associated Press, and the Boston Globe.





GUN-FREE ZONES AND THE RISE OF SCHOOL SHOOTINGS: A FAILED EXPERIMENT

By Kali Fontanilla

KEY POINTS

- School shooting training for teachers is now intense, costly, and even traumatizing.
- Gun-free zones invite attacks, while stricter gun laws punish law-abiding citizens, not criminals.
- Gun control nonprofits rake in millions while pushing ineffective, rights-stripping policies.
- The real crisis is youth mental health, not guns, and it's being dangerously ignored.

We were told to attend the full-day training in tennis shoes and comfortable clothes, ready to move. What was once a 30-minute training video we could watch on our own time had now turned into a full-day event. The training? A school shooting survival course for teachers.

In The session was led by a company called ALICE—Alert. Lockdown. Inform. Counter. Evacuate. With training costs averaging \$330 per participant in a school with over 50 teachers meant the district was spending a significant sum for just one day. On top of that, teachers were paid a per diem to attend the mandatory weekend training, making the bill for this training even higher.

Throughout the long day, we were taught how to barricade doors with desks and chairs, evacuate through windows, and run in a weave pattern to make ourselves more challenging targets. We practiced countering an attacker by throwing textbooks and other objects. Then came the simulation, a staged school shooting where instructors armed with fake guns tried to breach our classrooms. Our only defense? Soft foam balls meant to simulate throwing objects at an active shooter. Afterward, we gathered for a debrief. I will never forget one teacher admitting that she was traumatized by the experience and would never want to go through it again.

When I started teaching in the mid-2000s, school shooting training was just a 30-minute passive video. Now, it has evolved into an expensive, full-day, high-intensity, and sometimes traumatizing experience. This reflects the reality of the times we live in, when school shootings are no longer rare, once-in-a-lifetime tragedies but annual occurrences.



Credit: Christian Ouellet. License: Shutterstock.

In 1990, the Gun-Free School Zones Act was passed, making it illegal for anyone other than law enforcement to carry a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school.

But it also reflects the absurdity of one-sided political views in our schools, trumping common sense. I mean, throw textbooks? Seriously?

With each new school shooting comes renewed calls for strict gun control, especially the banning of assault rifles. The reaction from the Left is the exact opposite of what should be done to remedy the problem, almost as if their proposals are purposefully wrong. Disarm the good guys by stripping law-abiding citizens of their self-defense, remove armed school resource officers from schools, declare more

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.



Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, violence in schools was extremely rare.

and more spaces in society as “gun-free” zones (read: soft targets), and even attempt to bankrupt gun manufacturers. Furthermore, gun control nonprofits seize on these tragedies to push anti-gun legislation and fundraising efforts, forcing law-abiding gun owners to fight to protect their Second Amendment rights. It’s a firestorm of emotion, fear, and reactionary policies.

But let’s take a step back. Instead of just reacting, we need to examine the history of school shootings, the rise of gun control nonprofits, the current state of mental health in this country, and what’s really happening in our schools when it comes to guns, school shooters, and the protection of our children. We must have this conversation, but it needs to be based on facts, not just fear.

Early School Shootings: A Rare Occurrence

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, violence in schools was extremely rare. Firearms were a common part of American life and even schools. Students often brought rifles to school for hunting or marksmanship training. Schools had shooting clubs, and even as recently as the mid-20th century, programs like the Civilian Marksmanship Program encouraged safe and responsible gun use among students.

Despite widespread firearm access, shootings in schools were almost unheard of—especially mass shootings. In fact, they were so rare that data on all school shootings wasn’t officially recorded until the mid-1960s. The first official year recorded data was 1966, with nine school shooting incidents recorded, then dropping to five in 1969. *Contrast that with 349 incidents in 2023.*

This relaxed attitude around firearms on school campuses, even being handled by minors, continued for most of the 20th century. Schools were the opposite of gun-free zones, and the culture surrounding firearms was dramatically different. Students participated in shooting sports, and many schools had rifle teams. Guns were seen as tools for hunting and self-defense rather than as instruments of violence. Millennials like myself hear tales from baby boomers that sound like they are from another country—rifles in the backs of pickup trucks driven by teens into school parking lots. Safe to say, it was a much different time.

Then came the mass shooting in 1966, which suddenly put school mass shootings into the national spotlight. Charles Whitman, a former Marine, climbed the University of Texas Tower and opened fire, killing 16 people and wounding over 30 others. However, it was not yet an indication of a new trend. This isolated incident was shocking and rare for its time, with many blaming Whitman’s severe, untreated mental illness. Nevertheless, the nation got its first experience with a high-media-coverage school shooting, an evil that would plague the country in decades to come.

Gun Control and the Rise of Mass School Shootings

The late 20th century saw a shift in both gun laws and cultural attitudes. In 1990, the Gun-Free School Zones Act (GFSZA) was passed, making it illegal for anyone other than law enforcement to carry a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school. This act alone showed how far we had come as a country, long removed from the days of high school rifle clubs. It was already a different America, one that previous generations probably would not have accepted. This law, signed by President George H.W. Bush, created what many Second Amendment advocates call “soft targets”—places where law-abiding citizens were disarmed while criminals faced little resistance. Prior to this legislation, school shootings remained rare. However, after the enactment of gun-free school zones, mass school shootings began to rise significantly. Coincidence?

The Columbine High School massacre in 1999 marked a major turning point. Two students, armed with illegally obtained firearms and homemade explosives, killed 13 people and wounded over 20 others before taking their own lives. Despite existing gun control laws, the attackers had no trouble acquiring weapons. I remember this tragic event as a junior in high school. Suddenly, the idea of a disgruntled classmate coming and shooting up the classroom became all the more real, and many of us were paying more attention to the loner teen boys who liked to wear combat boots and long trench coats, with some of those same teens being bullied because they resembled the school shooters in the eerie videos recorded that day.

The 21st Century: Gun-Free Zones and Continued Failures

Sadly, Columbine proved to be like a model for deranged individuals to follow. The Virginia Tech shooting in 2007, the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012, and the Parkland shooting in 2018 all followed the same pattern: an armed individual entered a gun-free zone and carried out an attack with little to no resistance. In many of these cases, warning signs were ignored, law enforcement failed to intervene quickly, and schools had little to no adequate security measures in place.

At Parkland, for example, multiple reports had been made about the shooter's dangerous behavior, yet the school and law enforcement failed to act. Instead of addressing these failures, the response was to push for an "assault weapons" ban, even though semi-automatic rifles are used in a minority of mass shootings—78 percent of mass shootings since 1982 were done with handguns.

Gun control measures like red flag laws and universal background checks are frequently proposed after these events, even though many school shooters obtain their weapons illegally or steal them. Restrictions placed on law-abiding gun owners do nothing to stop criminals who already disregard the law. Maybe we should outlaw murder next? That'll stop them, right? Obviously, I'm being sarcastic, but the point is that criminals don't care what the law is, so making more and more guns illegal will only affect law-abiding citizens who need to defend themselves. We need the good guys who stop a school shooting before it happens. At the end of the day, these new gun control measures have not solved the problem, and the shootings have continued.

So what happened? How did America go from a place where school shootings were extremely rare to the point of not recording them as a separate category of crime statistics to a trend nearing epidemic levels? Michael Moore famously tried to tackle these questions in his 2002 documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, where he postulated that teenage violence was a reflection of U.S. foreign policy. He noted that a major employer in Littleton, Colorado, where the infamous Columbine shooting occurred, was Lockheed Martin, the weapons manufacturer, and tried to draw a link between the two. The problem with this thesis is that U.S. foreign policy hadn't changed all that dramatically from the 1960s or even earlier, when school shootings were rare, to the late 1990s when the Columbine shooting took place. Why didn't two world wars in previous decades lead to mass school shootings? Why didn't the Vietnam War cause school shootings? This argument falls apart pretty quickly.



Credit: fizzerintle. License: Shutterstock.

Everytown has been criticized for using impressionable high school students to push their political agenda.

Moore does get one thing right, however—Canada has plenty of guns and yet does not have the same issues with violence as America does. The issue, clearly, is not guns. And yet, that seems to be the main target of gun control groups since Columbine.

The Largest Gun Control Groups in America

We constantly hear the phrase "commonsense gun reform" from gun control organizations and the media that amplifies their arguments, which seems reasonable. Still, when you look more deeply into their agenda, it becomes clear that these groups are not about safety—they're about control. Who's behind these nonprofits? Who funds them? What is their agenda?

Let's start with Everytown for Gun Safety—the country's biggest and most well-funded gun control group, thanks to billionaire Michael Bloomberg. This organization has absorbed smaller groups including Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action, giving it a massive grassroots and media footprint. But what they label as "gun safety" is a push for sweeping restrictions on the rights of responsible gun owners. They exploit emotional tragedies to promote red flag laws that violate due process, universal background checks that inch dangerously close to a national gun registry, and bans on commonly owned firearms like the AR-15. Everytown has been criticized for using impressionable high

school students to push their political agenda, playing loose with facts and figures related to gun control, and funneling money to Democrats. Their messaging might sound compassionate on the surface. Still, the actions of the group don't reflect an organization that is actually trying to solve the problem of gun violence but one that is bent on amassing power in the hands of the government and disarming citizens while taking out political rivals.

Next is the Brady Campaign, with deep roots in the gun control movement; the group bills itself as the "nation's oldest gun violence prevention group." Named after Jim Brady, who was injured during the 1981 assassination attempt on President Reagan, this organization was instrumental in passing the 1993 Brady Bill, which led to the current federal background check system. These days, Brady continues to push for policies that weigh down law-abiding gun owners while doing little to stop actual crime. They back waiting periods and more purchase restrictions despite limited evidence that these policies reduce crime and real potential that they can hinder individuals from protecting themselves and have even made it a mission to sue gun manufacturers. This is a backdoor attempt to cripple the firearms industry entirely—not a genuine strategy to reduce violence. Again, the goal seems to be disarming the American public.

Then there's Giffords, founded by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) after surviving a horrific shooting in 2011. Her story is tragic and powerful, but the policy proposals coming from her organization go far beyond reasonable. Giffords pushes for unconstitutional semi-automatic firearm bans, ridiculously strict magazine capacity limits, and complex licensing requirements that disproportionately affect the very people who rely on firearms for self-defense—especially women, minorities, and those living in unsafe areas.

Sandy Hook Promise is another well-known group started by parents who lost children in the heartbreaking 2012 school shooting. Their mission focuses on mental health programs and early intervention in schools, something I support in theory. But alongside those efforts, they also back federal legislation that further restricts gun ownership and aligns with the broader gun control movement, focusing on gun ammunition restrictions like magazine size. While their story pulls at the heartstrings, their political activism pushes policies that penalize responsible gun owners.



The Brady Campaign pushes for policies that weigh down law-abiding gun owners while doing little to stop actual crime.

What do these four organizations have in common other than raising a lot of money? They claim to stand for safety yet consistently promote laws that strip rights from law-abiding citizens who want to protect themselves, the

very people who follow the rules and help keep this country safe. They target the tool instead of addressing the root problems. They push policies that empower government overreach and disarm citizens who just want to protect their families. In doing so, they pose a growing threat to liberty and personal security in this country.

