

THE “CHARITIES”

INFLUENCING ELECTIONS

== 2024 AND BEYOND ==



CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK



The Capital Research Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. As America's investigative think tank, CRC connects the dots between the philanthropic sector and the organizations that influence public policy so that the public knows which special interests are being protected.

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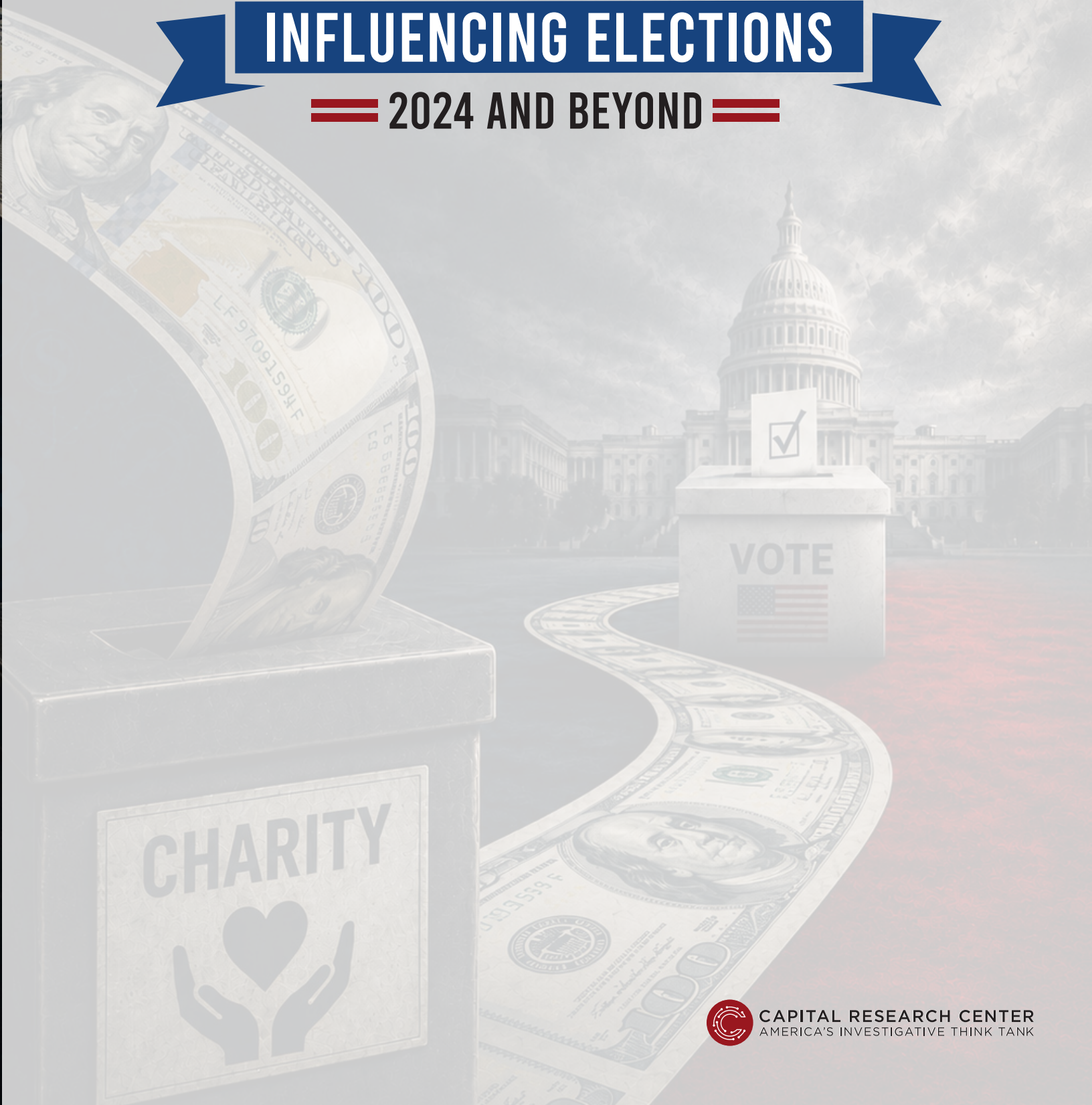
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

“A REPUBLIC IF YOU CAN KEEP IT.”