A Mental Health Crisis

If we're serious about reducing violence, the focus needs to shift. We must look at mental health, enforce the laws already in the books, and hold criminals accountable. Disarming the law-abiding public will never be the solution, and the more we allow these organizations to shape the narrative, the more we risk losing the freedoms that make this country different from the rest.

The real crisis driving the rise in school shootings isn't the presence of firearms, it's the dramatic decline in youth mental health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rates of persistent sadness and hopelessness among teens hit 42 percent in 2021, the highest level ever recorded. Suicidal thoughts and behaviors have also surged, with nearly one in five high school students seriously considering suicide. At the same time, school shootings have increased, suggesting a correlation that points more to emotional instability than firearm access, which has always been prevalent in America. Social media addiction, broken families, fatherlessness, overmedication, and isolation all play significant roles in the growing mental health epidemic among young people. Blaming guns ignores the deeper issue: a generation in crisis, emotionally unwell, and often untreated. Until the mental health crisis is addressed, no amount of gun control will stop the violence.

Solutions?

In August 2017, my former district, the Salinas Union High School District board unanimously voted against implementing a school resource officer (SRO) program in



Credit: Lance Cpl. Annuaun L. Jefferson. Public domain.

(Pictured, Michelle E. Quick-Reyes, school resource officer, Quantico Middle/High School) Schools that have adopted stronger security measures, including armed staff or resource officers, have been able to stop attacks before they escalate.

partnership with the Salinas Police Department. As a former teacher in the district, I found this decision deeply disappointing. The proposal, which aimed to station officers on campuses, was rejected due to concerns over the district's lack of input and the perceived control granted to the police department. In my experience, having trained police officers on site significantly enhances school safety. SROs provide immediate responses to emergencies and build relationships with students, fostering trust and proactively addressing potential issues. Removing these officers leaves schools more vulnerable, as no security cameras or hallway monitors can replace the presence of an armed and trained professional. Prioritizing political considerations over the safety of students and staff is a misguided approach that compromises the well-being of our school communities.

The evidence overwhelmingly shows that gun-free zones do not protect students. Shooters deliberately target places where they know they will not face immediate armed resistance. Meanwhile, schools that have adopted stronger security measures, including armed staff or resource officers, have been able to stop attacks before they escalate. In 2013, an SRO at Arapahoe High School in Colorado stopped a shooter within 80 seconds, preventing a potential mass casualty event. In 2021, a school staff member at a Tennessee high school neutralized an armed attacker before police even arrived. The lesson is clear: The presence of good guys with guns saves lives.

Rather than banning firearms, schools should be allowed to implement armed defense measures and adopt security policies similar to those used to protect politicians and government buildings, such as having an armed resource officer on campus as a first responder. If we can defend banks, courthouses, and celebrities with armed security, why not our children? Regardless of my views on how schools should protect themselves, I hope we can all agree that throwing textbooks and desk barricades is not enough.

I'm not claiming to have all the answers to this decades-old debate. But I do know what is not going to fix this problem, and that is precisely what left-wing nonprofits and the media are pushing: more and more gun control. Yet taking guns away from law-abiding American citizens will not prevent crime and violence by criminals any more than the new UK ban on ninja swords will seriously address the increase in murders involving sharp instruments in the UK. What's next? Banning kitchen knives? Rocks?

Again, you don't need to have all the answers to see the obvious. America had plenty of guns and virtually no school shootings a few decades ago. The question should be: How do we go back to the positive elements of that society—a healthy society in which the population, including teenagers, was moral enough to have guns without worry? ■

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REPUBLICANS AND BIG LABOR, A FAILED COURTSHIP

By Michael Watson

KEY POINTS

- There is nothing new about Republican politicians trying to court labor bosses.
- Before the second Trump administration, the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford administrations all appointed Big Labor supporters as labor secretaries.
- Those efforts did not fundamentally change Big Labor's leftist political outlook.
- Rather than appealing to union bosses, conservative policymakers should follow the Taft-Hartley consensus approach that empowers individual workers.

The appointment of Lori Chavez-DeRemer, the former Republican congresswoman from Oregon, as labor secretary came with one principal qualification for the job: the endorsement of Teamsters Union boss Sean O'Brien (and the tacit backing of other labor union bosses including Randi Weingarten). Groups like American Compass—which, it must be remembered, is extensively funded by the very liberal Hewlett Foundation—praise her nomination and other actions like attempts by Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) to exhume the labor policies of Obamanomics as a new approach for the Republican Party.

One former senator has written,

Unfortunately, many leaders in that group, who now occupy influential positions in the Administration, are convinced that to survive politically the G.O.P. must “buy” the support of big union leaders by yielding to their demands. This despite the evidence of recent elections, which show that no leader can deliver the so-called “labor vote” and that Republicans have been supported by rank-and-file workers when they disregarded demands of union leaders and supported measures aimed at protecting and expanding individual worker rights.



Credit: Shaun T Moore. Public domain.

The appointment of Lori Chavez-DeRemer as labor secretary came with one principal qualification for the job: the endorsement of Teamsters Union boss Sean O'Brien.

But former Sen. Joseph H. Ball (R-MN) wrote those words in 1953, not 2025. A review of the history shows that Republican political figures chasing the votes of working men and women have repeatedly sought to collaborate with union bosses who claim to speak for the American worker, and the record is poor both electorally and institutionally. The best that can be said for the efforts of Republican administrations from McKinley to George W. Bush—and likely extending to the current efforts of the second Trump administration—is that they have not fundamentally altered the general, slow progress toward the Taft-Hartley Consensus approach of affirming voluntarism in union participation, protecting the public from labor dispute fallout, and subjecting union operations to public scrutiny that their extensive private powers demand.

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

GOP-Union Outreach Before Franklin Roosevelt

During the later Gilded Age and the Progressive Era (roughly spanning from 1880 to 1930), the two major political parties were far less ideologically delineated than they would be in the Cold War era, to say nothing of the more recent history defined by harsh ideological polarization. That is not to say that proto-ideological distinctions did *not* exist: Democrats tended to side with agrarian populists and big-city immigrant workers in disputes with regional business magnates supported by Republicans.

Thus, the presidential campaigns of populist Democrat William Jennings Bryan sought to benefit those classes with a loose “free silver” monetary policy. Opposing Bryan was Republican President William McKinley, a business-friendly small-c conservative who supported the gold standard and was backed by a political machine built by Cleveland businessman Mark Hanna.

Hanna, who was appointed as a U.S. senator for Ohio in 1897, and McKinley saw themselves as modernizers. While Hanna raised major campaign funds from the business titans of his day, the two men wanted harmony between employers and the fledgling labor unions of the turn of the century. They would jump into action just before the 1900 presidential election to intervene in a strike against the anthracite coal mines of Pennsylvania. Sen. Hanna and banking tycoon J.P. Morgan mediated with the presidents of coal-hauling railroads and mine operators, pressuring them to offer the striking members of the United Mine Workers a raise and formalized grievance procedure. The union took the offer even though it did not include union recognition, and the strike was called off a week before the election. Sen. Hanna would later help organize the National Civic Federation, a coalition of labor union leaders (including AFL head Samuel Gompers) and business representatives who had committed to working with organized labor.

In 1901, the re-elected President McKinley was assassinated and succeeded by a Hanna rival, Theodore Roosevelt. And a year later, the anthracite coal miners struck again. The Roosevelt administration was deeply involved in negoti-

ating an end to the dispute, with Commissioner of Labor Statistics Carroll Wright sent by Roosevelt to conduct fact-finding. Wright’s fact-finding did not settle the dispute, and by October 1902 Roosevelt did something unprecedented, calling on union and management representatives to dispute before him and other senior officials. Management proved intransigent, and the strike continued.

Ultimately, the Roosevelt administration, with help from J.P. Morgan, cajoled management to agree to the appointment of a government commission to arbitrate the dispute in exchange for the union going back to work and not insisting on recognition. The parties agreed, and the Anthracite Coal Commission, which included a labor union official and various industry experts, conducted a survey of the coalfield regions and then three months of hearings. The commission ultimately awarded half the pay increase the strikers wanted, half the hours reduction they wanted, and a board to arbitrate future disputes equally divided between employee and management representatives.

Twenty-four years later, the Coolidge administration was dealing with repeated labor troubles on the railroads, despite enactment of a series of labor-regulation laws in the industry. Labor and management negotiated a legislative compromise to finally settle decades of often-violent strife. That compromise was codified as the Railway Labor Act of 1926, which is notable for being the first federal law guaranteeing workers power to organize into labor unions and to compel employers to bargain with labor union representatives. Coolidge’s successor, Herbert Hoover, would appoint railroad union leader William Doak as his second secretary of labor, and he supported the union-supporting Davis-Bacon Act, which mandates union-rate pay on federal construction projects to this day.

Shortly before the Great Depression turfed Republicans from control of any arm of the federal government until 1947, labor Republicans made one more legislative effort. The Norris-LaGuardia Act, backed by future party-switching Sen. George Norris (R-NE) and future New York City Mayor Rep. Fiorello LaGuardia (R-NY), sought to restrict the common usage of injunctions to end strikes and prohibit contracts that forbade workers from joining unions (known as “yellow dog contracts”). President Herbert Hoover signed the law.



The presidential campaigns of William Jennings Bryan, who sought to benefit those classes with a loose “free silver” monetary policy, illustrated the populism of the age.

The pre-FDR Republican efforts did very little to endear institutional organized labor to the GOP. The American Federation of Labor found more “friends” to elect in the Democratic Party, especially after the Woodrow Wilson administration and a Democratic Congress promised to exempt labor union activities from antitrust laws and restrict anti-strike injunctions and pushed through the Clayton Antitrust Act to accomplish those goals. The Supreme Court, under a Republican-appointed majority, constrained the application of the Clayton Act’s anti-injunction rules to secondary boycott actions, limiting its practical application until the Norris-LaGuardia Act strengthened the restrictions on court action.

The efforts did presage part of the Taft-Hartley consensus that would emerge later. All the policies pursued by the pre-New Deal Republicans sought to ameliorate the fallout from labor disputes in industries critical to the national economy such as coal production and the railroads. Taft-Hartley would respond to the fallout from labor disputes made worse by New Deal labor legislation.

Wagner and Taft-Hartley

The outreach to organized labor by Republicans essentially became irrelevant after the election of President Franklin Roosevelt and massive congressional majorities with a mandate to enact his “New Deal” of central planning, government spending, and regulation. Among Roosevelt’s and his Big Labor allies’ priorities was the codification of collective bargaining, and a collective bargaining provision was included in the central-planning omnibus National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). The NIRA’s collective bargaining provision was unsatisfying to union groups, since it permitted substantial employer involvement in the operations of NIRA-recognized unions.

The Supreme Court threw NIRA out in 1935. Sen. Robert Wagner (D-NY) pushed a new law, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), that established powerful protections for union activities including mandatory recognition and mandatory bargaining, alongside powers to seek federal intervention against “unfair labor practices” by employers. To protect their new powers, union officials formed “Labor’s Non-Partisan League” to support pro-Roosevelt candidates and FDR’s reelection.

Unions would align closely with Roosevelt for the remainder of his life and political career, except for United Mine Workers and Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) president John L. Lewis, who broke with Roosevelt over the president’s exceeding the then-customary two-term limit



Sen. Robert Wagner (D-NY) pushed a new law, the National Labor Relations Act, that established powerful protections for union activities.

and Roosevelt’s support for the United Kingdom in the early phase of World War II. When Roosevelt was reelected, Lewis stood down as head of the CIO, which under his successors (and aides who were Communists or fellow-travelers) would become a core element of the Roosevelt-Truman coalition.