From the Constitutional Convention through the end of the 20th century, American elections were a simple, widely understood, and respected core act of citizenship. Of course, everyone took turns being displeased with the outcome of certain elections. But win or lose, Americans accepted that the greatest experiment in representative government was working. The evidence was strong: only lightly altered over that time, our electoral system has helped us unleash an exceptional culture of liberty and opportunity that is both historically unprecedented and still has no modern rivals.

That’s surely worth preserving. But the 21st century has birthed well-funded movements that all presume otherwise and promote major changes to how the American people hire their politicians. Perhaps not coincidentally, as these movements preaching the supposed failures of our representative republic have multiplied, trust in our elections has declined.

This report profiles multiple examples.

In the conventional American tradition, voter registration was a nonpartisan, good government effort to increase participation. But today’s version has become fiercely partisan. The chapter titled “**The Left’s voter registration grift thrived in 2024**” explains how that happened:

The best explanation of the tax-exempt vote machine comes from the leaked emails of John Podesta. One such email, sent to Podesta in 2015 by the president of Swiss billionaire Hansjörg Wyss’s private foundation, contains an extremely detailed plan for using 501(c)(3) foundations and charities [which are forbidden by law to carry out partisan election work] to fund

and execute a \$100 million plot to register millions of voters.

But not all voters. In callously presented tables, the plan sums up “total non-white” votes that might be generated in eight key swing states, while still-visible edits show entire paragraphs about beating Republicans and “reshaping the electorate” being removed [from an earlier version of the scheme . . .] the plan was to direct 501(c)(3) voter registration at only demographics whose voting tendencies just so happen to benefit the Democratic Party for the specific purpose of winning elections.

By 2020, this program had become so pivotal for Democrats that a Democratic Super PAC boasted voter registration using the charitable sector is “4 to 10 times more cost-effective than the next-best alternative” at “netting additional Democratic votes” after tax considerations are included.

This voter registration machine spent \$638 million during the 2024 election, and much of that was raised by what are supposed to be nonpartisan charitable nonprofits. But many of those 501(c)(3) groups were forwarding most of the money over to 501(c)(4) advocacy nonprofits.

Examples of nonprofits profiled in this chapter include (but are not limited to) the Voter Participation Center, State Voices, America Votes Education Fund, Democracy Matters Foundation, and the Guarantee Our Votes Projects.

Alongside this behavior, some groups, such as the Voter Participation Center (VPC) and its allies, have been alleging voter suppression. But in the chapter titled

“The voting experts are full of it,” this report shows that VPC’s own research has repeatedly shown that the suppression has not occurred.

For example, in 2021 Georgia passed an election integrity measure that was dubbed “Jim Crow 2.0” by President Biden because he and his allies asserted it would suppress the votes of “underrepresented communities.” Similarly, VPC joined an ultimately unsuccessful lawsuit to overturn the Georgia measure.

But a September 2025 report from the Voter Participation Center found the opposite of voter suppression, even though the Georgia law remained on the books for the 2024 election:

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

Not convinced by its own research, VPC is now an opponent of the federal SAVE Act, which merely requires proof of citizenship before casting a ballot. Repeating claims it used against the Georgia law, VPC now asserts the SAVE Act will “disenfranchise” voters from the “underrepresented groups.”

Another plan to rig future elections in favor of Democrats is revealed in the chapter titled **“The vote machine is already planning for the 2030 Census.”** If the voter registration charities were operating what is better described as a partisan “get out the vote” program, then census charities are running a “get out the count” operation.

The main player here is the Funders Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP) and its Funders Census Initiative (FCI), formed in 2008 with support from the Ford Foundation and other major left-wing philanthropic donors.

This Big Philanthropy alliance spent \$38 million to help the federal government count the people FCI most wanted to find for the 2010 Census. FCI also boasted of its work to defeat a proposal that would have required a citizenship question during that count.