After the war, unions flexed their NLRA-supercharged muscles with the largest strike wave in American history, which worsened inflation caused by military demobilization. That economic disruption swept the Republicans into control of Congress in the 1946 elections. In 1947, a bipartisan supermajority passed the Taft-Hartley Act over President Harry Truman’s veto. Politically, this reinforced the labor-Democratic alliance, as Big Labor went all out to re-elect Truman in 1948 (which was successful) and to unseat Act namesake Sen. Robert A. Taft (R-OH) in 1950 (which failed miserably).

The Plumber Among the Millionaires

In 1952, Republicans broke a five-term Democratic hammerlock on the presidency, when retired World War II General and Columbia University president Dwight Eisenhower won election over Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson (D). A month after the election, Eisenhower announced that he would appoint Martin Durkin as secretary of labor. The *New York Times* described Durkin’s selection as “President-elect Eisenhower’s most unconventional appointment to date,” in part because “Mr. Durkin is



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In 1947 a bipartisan supermajority passed the Taft-Hartley Act over President Harry Truman's veto.

a Democrat and voted for Governor Stevenson; he is an A. F. L. man and a critic of the Taft-Hartley law.”

Senator Taft, the Senate Majority Leader-designate, was outraged; why had the Republican president appointed not only a Democrat but a labor union boss—Durkin led the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry—as secretary of labor? Eisenhower had pledged to be “fair” to organized labor, but Durkin’s appointment looked like a thumb on the scale in Big Labor’s favor.

Conservative Republicans feared for the young Taft-Hartley Act, which had survived attempts by Truman and Democratic Congresses to repeal it. Joseph Ball, a former U.S. senator from Minnesota, wrote in *The Freeman* (the journal published by the free-market Foundation for Economic Education at the time): “The job of emasculating the law will be done by way of amendments, with the sponsors piously insisting they are preserving the essentials of Taft-Hartley. But the effect on national labor policy will not differ materially from repeal.” Ball continued,

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Martin Durkin’s eight-month tenure as labor secretary is, as of February 2025, the shortest completed tenure of any Senate-confirmed labor secretary.

What is really frightening, however, is that the background of the message [a list of mostly union-favoring proposed amendments to Taft-Hartley that was leaked before being presented to Congress] indicates it may well be only a starting point for concessions to union leaders, which ultimately could result in a far worse law than the original Wagner Act.

But the Plumbers Union official in the cabinet of millionaires serving the war-hero general would not last. First, there was a game of back-and-forth negotiations between the Eisenhower Commerce Department and Durkin’s Labor Department, with Commerce advocating more pro-management changes and Durkin recommending changes more favorable to organized labor, especially the AFL. Durkin, at the urging of union officials, bailed on the joint plan and offered his own 19-point list of changes. Eisenhower balked at Durkin’s changes, Durkin threatened to resign, and Eisenhower accepted his resignation in early September.

Durkin was out, and Taft-Hartley had outlived its namesake. (Sen. Taft died of cancer at the end of July 1953.) The plumber’s eight-month tenure as labor secretary is, as of February 2025, the shortest completed tenure of any Senate-confirmed labor secretary. Following his departure, Durkin returned to the Plumbers Union, which he led until his death two years later.

Dancing with the Devil

Durkin’s departure did not end the Eisenhower administration’s appetite for outreach to Big Labor, then at its modern-era height in power, influence, and membership relative to the size of the workforce. Eisenhower’s team had a receptive audience from elements on the organized labor side, especially in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which functioned as labor’s compromised right wing in the mid-20th century.

Dave Beck was the leader of the Teamsters from 1952 through 1957. James Neff, a journalist and author who has written multiple books on the history of the Teamsters Union, characterized the boss:

A florid, fleshy man with a bald head, Beck used his power to insinuate himself into Seattle's political and cultural establishment. He bought downtown real estate, gas stations and other small companies. By the 1950s, Beck, a Republican, had become more powerful in Washington state than the governor. President Eisenhower welcomed him at visits to the White House, referring to him as the Republicans' labor statesman. Behind his back, Beck was known as His Majesty the Wheel.

Eisenhower and Beck were friendly. On policy, Beck promoted the Eisenhower administration's efforts to close down the Mexican migrant-worker Bracero Program and expel Mexican-national migrant workers, an effort known by the moniker "Operation Wetback." President Eisenhower sent a telegram hailing the construction of the Teamsters' "marble palace" headquarters down the street from the U.S. Capitol, writing "democratic trade unionism is one of the bulwarks of our American way of life." In 1956, President Eisenhower invited Beck to the White House for a meeting at which the union boss endorsed Ike's re-election campaign.

But Beck had secrets, and a young ambitious Democrat set out to uncover them. Working on the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor or Management Field (a.k.a. the McClellan Committee) under Sen. John McClellan (D-AR), Robert "Bobby" F. Kennedy opened an investigation into the finances of the nation's then-largest labor union (which had, conveniently, endorsed the Republican Eisenhower). Kennedy's main target was a Detroit-area Teamster boss thought to have ties to organized crime named James Riddle Hoffa, but in the process of inquiring into Hoffa discovered that Beck was *also* on the take.

By New Year's Day 1957, Kennedy and his fellow McClellan Committee investigators had secured an admission from Beck's fixer, a labor-relations consultant named Nathan Shefferman, that he had paid \$94,000—over \$1 million in today's money—toward Beck's personal expenses and the expenses of Beck's family and friends. Financial records backed up Shefferman's admission. All told, Kennedy and his colleagues found that Beck had misused \$400,000 in Teamsters funds—in today's money, over \$4.6 million.

At a congressional hearing, Beck pleaded the Fifth. His allies tried to make Kennedy's Democratic probe appear partisan, since the Teamster boss had allied with the Republicans. But later in 1957, facing a state charge in Washington, Beck had to step down as Teamsters boss.



Credit: Marion S. Triebosko. License: <https://bit.ly/42M19lu>.

Robert Kennedy's main target was a Detroit-area Teamster boss thought to have ties to organized crime named James Riddle Hoffa.

For Republicans, who wanted to direct the McClellan Committee's investigations toward the liberal-left United Auto Workers under Walter Reuther, Beck's departure didn't mean that much. His replacement, the aforementioned James Riddle Hoffa, was also GOP-friendly and hostile to Kennedy and his brother, Sen. John F. Kennedy (D-MA). Jimmy Hoffa—hailed to this day as "A Worker's Hero" by the Teamsters Union he led—was if anything more corrupt than Beck, as Bobby Kennedy had reportedly suspected.

Even before Beck's defenestration, Hoffa had attempted to put a double agent on the McClellan Committee's payroll, only to have Cy Cheasty turn him in to Kennedy and go to work for the committee. Indeed, if Hoffa had not benefitted from a cynical defense strategy focused on Black racial solidarity and bungling from DC federal prosecutors, Kennedy might have put Hoffa in prison before Hoffa managed to top the Teamsters.

The McClellan Committee ultimately produced dozens of volumes of testimony and documentary evidence showing the extent of corruption in organized labor, with the Teamsters being the principal perpetrators. In response to the McClellan Committee investigations, Congress passed and President Eisenhower signed the Landrum-Griffin Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959. It placed regulations on union internal operations, required labor unions to file financial disclosures subject to public inspection, and further restricted "secondary boycotts" by

prohibiting “hot cargo” agreements under which employers agreed not to handle goods produced by or intended for a struck shop.

The Eisenhower labor record ended up not being the rollback of Taft-Hartley into a union-favoring Wagner Act environment that former Senator Ball feared. While the administration had opposed attempts to expand state-level right-to-work in 1958 (most attempts, most prominently in California, failed amid the internal GOP opposition and a Democratic wave-election environment), the Landrum-Griffin Act ultimately advanced the Taft-Hartley consensus.

The Two Minds of Tricky Dick

In 1960, Robert Kennedy’s brother John F. Kennedy was elected president, bringing labor’s liberal wing into the White House, as UAW leader Walter Reuther was an ally of the Kennedys. When Republicans nominated firebrand conservative Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) for president in 1964, even the occasionally right-leaning Jimmy Hoffa backed Jack Kennedy’s liberal Democratic successor, President Lyndon Johnson.

Johnson aggressively expanded the welfare state and sought to expand union power, with the massive Congressional Democratic majorities that rode his coattails pushing legislation in 1965 to repeal 14(b), the provision of Taft-Hartley that explicitly authorizes state laws prohibiting compulsory union fees (called right to work laws). Sen. Everett Dirksen (R-IL) led a bipartisan filibuster that protected 14(b), and the 1966 elections narrowed the Democratic majority such that the repeal of 14(b) was dropped.

In 1968, President Johnson withdrew his campaign for reelection and Vice President Hubert Humphrey, a long-time favorite of the AFL-CIO, became the Democratic nominee. Opposing him was former Vice President Richard Nixon, whose labor record was mixed. He had voted for Taft-Hartley in Congress but opposed efforts to establish a national right-to-work law. After his decisive but narrow victory, President Nixon pursued a middle path on labor relations, reaching out to AFL-CIO head George Meany and wining and dining the grandees of the union federation.

Tricky Dick’s friendly relations with union bigwigs did not apply to them all. Leonard Woodcock, Walter Reuther’s successor as the head of the self-consciously progressive United Auto Workers, was named on President Nixon’s first list of 20 “political enemies.” He was joined in that distinction by AFL-CIO political chief Alexander Barkan. Lane Kirkland, then George Meany’s number two at the AFL-CIO itself, was listed as one of the administration’s “political oppo-

nents,” though the drafter of the list noted dryly “but we must deal with him.”

But in 1972, Nixon’s outreach and overreach by the Democratic left wing paid off, sort of. Democrats nominated Sen. George McGovern (D-SD), a darling of anti-Vietnam War and social-liberal activists loathed by Meany and his old-labor Cold Warriors. Facing the choice of McGovern or Nixon, the AFL-CIO, for the only time in its united existence to date, elected not to endorse the Democratic candidate and remained neutral, vowing to focus its Committee on Political Education (COPE) activities on supporting pro-labor candidates (mostly Democrats) for Congress.

Some labor leaders went further than mere neutrality in support of Nixon. Prominent among them was Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York president Peter J. Brennan. Brennan was a controversial figure, as he pushed back against construction-industry racial-integration initiatives pushed by then-liberal Republican New York City



(Richard Nixon wears a hard hat while visiting the Bethlehem Steel plant.) Some labor leaders went further than mere neutrality in support of Nixon. Prominent among them was Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York president Peter J. Brennan (not shown).

Mayor John Lindsay. The Nixon administration had pushed similar affirmative-action initiatives on federal construction projects itself.

Brennan rose to national prominence after the May 1970 “hard hat riot,” in which construction workers, many of whom claimed to be Vietnam War veterans, attacked student anti-Vietnam War demonstrators and stormed New York City Hall demanding the American flag, which Mayor Lindsay had ordered lowered to half-mast in mourning for the student demonstrators killed at Kent State University, be raised to full mast. Brennan denied orchestrating the riot, though eyewitnesses and participants claimed union shop stewards encouraged or directed the demonstrators. Brennan organized a later march through lower Manhattan to show support for the Vietnam War, and at the end of May, Brennan met with President Nixon and presented him with a hard hat in commemoration of the event.

Nixon’s re-election campaign commissioned Brennan to drum up labor unionist support for the Republican candidate. Supporters of conservative outreach to labor unions as such (like former U.S. Representative Peter King (R-NY), a labor-favorite Republican during his time in office) often tout the hard hat men (if not their riot) as evidence that going through Brennan was necessary. However, it seems likely that the hard hat demonstrations merely revealed a fissure that already existed between Big Labor’s national bosses who found themselves on Nixon’s adversaries’ lists and the working men and their families those bosses claimed to represent.

When Nixon defeated McGovern, Brennan was rewarded. Shortly after Nixon’s second inauguration, Nixon nominated Brennan for labor secretary. Brennan and Nixon did little related to collective bargaining, though the pension law ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974) was enacted during Brennan’s time as labor secretary.

Meany’s Man

In August 1974, the misdeeds of President Nixon’s reelection campaigners caught up with the President. Facing an expected impeachment and removal from office, Richard Nixon became the first (and to date, only) president to resign his office before the end of his term. His successor, the appointed Vice President Gerald Ford (Nixon’s running mate, elected Vice President Spiro Agnew, had himself resigned over tax issues), had been House Minority Leader from 1965 through his appointment as vice president in 1973.

Ford was not interested in continuing giving Secretary Brennan patronage. In early 1975, with liberal Republican Nelson Rockefeller safely ensconced as Vice President, Ford reshuffled the Cabinet he had inherited from the resigned Nixon. Brennan was out; he turned down an offer to take a consolation post of U.S. Ambassador to Ireland, instead returning to lead his old union, just as Martin Durkin had in 1953.

Succeeding Brennan was John Dunlop, an academic economist from Harvard specializing in labor-relations negotiations. Dunlop had served extensively in government, sitting on the National Labor Relations Board from 1948 through 1952 and on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from 1964 to 1965.

Dunlop, like Durkin, was tasked with shepherding a legislative “compromise” to empower organized labor under a Republican presidency (though Democrats controlled Congress under Ford, unlike the Republicans during Durkin’s time in Eisenhower’s Cabinet). The issue was “common situs picketing,” a proposed change to rules from the Taft-Hartley Act restricting labor actions against third-party businesses rather than the immediate parties to a labor dispute (known as “secondary boycotts”).

The courts, applying Taft-Hartley’s restrictions on secondary boycotts, had prohibited picketing against a building site contractor if such picketing induced workers for *other* contractors on the building site not to work. These findings later led to rules allowing job sites to have a reserved entrance for disputing contractors and union members, and unions were free to picket that entrance. Construction unions chafed at these restrictions, and Big Labor pushed “common situs” rules that would free unions to picket at multi-contractor job sites.

Secretary Dunlop supported the “common situs” legislation and argued for its passage. Opposed to the bill were the right wing of the Republican Party, led by former California Governor and likely 1976 Ford primary challenger Ronald Reagan, and the activist National Right to Work Committee, whose president Reed Larson dubbed Dunlop “an Ivy League mouthpiece for George Meany and his union hierarchy.” Hundreds of thousands of mailers were returned to the White House calling on President Ford to uphold the Taft-Hartley Consensus and veto the “common situs” legislation. As the legislation reached Ford’s desk, the influential Evans-Novak Political Report argued Ford’s dalliance with Big Labor was inexplicable, writing, “With organized labor making him a punching bag a year before the [1976] elections, he cannot win significant union support no matter what he does.”



Reed Larson dubbed labor secretary, John Dunlop, “an Ivy League mouthpiece for George Meany and his union hierarchy.”

On December 22, 1975, President Ford announced his intention to veto the common situs legislation, and he carried out the veto shortly after the turn of the year. Dunlop took this as something of a double cross. In an interview before his death, Dunlop said that “He [President Ford] asked me to support it; the issue was not my idea.” Dunlop blamed Ford’s switch on political considerations related to Reagan’s looming primary challenge and resigned shortly thereafter.

Big Labor remembered what Dunlop had tried to do for its institutional power. After the union-backed Democrat Jimmy Carter unseated President Ford in 1976, AFL-CIO head George Meany and number-two man Lane Kirkland both declared Dunlop “their only choice for Secretary of Labor,” according to a contemporary *New York Times* report. When Dunlop faced opposition from ethnic-minority and women’s-interest groups, Carter instead chose Ray Marshall, who would later co-found the union-backed think tank Economic Policy Institute after his time in government.

Reagan-Bush and Beyond

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected president over union-backed incumbent President Jimmy Carter. While Reagan himself had been the actors’ union president during his Hollywood career, his labor secretaries deviated from the models set by his 20th century Republican predecessors. Rather than union bosses like Durkin, Brennan, or Dunlop’s Ford administration successor William Usery or an outside supporter of organized labor like James Mitchell (who replaced Durkin under Eisenhower) or John Dunlop, Reagan appointed the deregulation-minded Raymond J. Donovan to the labor secretary role. Donovan was forced to resign amid lawfare attacks in 1985, but his two Reagan administration successors were Republicans who kept in line with Reagan’s deregulatory mold. After George H.W. Bush was elected to succeed Reagan, he appointed Elizabeth Dole to the role. Dole would later co-sponsor a National Right to Work bill as a U.S. senator.

Running away from Big Labor, most prominently by Reagan’s Transportation Department sacking illegally striking PATCO air traffic controllers in 1981, did not harm

the GOP. Reagan’s re-election over Carter’s Vice President, Walter Mondale, saw the GOP win its highest share with union household voters (46 percent) between 1976 and 2020, despite his aggressive breaking of the PATCO strike. The key to securing the “Reagan Democrats” was *not* expanded collective bargaining, appeasing union bosses, or otherwise giving into what the former Sen. Joseph Ball called “the eastern Republican group” during the Eisenhower era: It was delivering a strong deregulatory and tax-cutting agenda that controlled inflation and restarted economic growth.

Following the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994 and the ascent to the AFL-CIO leadership of the left-wing activist John Sweeney in 1996, relations between the GOP and the declining labor union movement further soured. Sweeney’s aggressive (and unsuccessful) push to return Congress to Democratic control in 1996 led to criticism from the union-friendly then-Rep. Peter King (R-NY), who told a journalist:

“If the Democrats take back the Congress, Sweeney could well be one of the two or three most powerful people in the country. If they don’t, he’s really hurt organized labor,” because he has totally alienated the GOP. “If he’d been more of an appeaser to pro-labor Republicans, we wouldn’t get drilled by [House speaker] Newt [Gingrich] for supporting labor. But now he can just say, ‘Why are you stupid bastards messing around with them? They’re just a Democratic annex.’”

The Teamsters, now under “reformist” leadership of Ron Carey, broke with the union’s Republican ancestry and joined at the hip with the Clinton White House, leading to (among other things) Carey’s removal from office amid a campaign-finance scandal. Carey’s successor, James P. Hoffa (son of Jimmy), was little more than a false target for Republican outreach from the George W. Bush campaigns; the Teamsters endorsed Democrats in 2000 and 2004.

Following the latter election, Hoffa *filed* took the Teamsters back out of the AFL-CIO alongside the left-wing activist Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to form Change to Win, an unsuccessful organizing and political

coalition that sought to reinvigorate the declining union movement. That aligned the Teamsters Union even more closely with the Democratic Party and left-wing activism, as the SEIU ended up by far the senior partner in the coalition.

The fall of Change to Win and a new regime at the Teamsters Union that plays special-interest rather than left-wing ideological politics (at least in name) has reinvigorated those on the right about whom Senator Ball warned almost three-quarters of a century ago, today led by Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer. These Republicans have forgotten that the Reagan Democrats stuck with Reagan *even after the PATCO strike*, thinking instead that the way to appeal to right-leaning working people is by increasing the strength of left-leaning (or outright left-wing) union bosses. Working people do not follow union leadership's guidance closely. As an electoral matter, union leadership's claims to speak for working people (or even their members) as a class are hollow.

The Eisenhower and Nixon/Ford "outreach" eras also demonstrate that ideology-based "splits" in Big Labor never last. Government-sector unions and private-sector unions have too much overlap in staffing and policy goals to stay disunited, especially if the Republican Party wants to do anything remotely conservative in domestic affairs. It is no coincidence that the liberal-on-domestic-affairs Nixon and Ford administrations were the most consistent in outreach to Big Labor.

Ultimately, any short-run electoral benefit the GOP might obtain (and the historical evidence suggests that benefit may not even exist) would come at the cost of bad policies. The Nixon and Ford administrations left America with the deeper institutionalization of the Great Society programs in

American life, and the AFL-CIO turned right around and endorsed the Democrats to deepen the institutionalization of the Great Society anyway at the next election.

Unions are, and have been since their creation, creatures of the political Left. Shifts to the right among working people are completely independent of union boss wishes, and with exceptions rare enough that they warrant noting by name they are *explicitly contrary* to union boss wishes. Empowering union bosses by increasing labor union powers not only will fail to secure their loyalty and the loyalty of their members, it will harm the broader economy and offend working people outside of organized labor (most prominently independent contractors) who are otherwise friendly to a free-market conservatism.

In his 1953 *Freeman* piece, former Senator Ball warned, "bucking the [Eisenhower] White House on this issue could mean primary defeat for many G.O.P. congressmen. Only those sure of the support of their own districts on this issue could afford to risk it, and there are not enough of them." He continued, "Some G.O.P. congressional leaders have even swallowed the political deal aspect. As of now, a White House bill to amend the heart out of Taft-Hartley could not be stopped in Congress." Worker freedom advocates have been here before, with a Republican administration flattering the interests of Teamsters Union leadership in a mistargeted effort to reach out to working Americans. In 1953, the long-term logic held, and Taft-Hartley survived, but not without the work of activists interested in these issues. One hopes the past will prove prologue. ■

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

A project of Capital Research Center

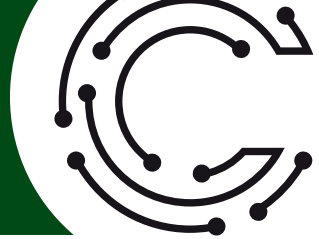


CLIMATE DOLLARS

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

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

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



BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES TRACKS “PETROCHEMICAL INCIDENTS” BUT NOT WIND AND SOLAR ACCIDENTS

By Ken Braun

KEY POINTS

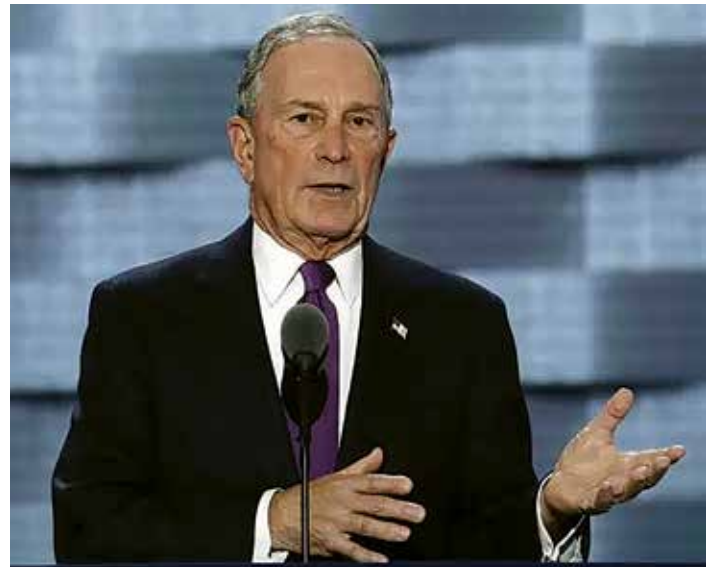
- Bloomberg Philanthropies is tracking oil and gas industry accidents and reported 132 incidents in 2024, also counting traffic accidents.
- In 2024, there were at least 43 instances of weather-dependent energy accidents in the United States, including solar panel fires, wind turbine fires, wind tower collapses, and blades detaching.
- The number of weather-dependent energy accidents is disproportionate, considering that wind and solar combined produced less than 3 percent of total American energy consumption in 2023.
- Wind and solar electricity generators need hundreds of times the land area to produce the same energy output as natural gas or carbon-free nuclear power plants.
- There is no official tracking effort for wind and solar energy accidents.