This program was ramped up to \$118 million (courtesy of more than 100 donors) for the 2020 Census. As the report notes, the bigger payday made a bigger difference:

... by the Census Bureau’s own admission, there was massive overcounting, mostly in blue states, and massive undercounting, mostly in red states. The 2010 Census was reported to have a minuscule error rate of less than 1 percent; in 2020, the census reported undercounting six states and overcounting eight. [. . .] As Hans Von Spakovsky explained in 2022, the Census Bureau’s post-census survey data for the 2020 count shows that the over and under counts were so egregious that Minnesota and Rhode Island were apportioned two congressional seats that ought to have rightfully been assigned to Florida.

Corrupting the census count, as this report notes, may have been the ultimate form of gerrymandering. But another chapter in this report, **“Major donors to the Virginia redistricting ballot measure,”** shows that election-influencing charities have also been hard at work creating new forms of the old-style gerrymandering. In Virginia, this effort took the form of a ballot proposal that would have redrawn the state’s congressional districts ahead of the 2026 midterm election. If successful, the proposal would have likely flipped Virginia from a narrow 6-5 Democratic majority (which more or less reflects the actual partisan divide among Virginians) to a 10-1 Democratic advantage (which does not).

It was the most expensive ballot measure in Virginia history, with supporters of the 10-1 Democrat-favorable map “significantly better resourced” than proponents of keeping the old map. Our report shows millions of dollars contributed by committees affiliated with George Soros, the Service Employees International Union, and what was once known as the Arabella Advisors network.

All this loot—more than \$66 million—helped persuade a majority of Virginia voters to approve the measure in an April 2026 special election. But two weeks later, the Virginia Supreme Court invalidated the new map, citing procedural violations.

The U.S. Constitution is another “procedural” roadblock the election-influencing charities would like to sweep away. The chapter titled “**Enemies of the Electoral College**” profiles a movement that seeks to do away with the way every president since George Washington has been selected.

The largest and best-funded effort is known as the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact. It would “award all electoral votes from all states within the compact to the winner of the national popular vote, regardless of which candidate won the popular vote within each individual state.” The chapter explains the many problems with this, not least of which is diminishing the influence of low-population states—exactly what the authors of the U.S. Constitution intended to prevent with the Electoral College and the Senate.

The alleged upside of the NPV Compact is that it would eliminate closely contested elections where the candidate receiving the most popular votes (a majority or not) does not win the Electoral College. Supposedly, the change would create the appearance of a more united nation.

The chapter notes that the proposal is mostly a solution in search of a problem:

The alleged problem this supposedly solves has happened just five times over sixty American presidential elections, and only twice since the election of 1888. Notably, the beneficiaries in the two cases that anyone

alive can remember (Bush in 2000 and Trump in 2016) were both Republicans. It should be no surprise that the NPV movement is animated more by partisan goals than policy objectives.

The report shows the NPV movement is also supported by some carefully selected, nominally Republican political professionals to help it succeed in red states. But here again, the old Arabella Advisors network, Big Labor, and other left-leaning contributors have been writing most of the NPV checks.

Hiring the Republican operators in a rent-a-pol campaign has been somewhat successful. At present, NPV has secured a commitment from states representing 222 of the 270 presidential electoral votes need to implement the Compact.

Finally, the chapter titled “**Ranked Choice Voting is down, but not out**” profiles an even more confusing idea that seems designed to further muddle the presidential election process after 238 years and sow distrust. As the essay explains, the American tradition of “one person one vote” and “vote for the person you like” would be replaced with this contraption:

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

Notable supporters include Texas hedge-fund manager John Arnold ... but not actual Americans. On Election Day 2024, voters in at least five states rejected ballot

measures that would have implemented RCV. The report also shows that RCV is so unpopular that 19 states have enacted total prohibitions against its use, with seven of them doing so since January 2025.

This shouldn't be surprising. We know in our bones that making voting needlessly complicated corrupts the integrity of elections. We also know that charitable voter registration should not be slanted in favor of one political party. We know that corrupting the census count corrupts our elections (and much else).

And though it isn't as straightforward as a simple popular vote, we are taught in elementary school why the Framers of the Constitution created the Electoral College to preserve the role of states with small populations. It's one of many good reasons why 13 colonies hugging the Atlantic Coast became 50 states spilling far out into the Pacific and nearly touching Russia.

That's just one of many reasons why we respect our Constitution and change it only in very extreme situations. We are history's most wildly successful nation because we run on elegantly simple software.

After emerging from the Constitutional Convention, Ben Franklin was asked what sort of government he and his patriot compatriots had drawn up. "A republic, if you can keep it," he famously replied. Given what we now know that the republic has accomplished, it shouldn't be so hard to keep it. But as this report shows, Franklin was wise to issue the warning.



THE LEFT'S VOTER REGISTRATION GRIFT THRIVED IN 2024

BY PARKER THAYER

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

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

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

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

The History of the Vote Machine

The best explanation of the tax-exempt vote machine comes from the leaked emails of John Podesta. One such email, sent to Podesta in 2015 by the president of Swiss billionaire Hansjörg Wyss's private foundation, contains an *extremely* detailed plan for using 501(c)(3)s to fund and execute a \$100 million plot to register millions of voters.¹

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

This plan, as the Capital Research Center was the first to expose, later became the Everybody Votes Campaign, the largest and most partisan voter registration scheme in American history, and it played a pivotal role in helping President Biden win the 2020 election. A leaked memo from Democratic Super PAC Mind the Gap called groups such as the Everybody Votes Campaign and the Voter Participation Center “4 to 10 times more cost effective than the next best alternative” at “netting additional democratic votes” and Democratic mega donors lined up to fund them. Some donors, including the San Francisco Foundation, the Black Dog Private



Foundation, and the David E. Reese Family Foundation were even foolhardy enough to write out the name of the Super PAC in the description of their charitable grantmaking, without receiving so much as a second look from the IRS.²

All by April

The tax-exempt vote machine was riding high on its 2020 successes as 2024 approached. Off-cycle budgets remained high, much higher than in the past, since donors had learned that “registering in the off year is just as — or even more — effective than registering during the on year” because it kept the vote machine running smoothly.³ With election season approaching, Mind the Gap once again advised its donors that 501(c)(3) voter registration would be the key to a Democratic victory in 2024, while some two dozen new organizations had been added to the industry’s ranks since 2020.⁴

Another initiative, All by April, was launched by Pierre Omidyar’s Democracy Fund specifically to urge donors to distribute their “election-related grants” to 501(c)(3) groups early, by April of 2024, giving the vote machine plenty of time and money to get back into full gear before November.⁵ One-hundred-seventy-four donors signed the pledge, making a combined “\$79 million in new 501(c)(3) grants for election-related work and moving up \$61 million in scheduled grant payments so that grantees would have access to funds earlier in the year.”⁶ In total the campaign estimates it mobilized \$155 million, getting generous funding to many electioneering 501(c)(3)s earlier than ever before. All by April even conducted a detailed survey to verify it.⁷

Things were looking very good.

A Fly in the “Nonpartisan” Ointment

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

had shifted and the “nonpartisan” voter registration groups might now actually be helping Republicans.⁸

The memo caused quite a ruckus.

Writing about the memo in April the *Washington Post* reported that Strauss and other Democrats were concerned that nonpartisan voter registration groups wouldn’t be able to “avoid signing up likely Republicans” in 2024. The main reason for this concern was “a marked shift among the roughly 1 in 5 citizens of voting age who are unregistered toward Republicans,” and several polls “[showing] Biden polling below 2020 levels among Black and Latino voters.”⁹ Suddenly, the façade of altruistic concern for the voices of “underrepresented communities” and “civic participation” had dropped. “Indeed, if we were to blindly register nonvoters and get them on the rolls, we would be distinctly aiding Trump’s quest for a personal dictatorship,” Strauss wrote. The memo also admits that the Democratic Party and its donors have outsourced its voter mobilization work to the nonprofit sector, saying “For too long, many funders have relegated the work of mobilizing base constituencies, especially voters of color and young people, to nonpartisan programs.”¹⁰

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

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

By the Numbers

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

Using a service called Impala, which aggregates nonprofit financial data for research and fundraising purposes, our researchers gathered financial information for 83 of the leading voter registration and get-out-the-vote groups

in 2024. Groups were selected judiciously to avoid counting large organizations for whom voter registration and mobilization was only a small part of their overall work. Only 501(c)(3) organizations were included, and for each group total revenues and expenses from both 2020 and 2024 were recorded (when applicable) in order to estimate the rough size of the nonprofit voter registration and mobilization industry. Totals were automatically rounded by Impala to the nearest 100,000 or the nearest 100 if the value was below one million.