Wind and solar produce just a tiny (and unreliable) trickle of total American energy consumption, yet in 2024 there were at least 43 instances of tower collapses, solar panel fires, turbine fires, blades being thrown, and pollution from improper blade disposal.

Is that too much?

Beyond Petrochemicals

Bloomberg Philanthropies, the philanthropy funded by billionaire climate-lefty Michael Bloomberg has begun tracking and is very concerned over a comparatively small number of oil and gas industry accidents. Earlier this year, the Bloomberg Philanthropies “Beyond Petrochemicals” campaign launched SpillTracker.org, a “database of fires, flares, spills, and other petrochemical incidents, which occur on average every four days.”



Credit: freemalaysia today. License: <https://bit.ly/4cLpUdG>.

Bloomberg Philanthropies, the philanthropy funded by billionaire climate-lefty Michael Bloomberg, has begun tracking and is very concerned over a comparatively small number of oil and gas industry accidents.

Launched in September 2022, Beyond Petrochemicals is an \$85 million commitment to block development of more than 120 petrochemical projects in the United States. Some of the named allies (and presumably recipients of loot from Bloomberg) include Beyond Plastics, EarthJustice, Earthworks, the Hip Hop Caucus, and the Resources Legacy Fund. Each is an anti-energy activist nongovernmental organization, and at least three of them oppose even carbon-free, reliable nuclear power.

“In 2024 alone, there were 132 petrochemical-related incidents, up from 96 reported incidents in 2023,” claims SpillTracker.

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

Their accounting is fairly liberal. In one incident listed on SpillTracker, a chemical tanker truck was involved in a free-way accident in Pennsylvania, in which only the driver's cab, *but not the tanker full of petrochemicals*, caught fire.

Basic Physics

As a matter of basic physics, developing energy often means playing with fire—sometimes literally. Every important technology has a dark side. People have been dying in traffic accidents that don't involve chemical tankers since the creation of the automobile.

Batteries are a containment system for otherwise dangerous energy, and a lot more of them will be needed to store all the weather-dependent wind and solar energy that Bloomberg and its allies want to develop. And they've already become a separate problem: Google "battery" and "fire" and just the "news" tab returns 30 pages of results.

On January 16, two weeks before the launch of SpillTracker, the largest battery storage facility in America caught fire and burned *for several days* in California. More than 1,000 people had to flee their homes, and nearly a month later it still wasn't safe to inspect the damage. Residents reported getting sick. There were reports of chemical contamination, and, of course, lawsuits have been filed.

A *fair* comparison of accidents in the supposedly "green" energy industry versus the hydrocarbon and petrochemical industry must also account for what they each produce for us—energy and otherwise.

Wind and solar put together accounted for only 2.6 percent of total U.S. energy consumption in 2023:

Note that the total contribution of wind and solar energy is just a couple of percentage ticks more than the energy we generated from burning wood and trash. The supposed energy of the future contributed as much as the energy of the 18th century.

Meanwhile, the hydrocarbons Bloomberg and its allies want us to hate—oil and natural gas—accounted for 74 percent of the total. That's 28 times more than wind and solar.

And that's just energy output. The petrochemical industry also generates fertilizer to produce our food and nearly all of our plastics. To take just one of many miraculous examples, wind and solar energy and their flammable battery storage don't produce PVC water pipes used to replace ancient leaden pipes that can cause lead poisoning in children.

Then there's the land use, what some environmentalists once referred to as . . . the environment. Wind and solar are land hogs. An April 2021 report from Bloomberg News showed the space needed for different electricity sources. A solar

energy project gobbles up 140 times more American nature to produce the same amount of power as a natural gas plant, and wind is far worse:

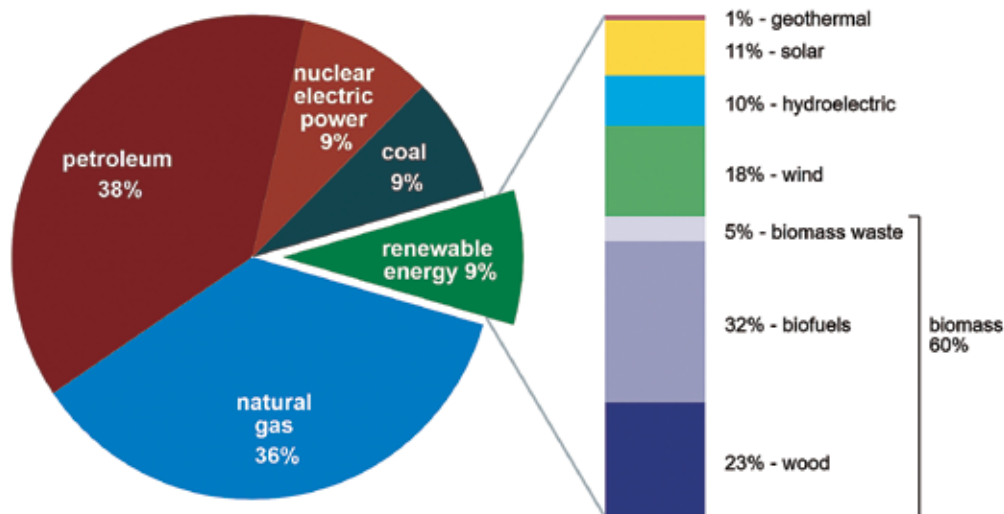
Because the raw energy output of petrochemicals is almost 30 times more than wind and solar, should we be willing to accept 30 times more accidents? That's a more than fair comparison, since it does not (but could also) count the plastic, fertilizer, and other side benefits of petrochemicals.

As noted, SpillTracker claimed 132 petrochemical incidents in 2024. So, a very conservative, generous comparison would yield 4.4

U.S. primary energy consumption by energy source, 2023

total = 93.59 quadrillion
British thermal units

total = 8.24 quadrillion British thermal units



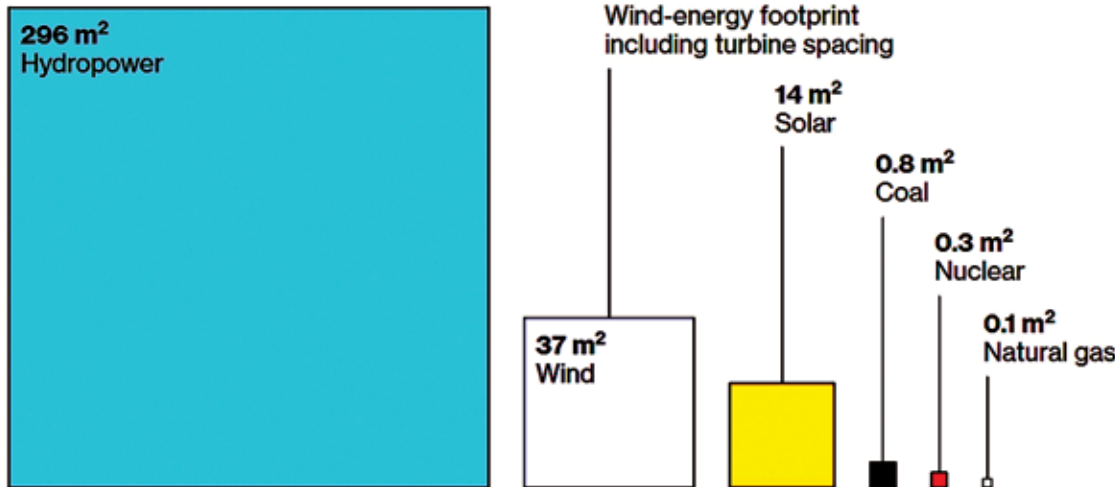
Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Monthly Energy Review*, Table 1.3 and 10.1, April 2024, preliminary data



Note: Sum of components may not equal 100% because of independent rounding.

Power Densities: Renewables Need More Space

Land area needed to power a flat-screen TV, by energy source



Note: Assumes 100-watt television operating year-round

Source: van Zalk, John, Behrens, Paul, 2018, The Spatial Extent of Renewable and Non-Renewable Power Generation

acceptable wind and solar incidents over the same period.
(0.3 multiplied by 132 = 4.4)

The actual 2024 accident list for wind and solar was almost 10 times worse.

What follows is a chronological, but not exhaustive, list of what can be found from searching online for a couple of hours. SpillTracker claims some petrochemical accidents are never reported, and that's true of this wind and solar listing as well. There is no legal requirement to advertise catastrophic wind and solar accidents, and some incidents may have been reported yet hidden behind paywalls.

Just 2.6 percent of total energy led to these 43 wind and solar accidents. Extrapolate out to wind and solar replacing all our oil and gas usage, and the annual accident list would stretch well into the thousands.

That's a lot more than the 132 worried over by Bloomberg's SpillTracker, and it doesn't include all the extra battery fires.

Wind and Solar Accidents in 2024

January 11. Colorado-Nebraska border: A wind turbine either caught fire and fell over or fell over and caught fire. According to the media report: "Readings from the Sidney Airport MesoWest station at the time indicated winds of 16 to 24 miles an hour and gusts up to 31 miles an hour, with a period of light freezing rain and ice fog that preceded light snow."

"Our country is too big and too diverse to rely on one source of energy," said

a resident living next to the accident. "But I don't know if this one has been thought out. You need to have a plan to take care of stuff like that."

This was the first, but far from the last, example of weather causing big problems for weather dependent energy.

January 22. Ohio: A blade fell off a turbine. Bad bolts were blamed.

February 21. Washington, DC: In the ritzy Georgetown section of town, a rooftop solar panel caught fire, lighting up the roof along with it.

March 10. Rhode Island: The solar panels atop a modest home malfunctioned and lit the roof ablaze. The following day, smoke started coming from the same house. Firefighters determined the original fire had damaged the house wiring. The local power company arrived to "de-energize" the whole system.



A neighbor noticed the fire start and woke up the sleeping residents. They had a small daughter. Nobody was harmed."

March 13. Maryland: According to a Fox TV affiliate, another residential rooftop solar panel lit a home on fire.

March 23. Staten Island, New York City: Yet another solar panel fire atop a modest home. According to local news, a neighbor noticed the fire start and woke up the sleeping residents. They had a small daughter. Nobody was harmed.

March 31. Massachusetts: A solar panel atop an auto parts warehouse hospitalized one person and challenged firefighters who “arrived to find 20-foot-high flames coming from the roof.”

April 3. Texas: A rooftop solar panel system started a fire at a modest home in Lago Vista, Texas.