A digital copy of the data can be found at CapitalResearch.org.¹¹

The results showed very impressive growth:

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

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

Some concessions and explanations must be made regarding this data.

First, there is a non-negligible amount of double-counting in the totals since many of the organizations made large grants to one or more of the other organizations on the list, so the total size of the industry is at least slightly inflated by those grants. For the purposes of comparing the year over year size of the industry, this double counting does not create as much of a problem since relative size, not total size, is most important.

Second, there was a staggering amount of inflation between 2020 and 2024, 20 percent by most estimates, so the real growth in expenses from 2020 to 2024 is

about 10 percent—still sizeable, but not as impressive as the 30 percent nominal growth. Ten percent growth is still a remarkable feat since, according to Open Secrets, inflation adjusted total spending on elections through traditional PACs in 2024 was about twenty percent less than 2020. At a time when the total money being spent on politics was decreasing dramatically (relative to the last presidential election cycle) the voter registration industry actually seems to have surged.¹²

The Everybody Votes Campaign

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

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

For example, in 2024 the Voter Registration Project's 990 shows it paid a canvassing firm called Field+Media Corps \$4.6 million for "voter registration support" in 2024.¹³ In October 2025, seven employees of Field+Media Corps were charged by Pennsylvania Attorney General Dave Sunday with numerous crimes, including forgery and tampering with public records related to their work on behalf of the EVC after *thousands*

of fraudulent voter registration forms were submitted in bulk in multiple important swing districts just before the 2024 election.¹⁴ Clearly, the \$9.1 million that the Voter Registration Project paid for voter registration "quality control services" to another canvassing firm called The Outreach Team was not well spent.¹⁵

One of the EVC's grantees, New Georgia Project, was also fined \$300,000¹⁶ for illegal partisan activity by the Georgia ethics commission in January 2025 and was ultimately permanently dissolved.¹⁷ Another grantee, the Voter Formation Project, reported record high revenues and 50,000 voter registrations after spending millions on digital ads in 2024, but the group was also suddenly closed in 2025 with no explanation given.^{18,19}

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

Voter Participation Center

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

In March, the VPC's misleading mailers caused so much confusion that the Mississippi and Alabama secretaries of state each had to issue statements clarifying that they were not official government communications.^{20,21}

In September, the VPC was caught filtering its digital voter registration ads so that they wouldn't be shown

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

to people interested in things like NASCAR, Duck Dynasty, or golf.²² This scandal resulted in a demand from Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (R-NY) that the IRS investigate the VPC's tax status compliance.²³

In October, the VPC's misleading mailers *again* caused so much confusion in Mississippi that the Secretary of State issued a statement.²⁴

In November, the VPC was sent a cease and desist by the Attorney General of Maryland over intimidating mailers that they sent threatening to tell the recipient's neighbors if the recipient didn't vote that year.²⁵

The VPC also continued its controversial relationship with a consulting firm called the "Pivot Group," paying the firm nearly \$15 million for mailing services despite the fact that the Pivot Group has long described itself as "committed to electing Democrats up and down the ballot."²⁶