April 6. New Jersey: The headline was “3-alarm fire badly damages South Jersey nutritional products company.” Video from the TV station’s drone “showed extreme damage to solar panels on the roof.”

April 21. Connecticut: The solar panel system atop a home lit on fire. The local news noted this little detail: “Crews exercised extreme caution in extinguishing the fire as there still could have been power flowing to the panels.”

April 26. Missouri: A turbine tower collapsed at the High Prairie Renewable Energy Center. This would be the first of three turbine tower collapses that would take place at the facility during 2024. (See also: August 25 and October 31). It was later determined that the tower collapsed because the nacelle—the housing for the turbine’s generator—broke off. The turbine was installed in 2021.

Ameren Missouri, the owner of the facility, began construction on High Prairie’s 175 turbines in April 2020. In April 2021, the facility was shut off at night after the discovery that it was killing birds and bats. The *Missouri Independent* reported 52 bird kills, including a bald eagle.

But despite the intermittent energy system operating even less reliably than anticipated, Ameren asked the Missouri Public Service Commission for a \$300 million rate increase to cover the costs of the troubled facility.

The *Missouri Independent* quoted Geoff Marke, chief economist for the Missouri Office of the Public Counsel, who presciently warned back in 2018 that wildlife kills would be a problem:

If Ameren Missouri’s project results in fatalities of vulnerable, endangered or protected species, Ameren Missouri could be liable for financial penalties and potential enforced curtailment of generation, which in turn could raise future prudency concerns and would almost certainly include greater scrutiny of future wind projects.

And then, proven correct after the turbines began spinning, Marks testified against Ameren’s rate increase: “As such, I do not believe ratepayers should be responsible for any costs related to Ameren’s poor managerial decisions in electing to site its wind farm where it did.”

May 1. Virginia: A fire broke out at a commercial solar facility. The fire department ruled it “accidental.”

May 13. Iowa: Lightning struck, lit ablaze, and destroyed a wind turbine on a family farm.

“Flames shot into the sky as the damaged blade hung down before plunging tip-first into the cornfield,” reported local media. “There was nothing the family or firefighters could do besides watch it burn.”

“Most of the time, turbines spin without incident,” the report alleged.

Another turbine on the same farm was hit and destroyed in 2023. And a third strike and fire occurred in August 2024 (see below).

May 15. Arizona: A fire broke out at another commercial solar facility. Local media reported some challenges for the fire crews:

On-site personnel arrived on scene and shut the power down to the inverters. However, with the sun still shining, the panels generate electricity.

High-voltage lines hampered access to the middle of the array.

The fire spread due to high weeds under the panels, but CFD had favorable weather conditions on Thursday that assisted them in quickly extinguishing it.



A turbine tower collapsed at the High Prairie Renewable Energy Center. This would be the first of three turbine tower collapses that would take place at the facility during 2024.



*A “rack of 25 solar panels caught fire” at an elementary school.
Fortunately, it was a Sunday.*

Maybe they should have put wind turbines in instead?
Well... maybe not ...

May 21. Iowa: Tornadoes rolling through Iowa destroyed 10 turbines. Wind speeds reportedly hit 100 mph, which was too much for the . . . wind . . . turbines.

Imagine the reaction if a tornado tossed a nuclear reactor all over Iowa.

May 25. Massachusetts: A house fire was blamed on “a squirrel nest with rodents eating the wires from the home’s solar panels.”

Solar energy may not be reliable, but it can be delicious!

May 26. Virginia: A wind turbine at the “Brock Environmental Center” caught fire after getting hit by lightning (and a lot of irony).

June 9. New Jersey: Local media reported that a “rack of 25 solar panels caught fire” at an elementary school. Fortunately, it was a Sunday.

June 28. California: Solar panels caught fire atop a five-story building.

July 9. California: Ninety-three acres were burned up when a vegetation fire started at an industrial solar facility.

July 10. New Jersey: Media reported “a large response from emergency responders” was needed to put out a solar panel fire atop the roof of a manufacturing facility. The blaze was upgraded to a two-alarm fire because “strong winds” were making it worse.

July 13. Massachusetts: The Vinyard Wind offshore industrial wind facility was home to 62 of what manufacturer GE Vernova claims is the “largest turbine in the Western world.” In operation for less than a year and hit by wind speeds of... no worse than 13 mph... a blade on one of the turbines shredded apart. Most of the fiberglass blade and “thousands” of shards of same fell into the Atlantic Ocean and washed up on the beaches of ritzy Nantucket.

The manufacturer claimed the problem was “not a fundamental design flaw” and then said it was a “material deviation or a manufacturing deviation in one of our factories that, through the inspection or quality assurance process, we should have identified.”

A lawsuit filed by a different GE Vernova customer claimed this was a distinction without a difference: “Within only two to three years of commercial operation, the GE wind turbine generators have exhibited numerous material defects on major components and experienced several complete failures, at least one turbine blade liberation event, and other deficiencies.”

When the Deepwater Horizon blew up in 2010, maybe BP should have thought to explain it away as a “petroleum liberation event.”

July 17. Wyoming: The blade of a wind turbine was taken out by lightning.

“Lightning damage is the single largest cause of unplanned downtime for wind turbines and the most common insurance claim filed by wind farm owners,” claimed the report in *Cowboy State News*.

So, the leading cause of wind turbines not producing electricity is wind turbines getting hit by . . . *electricity*?

July 22. Rhode Island: A local fire chief blamed the solar panels that “completely covered” a commercial building for a serious blaze that broke out. The chief told local media that “fire crews are seeing these types of fires more often.”

This isn’t surprising. A September 2022 report from *Insurance Business Magazine* carried this headline: “Fire a major hidden danger for solar farms.” The main finding was this:

A recent report by Firetrace International found that the solar industry is potentially underestimating the risk of fire at solar farms, partly due to a shortage of data on solar farm fires. The report also said that research into the issue has given rise to suspicions that fires at solar farms have been under-reported.

July 23. New Jersey: One day after the Rhode Island commercial building fire (noted above) another solar panel fire broke out atop a New Jersey warehouse, leading to a three-alarm firefighter response. The local ABC TV affiliate said its investigators had “interviewed a number of consumers who said solar panels caused major damage to their home.”

July 28. New York: A NY TV station filed this report: “Residents within a 1-mile radius of the scene were told to shelter in place for several hours Thursday afternoon and

evening after four lithium battery storage trailers caught fire at the Convergent Energy solar farm.”

The locals got pretty snippy because the fire was “the third so far this summer at energy storage facilities in New York.” The fire chief added this bad news about his challenge:

“Where this being lithium-ion batteries, they’re a beast of their own, and the water, you just can’t control it with it.”



Your wind turbine’s on fire again.”

(Note: This was included because the fire occurred at industrial solar facility. Other battery storage fires, such as two others in New York, have not been added. While it would have been defensible to include most battery storage facility fires in this account because battery storage is not needed for oil and gas energy, this list does not include other battery storage fires in 2024. Including those could have added a dozen additional examples.)

July 31. Oregon: A grass fire broke out at a 33,000-panel solar energy facility. Fire officials blamed “overheated electronic panels that failed and then subsequently dropped molten electronics onto the dried grass.” (It happened again on September 30; see below.)

August 9. Maine: A tractor-trailer truck carrying a 240-foot turbine blade hit a bridge and rolled over. The highway was closed for 11 hours.

August 9. Minnesota: The *Minnesota Star-Tribune* reported on a town of 1,100 residents and their ordeal with a pile of 100 discarded wind turbine blades.

“Almost four years later, the mountain of old wind parts—which is visible on Google Earth—is still there,” reported the newspaper. “Some blades are cracked and stained. Locals say they draw feral cats and foxes and are a safety risk because kids climb on the junk. They’re also ugly, ruining Richardson’s view, hurting property values and attracting the curiosity of seemingly everyone who drives the highway into town.”

In September, a co-owner of the property where the blades had been discarded tried—without success—to use a stump grinder to cut them apart.

August 12. California: A wind turbine fire sparked a brushfire underneath that burned at least 329 acres (half a square mile).

August 14. California: Solar panels covering a half-million-square-foot roof of a commercial building caught fire. Aggressive work by more than 80 firefighters had the blaze

put out within an hour, even though the size of the building prevented them from using some of their best equipment to reach the flames. A news release from the Los Angeles County Fire Department made this observation: “Without the aggressive and timely actions of the crews on scene, the

fire could have continued to jump from solar array to solar array and potentially extend to the interior of the building, with devastating results for the business.”

August 15. Iowa: “Your wind turbine’s on fire again,” said a neighbor, making a 5 am call to farmer Sally Freeman. It was the third time in 18 months that one of her turbines had been hit by lightning and caught fire. (See the May 13 incident in Iowa.)

“The strikes left fiberglass, dust and other debris strewn over at least 240 acres, almost a third of the farm’s land,” reported local media. “And with the fall harvest underway, the family’s frustration with having the damaged turbines removed and the debris cleaned up is threatening their bottom line.”

According to the report: “The scattered debris on the farm has become more embedded in the corn as time goes on, leading to questions on how the harvest will unfold to avoid potential contamination and damage to farm equipment.”

Freeman claimed she received little help from the owner of the turbine and that the damage to her farm business could run into millions of dollars.

August 18. North Carolina: The roof of a commercial building caught fire from what the fire department described as an “unspecified abnormal electrical event in the solar panel system.” Thirty firefighters were called to put it out.

August 25. Missouri: For the second (but not last) time in 2024, a wind turbine tower collapsed at the High Prairie Renewable Energy Center. (See also April 26 and October 31.) The 175-turbine facility had been open since 2021.

September 6. Tennessee: Six fire departments, including the state forestry service, were needed to put out a grass fire that broke out at a solar energy facility.

September 7. New Jersey: Solar panels atop a commercial building caught fire. While that fire was burning, another (not solar-related) blaze erupted in the same community.

September 12. Arizona: The rooftop solar panels above a furniture store in a strip mall caught fire.



Solar panels cannot be fully de-energized. If the sun is shining, electricity is being produced within the panels. There is no 'off-switch.'"

September 26. Iowa: Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird announced a lawsuit against Global Fiberglass Solutions (GFS), alleging the firm “dumped and abandoned 1,300 decommissioned wind turbine blades in stockpiles across the state” and “refused cleanup, allowing these blades to pose an environmental risk.”

Turbine blades can be as long as a football field and are very difficult to recycle.

September 30. Massachusetts: Solar panels atop the roof of a residential home caught fire and burned through the roof. Ten emergency vehicles were brought to the scene. Nobody was living in the home. The fire was reported by a neighbor.

September 30. Oregon: A grass fire broke out at a solar panel facility, the second in two months. As with the July 31 incident (see above) fire officials blamed “overheated electronic panels that failed and then subsequently dropped molten electronics onto the dried grass.”

Soltage, the owner of the solar panels, removed them from the electrical grid and away from dry grass, but warned this did not fully address the fire risk.

“Solar panels cannot be fully de-energized,” claimed a Soltage news release. “If the sun is shining, electricity is

being produced within the panels. There is no ‘off-switch’ to stop electricity from being produced within the panels and the internal components.”

October 16. Texas: A fire at a solar facility burned eight acres before it was put out by local fire crews. The local Fox TV affiliate reported the “fire could have started from a power unit that controls the solar panels.”

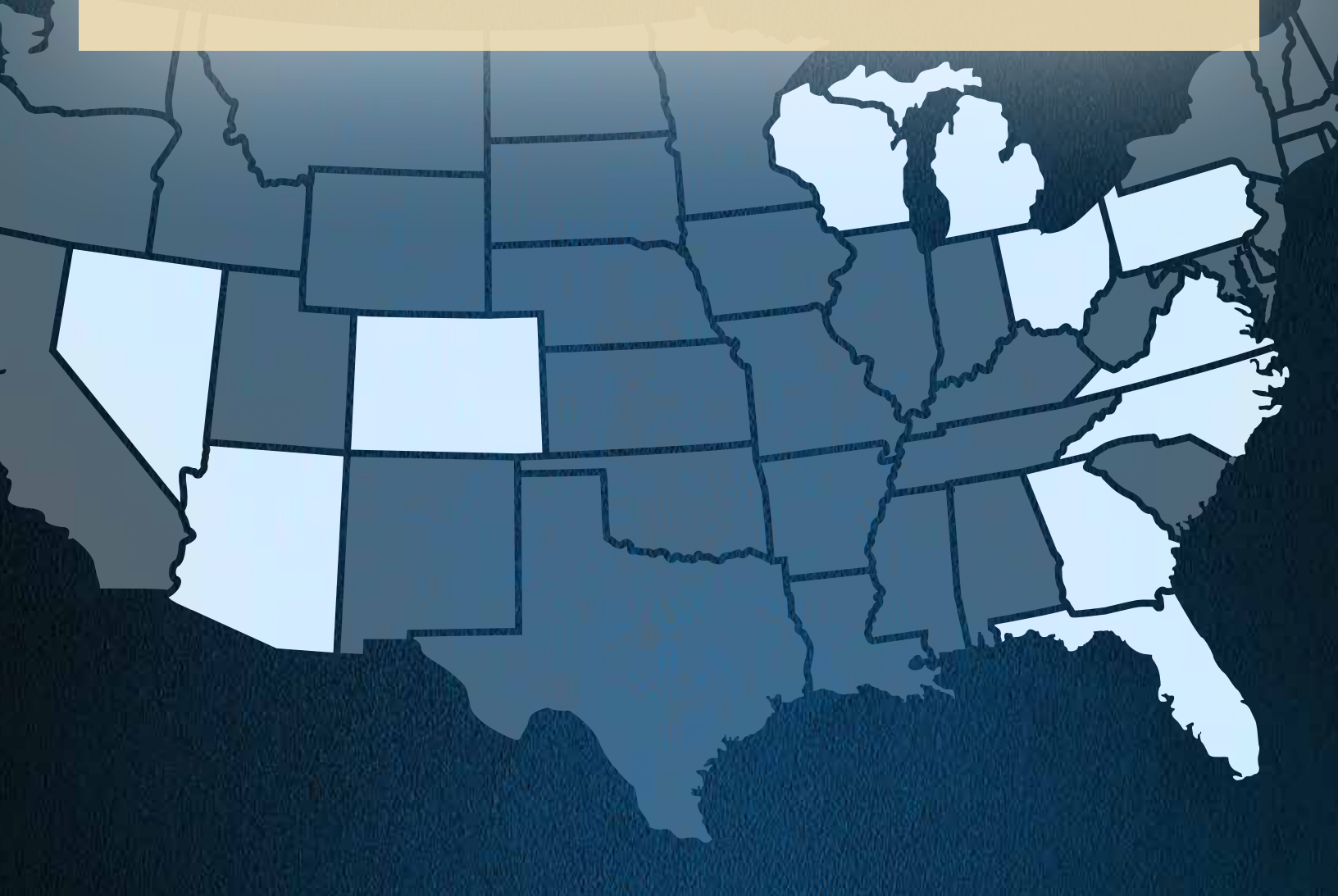
October 26. New York: Nearly 17,000 solar panels caught fire, and 15 fire departments were needed to put it out. Weather was once again at fault for the maladies of weather dependent power. A fire department official blamed strong winds and dry grass for the size of the blaze.

October 31. Missouri: The third turbine collapse in six months occurred at the High Prairie wind facility in Missouri. (See also: August 25 and April 26.) Witnesses reported two blades coming detached, followed by the rest of the tower falling with a loud crash. At the time of its opening in 2021, the facility had 175 turbines.

November 19. Massachusetts: A solar panel caught fire atop a residential home. ■

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

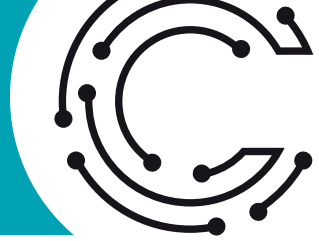
Parker Thayer's exposé reveals the shocking true story of the Everybody Votes campaign—the largest and most corrupt “charitable” voter registration effort in American history—that may have decided the 2020 presidential election and could decide 2024. The Everybody Votes campaign used the guise of civic-minded 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.



HOW CHARITIES SECRETLY HELP WIN ELECTIONS

BY PARKER THAYER

Read the report at
<https://capitalresearch.org/article/report-how-charities-secretly-help-win-elections/>



THE NONPROFIT VOTER REGISTRATION INDUSTRY

Parker Thayer

Note: This is Parker Thayer's oral testimony to the Election Integrity Committee of the Michigan House of Representatives on March 18, 2025.

Good afternoon. I'd like to begin by offering a heartfelt thank you to the committee members for inviting me to testify today. Briefly about myself: my name is Parker Thayer, and I'm a researcher at the Capital Research Center, a nonpartisan organization that specializes in researching the flows of money behind special interest groups seeking to influence policy making and elections. I was born and raised here in Michigan, attended Hillsdale College, and now reside in Monroe County with my wife, and *soon*, a baby girl. It is an honor to testify before the legislature of the state that I hope to always call home.

The topic that brings me here today is the nonprofit voter registration industry. It might not sound like a particularly exciting or important topic, and in an ideal world it wouldn't be either, but unfortunately, it's both, and particularly in Michigan. Indeed, it was Michigan that first started the corruption of the nonprofit voter registration industry back when the Ford Foundation whose funding of partisan voter registration drives in 1967 outraged congressional Democrats so much that they passed the Tax Reform Act of 1969, which created many of the electioneering restrictions on the charitable sector that we still have today. As you'll see later, many groups are still openly circumventing those rules.

Just before the 2020 election, and well afterwards as well, headlines around the state and the nation were grabbed by the story of thousands of suspicious voter registration forms being submitted in Muskegon by employees of GBI Strategies, a Tennessee-based canvassing and voter registration firm. The forms were immediately recognized as suspicious due to the inordinate number of them along with the signatures, dates of birth, and addresses not matching up on many of the forms, and the police and even, eventually, the FBI were quickly brought in to investigate.



Credit: Michigan House TV. License: <https://bit.ly/42nPHG>.

Parker Thayer.

It was all very exciting, but that's not what I'm here to talk about. What I'm here to tell you about is who was paying GBI to register voters in the first place.

During the 2020 election, GBI Strategies had several large PAC clients, including the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) and Biden for President, that paid them lots of money for canvassing, phone banking, and voter outreach, but only one client reported paying GBI Strategies for voter registration work. It wasn't a PAC at all, it was a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit by the name of "Voter Registration Project" which reported paying GBI Strategies over \$2.5 million for "Voter Registration Consulting" on their 2020 IRS Form 990. But why would a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, legally barred from any and all partisan electioneering activities by IRS rules attached to their tax-exempt status, be paying millions of dollars to a Democratic political canvassing and phone banking company?

The answer to that question takes us back to 2016, when the Voter Registration Project (VRP) was first created, and

Parker Thayer is an investigative researcher.

it doesn't make them look very good. The VRP apparently got its start in the bowels of a Democratic consulting firm by the name of Corridor Partners, which created a very sophisticated plan for a "nonpartisan" voter registration scheme that would take 5 years and \$105 million to generate 2.4 million additional voters in those states by the start of the 2020 election. The plan was initially emailed to Molly McUsic, the president of the Wyss Foundation, the private foundation of Hansjorg Wyss, a Swiss billionaire who has poured tens of millions of dollars into American "dark money" groups to meddle in our elections despite not being an American citizen. The details of this plan were ultimately leaked because McUsic inexplicably forwarded the plan to the then-presumptive head of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, John Podesta, whose emails were later obtained by Wikileaks. The blueprints for this plan had been edited, according to the consultants that had created it, to be more appropriate, meaning "less partisan" than a previous version of the plan, but by happy chance the consultants left the "track changes" function on, meaning the original version of the plan is still available for all to see.

How was the plan changed from a highly partisan operation into a "charitable" project permissible for a 501(c)(3) organization? Well, it wasn't, really. The complex potential voter numbers, states, proposed methods, and dollar amounts were all the same, the only thing that changed was how they were described. For example, where before the plan had said it would change the "outcome of an election" it now said it would change the "competitiveness of an election" and at one point three entire paragraphs were just deleted entirely because they featured detailed calculations of the ways in which this plan, had it been enacted earlier would have swung the results of past elections from a Republican to a Democrat. It's partisan stuff, just described differently, and it would become the basis of the same Voter Registration Project that was paying GBI Strategies in 2020.

Months later, blueprints for a nearly identical voter registration scheme appeared again in Podesta's emails, but this time with a name: The Everybody Votes Campaign. This would become the public facing name of the Voter Registration Project and its network, though the VRP did everything in its power to hide its existence from the public until my reporting forced them into the light in 2023.

With a catchy name decided upon, the Everybody Votes Campaign started hiring staff, registering voters, and raking in the money from the leading left-wing political donors and "dark money" groups in America. One of their biggest scores was the secret endorsement of a Democrat Super PAC called "Mind the Gap" that was created and led by Barabara Fried,

mother of crypto-fraudster and Democrat mega-donor Sam Bankman-Fried. *Vox* obtained a leaked copy of a memo Mind the Gap sent donors, advising them that the best way to help Democrats win in 2020 was donating to the Everybody Votes Campaign and another organization called the Voter Participation Center. That's right, a Democrat Super PAC was advising its donors to send their money elsewhere because a "nonpartisan" group was so much better than them at being partisan. The memo also vigorously instructs donors to keep the name of the Everybody Votes Campaign a secret from the media and Republicans, because if their identity were to become public somebody might try to stop or investigate them.

To answer my earlier question: Why was a "nonpartisan" charity paying millions of dollars to a Democrat political consulting firm like GBI Strategies that was submitting thousands of fraudulent registrations? Because the nonprofit was designed with partisan intent from the very beginning. If you want further proof, look no further than the current executive director of the Everybody Votes Campaign, Nellie Sires. Her previous job? Executive Director of the Wisconsin Democratic Party.

GBI Strategies isn't even the only recipient of Everybody Votes Campaign funds that has been embroiled in a scandal. At least three other Everybody Votes Campaign consultants and grantees have been the subject of major scandals surrounding illicit partisanship or fraudulent voter registrations.

First, this past election, stories emerged from York County Pennsylvania of another Democrat canvassing firm, Field+Media Corps, that had submitted thousands of voter registration forms on behalf of the Everybody Votes Campaign. According to the county, less than half of the forms were found to be legitimate, and voter registration forms submitted by Field+Media Corps in Monroe County Pennsylvania, Navajo County Arizona, and Mohave County Arizona were also found to be suspicious or fraudulent.