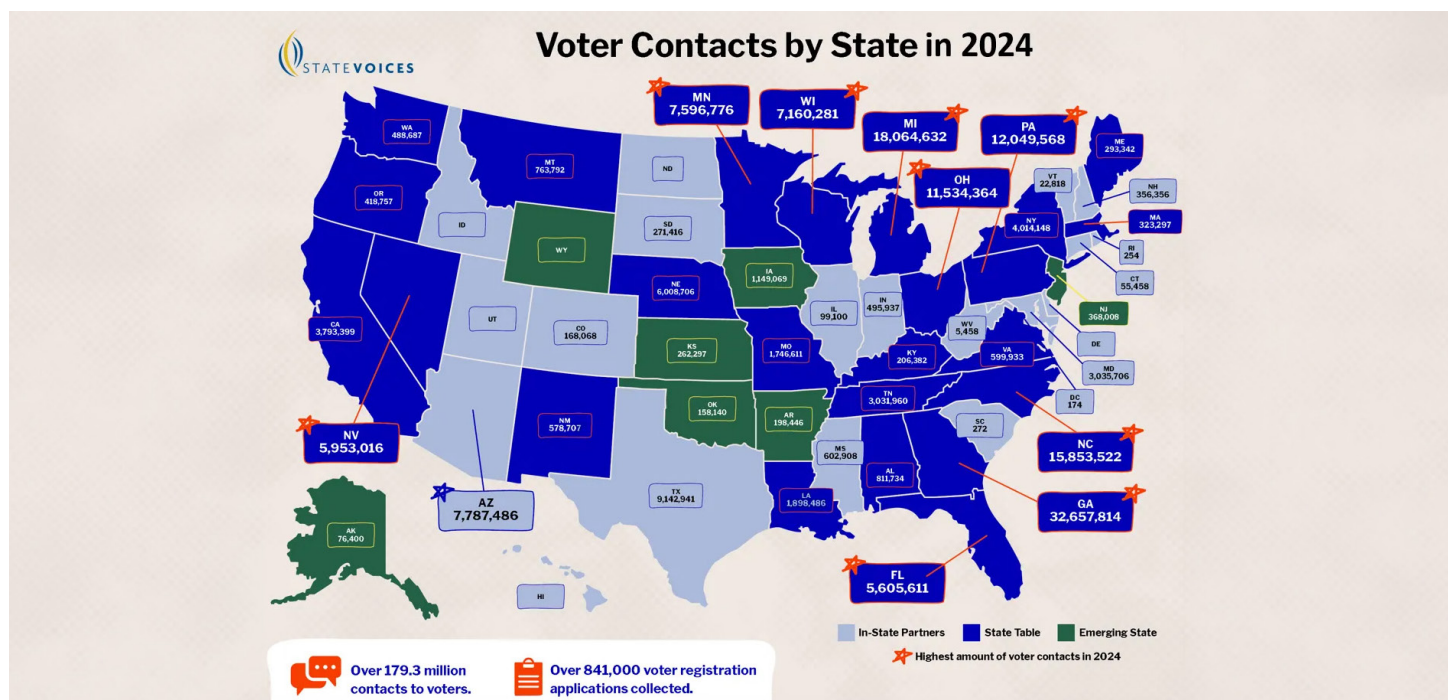
State Voices

State Voices is probably the leading organizing and training hub for the left's vast network of smaller get-

out-the-vote groups. They provide technical training, data tools, and other assistance through their "state tables" which often work with and fund a dozen or more local groups.²⁷

State Voices raised nearly \$20 million in 2024 and spent nearly \$25 million, a significant decrease from 2020. But that shrinkage might be partially explained by "state tables" within the State Voices network spinning off and obtaining independent tax status, meaning their revenues and expenses would no longer appear on the State Voices books. Despite diminished revenues and expenses, State Voices still reported its network made more than 179 million voter contacts and registered 840,000 voters during 2024.^{28,29} In 2020 the group reported only 124 million voter contacts but 2.1 million voter registrations, so voter registration numbers were cut dramatically while voter contact numbers improved. Perhaps Aaron Strauss's memo *did* make an impact?³⁰

State Voices is an extremely useful organization for understanding the scale and activity of the tax-exempt vote machine because they train and fund so many



organizations across so many states that are below them in the food chain. In their 2024 annual report State Voices provided a map of their voter contact numbers broken down state-by-state. Looking at the states highlighted with red stars, indicating where the most voter contacts were performed, a clear pattern emerges (see image on previous page).

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

Enough is Enough

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

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

keep abusing the register-by-demographic loophole that the IRS has benevolently neglected to close with even the slightest enforcement action.