Second, in January the New Georgia Project, the nonprofit created by Stacey Abrams was fined \$300,000 for illicit partisan electioneering on Abrams's behalf during her 2018 gubernatorial campaign. It's the largest fine in the history of the Georgia State Ethics Commission, and the Georgia State Senate has now launched its own investigation. The New Georgia project has received nearly \$3 million for voter registration work from the Everybody Votes Campaign, and during the year of the campaign finance violations, a \$1 million grant from the Everybody Votes Campaign accounted for over half of the New Georgia Project's revenues.

Finally, in the lead up to the 2020 election, the Everybody Votes Campaign granted over \$10 million the Voter Participation Center, the second largest nonprofit voter registration group in the nation (after the Everybody Votes Campaign). The Voter Participation Center, you might remember, was the other group named in the Mind the Gap memo as the “most cost effective” group for “netting additional democratic votes.” The Voter Participation Center is active in dozens of states including Michigan, estimating in a 2020 election impact report that they generated a net of 16,000 votes here. The group was most recently in the news when reporters at the *Washington Free Beacon* unearthed that the Voter Participation Center was using filters to exclude certain audiences from its “nonpartisan” voter registration ads on Facebook and Instagram. Data from the Facebook Transparency Ad Library showed that VPC went out of its way to use “exclude” filters so that users with interests like “PGA Tour,” “Indianapolis 500,” “Daytona 500,” “Tom Clancy,” “Modified Jeeps,” “Duck Dynasty,” and others were NOT shown ads reminding them to register to vote. Meanwhile, VPC used “include” filters to target users interested in “African-American Literature,” “Jordan Peele,” “Taylor Swift,” “Patagonia,” and “hot yoga.” It’s painfully obvious that the purpose of these filters was to exclude possible Republican voters from a “nonpartisan” voter registration effort while targeting likely Democrat voters. Some people’s civic participation apparently matters more than others, in their view, and I’d love to see the data that VPC used to determine that “Duck Dynasty” enjoyers didn’t need to be registered to vote as much as “Taylor Swift” enjoyers. Voter

Participation Center, like Everybody Votes has also paid enormous sums of money to Democrat political consulting firms. Over the last several years \$17.8 million to Mission Control, a canvassing firm that advertises itself as “the most successful direct mail firm working in Democratic politics today.” It has also paid nearly \$40 million to the Pivot Group, another powerful Democrat consulting firm that boasts about “winning races from the municipal level to Congress and from the Statehouse to the Statewide office.”

There is a pattern here, if you haven’t noticed yet. All over the country, everywhere the Everybody Votes campaign sends its money problems seem to arise that corrupt the American charitable sector and harm the public’s trust in our elections. There is simply no reason to allow this to continue. The evidence of partisan rot in the nonprofit voter registration industry is overwhelming, it’s harming the country and it’s harming Michigan.

Everybody Votes Campaign should be made to explain what they’re going to do to stop the scandals that seem to follow them everywhere from happening again. Their grantees and contactors have been caught crossing the line at least four times now, they deserve no more second chances.

See the Appendix for Speaker Pro Tempore’s Letter to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi based on Thayer’s testimony. ■

Read previous articles from the Testimony series online at CapitalResearch.org/category/testimony/.

Appendix: Speaker Pro Tempore's Letter to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi.



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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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March 27, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

Thank you for serving as our nation's Chief Law Enforcement Officer and for your long history of public service. It is a great relief to know that someone of your background, history of success, and integrity is leading our nation's Department of Justice.

I would like to bring to your attention and request that you investigate what appear to be serious and significant crimes that are adversely affecting our nation and corrupting its political systems.

In Michigan, we've been made aware of potential large-scale tax fraud involving several 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entities that are allegedly engaging in electioneering activities in Michigan, including partisan voter registration efforts. This request is based on comprehensive research conducted by Parker Thayer of the Capital Research Center, a reputable think tank based in Washington, D.C. Mr. Thayer recently testified before the Michigan House Committee on Election Integrity, of which I serve as chair.

The research highlights the activities of GBI Strategies, a partisan voter registration firm that operated during the 2020 election in Michigan. GBI Strategies was reportedly involved in submitting tens of thousands of suspicious voter registration forms, which led to investigations by local police and the FBI. These forms were characterized by discrepancies in signatures, dates of birth, and addresses that did not correspond with real voters. Despite these irregularities, GBI Strategies received millions of dollars from 501(c)(3) organizations – such as the Voter Registration Project – for voter registration work.

The Voter Registration Project, along with other significant 501(c)(3) entities like the Voter Participation Center and Everybody Votes, appear to be raising and spending funds for electioneering purposes, which is a violation of IRS regulations that prohibit 501(c)(3) organizations from engaging in partisan activities. The Voter Registration Project, for instance, paid GBI Strategies over \$2.5 million for "Voter Registration Consulting" during the 2020 election despite being legally barred from partisan electioneering.

Furthermore, the Voter Participation Center has been involved in similar activities. The Center has been accused of using targeted filters to exclude potential Republican voters from its voter registration efforts, while the Voter Registration Project has been linked to multiple scandals involving illicit partisanship and fraudulent voter registrations.

Attorney General Pam Bondi

Page 2

March 27, 2025

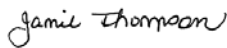
Given the scale and seriousness of these allegations, I urge the Department of Justice to initiate a thorough investigation into these entities to determine the extent of their involvement in illegal electioneering activities and fraudulent voter registration efforts. Such an investigation is crucial to uphold the integrity of our electoral process as well as to ensure that tax-exempt organizations comply with federal laws.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I enclose a copy of the remarks given by Mr. Thayer before the Committee on Election Integrity, as well as the slide deck. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or documentation.

Sincerely,



SPT Rachelle Smit
43rd House District



Rep. Jamie Thompson
28th House District



Rep. William Bruck
30th House District



Rep. Jennifer Wortz
35th House District



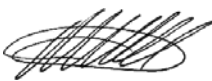
Rep. Steve Carra
36th House District



Rep. Ann Bollin
49th House District



Rep. Jason Woolford
50th House District



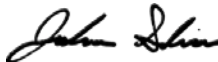
Rep. Matt Maddock
51st House District



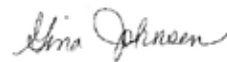
Rep. Doug Wozniak
59th House District



Rep. Jay DeBoyer
63rd House District



Rep. Josh Schriver
66th House District



Rep. Gina Johnsen
78th House District



Rep. Angela Rigas
79th House District



Rep. Luke Meerman
89th House District



Rep. Tim Kelly
93rd House District



Rep. Timothy Beson
96th House District



Rep. Greg Alexander
98th House District



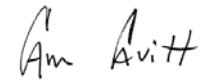
Rep. Mike Hoadley
99th House District



Rep. Tom Kunse
100th House District



Rep. Joseph Fox
101st House District



Rep. Cam Cavitt
106th House District



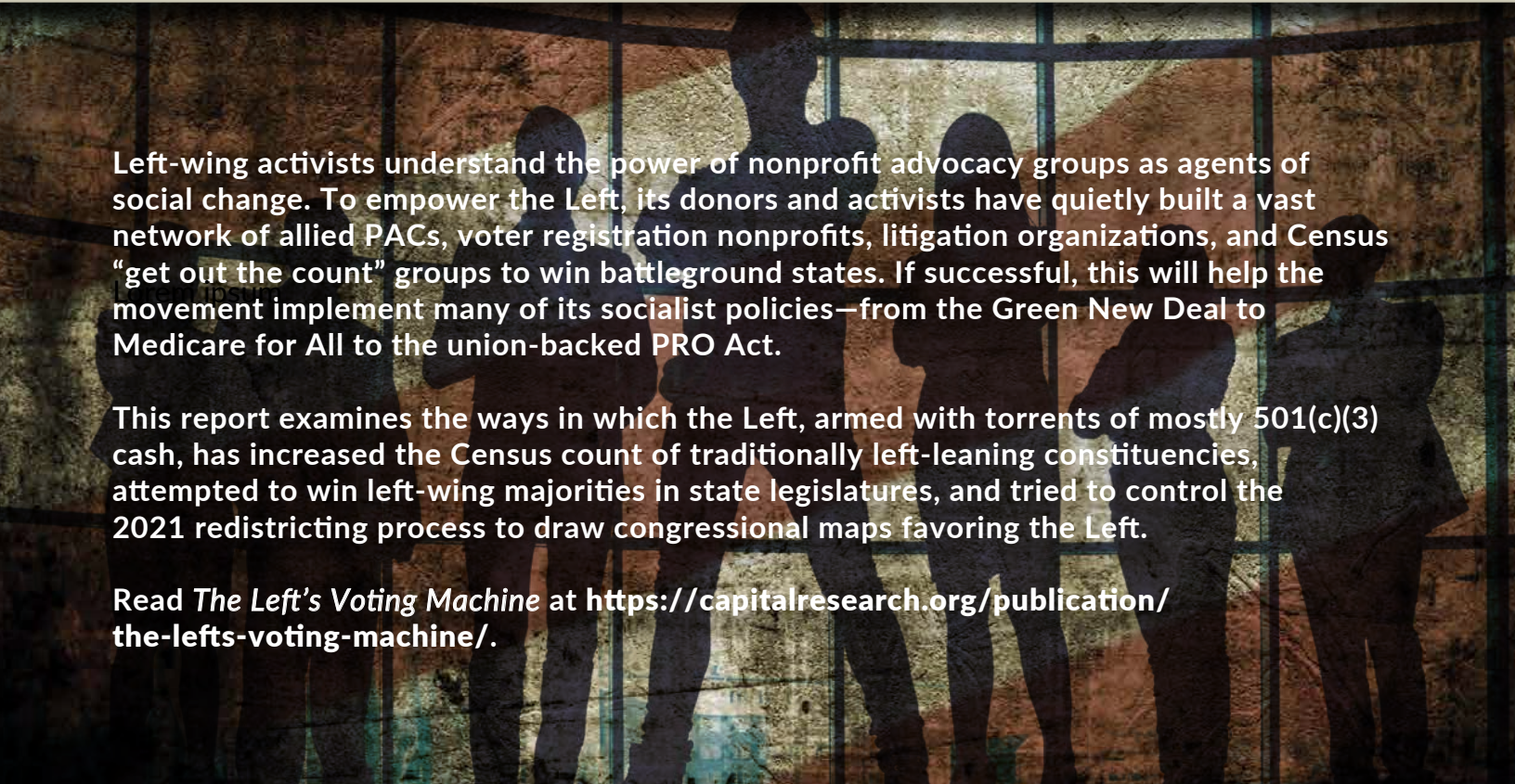
Rep. Greg Markkanen
110th House District



THE LEFT'S VOTING MACHINE



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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/>.



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MARCHING TOWARD VIOLENCE

THE DOMESTIC ANTI-ISRAELI PROTEST MOVEMENT

BY: RYAN MAURO

“Over 150 groups involved in the disruptive anti-Israel protests on college campuses and elsewhere in the United States are “pro-terrorism.” The vast majority support Hamas and/or the October 7 terrorist attacks. The movement contains militant elements pushing it toward a wider, more severe campaign focused on property destruction and violence properly described as domestic terrorism.”

Read the full study on [CapitalResearch.org](https://www.CapitalResearch.org).



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