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

The 501(c)(3) "Blood Bags"

While the tax-exempt vote machine grew larger than ever before, a concerning parallel development was

also emerging. During 2024 multiple 501(c)(3) groups emerged from out of nowhere with massive budgets making enormous grants to an affiliated 501(c)(4) and doing nothing else. Inspired by the dystopian film *Mad Max*, wherein prisoners are kept alive for the sole purpose of providing blood transfusions, we have dubbed this arrangement the 501(c)(3)

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

"blood bag" because these nonprofits seem to have been intended as parasitized feeder-organs for their partisan affiliates from the very beginning.

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

The 501(c)(3) "blood bags" are totally different. Rather than performing their tax-exempt function themselves, they quietly spent upwards of 95 percent of their budgets on grants to their 501(c)(4) affiliates, outsourcing their

charitable functions entirely to groups that routinely donated to Super PACs.

America Votes Education Fund

In 2023, the America Votes Education Fund, the legally affiliated 501(c)(3) wing of America Votes, didn't exist. In 2024, it spent \$20.7 million. Of that, \$532 was allocated for office expenses, \$274 for fundraising expenses, and \$20,748,002 granted to America Votes. Perhaps they used that \$532 to buy a checkbook, some "AV Education Fund" letterhead, and a plaque for an empty office door while the tax-exempt work it was nominally created to do was outsourced entirely to the bullpen of partisan operatives down the hall?³¹

Outside of that, the America Votes Education Fund has done nothing of its own. Its three board members, Greg Speed, Heidi Schloesser, and Brandon Boswell, serve as the president, COO, and treasurer of America Votes; it reported zero accounting or legal fees; it had zero paid employees or volunteers. The only reason for its "charitable" existence is taking in tax-deductible donations and delivering them to the group next door, whose statement on the 2024 election brags: "Our program also contributed to Democrats' Senate wins in Nevada, Michigan, Wisconsin, and likely Arizona, as well as major state-level victories in North Carolina, including the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General races."³²

Even more troubling, almost all of America Votes Education Fund's revenue came from a \$19.25 million grant from Future Forward USA Action, a 501(c)(4)³³ that the *New York Times* called the "dark-money group of the main super PAC backing Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Kamala Harris." It seems likely that Future Forward USA Action counted this contribution to America Votes Education Fund towards its own 51 percent charitable activity threshold that the IRS requires them to meet, but the money was simply passed along to another 501(c)(4) whose own "charitable" activities are limited to supposedly nonpartisan get-out-the-vote operations run by the exact same operatives who admittedly "contributed to Democrats' Senate wins" in 2024.³⁴

Other large donors to the group include the Arabella Advisors-led New Venture Fund,³⁵ the Silicon Valley Community Foundation,³⁶ the Linda and Lenny Bell Foundation, and the Wallace H. Coulter Trust,³⁷ all of which are 501(c)(3)s. Each should probably be asked if they knew that every cent of their money was going to be rerouted to a group that openly boasts that it works to elect Democrats.

Guarantee Our Votes Project

The Guarantee Our Votes Project,³⁸ a 501(c)(3) affiliate of the Democratic Governors Association, stretched the limits of 501(c)(3) status even further.³⁹

The group spent \$13,919,873 in 2024, with \$39,873, or 0.2 percent, spent on legal, accounting, and office expenses. The other 99.8 percent was spent on grants to America Works USA⁴⁰ (\$13.85 million) and New Hampshire Youth Movement Project (\$30,000).⁴¹ America Works USA is one of the Democratic Governors Association's affiliated 501(c)(4)s and has historically spent most of its money on Democratic PAC contributions.

The group's May to April financial calendar means it is not possible to see the group's finances for most of 2024 yet. But PAC spending records show that the group gave over \$6 million to the Democratic Governors Association in 2024. The organization's only donors in 2024 were the Vanguard Charitable Endowment,⁴² which gave \$9.9 million, and the Foundation for the Carolinas,⁴³ which gave the other \$4 million. Both donors operate donor advised funds (DAFs) which are traditionally not allowed to contribute directly to a 501(c)(4) organization, but the Guarantee Our Votes Project seems to have been conjured into being just to solve that problem, and on behalf of an arm of the Democratic party, no less.⁴⁴

Democracy Matters Foundation

The Democracy Matters Foundation (DMF), formerly the Franklin Education Forum, spent \$34.7 million in 2024, with \$31.38 million granted to the affiliated Democracy Matters and \$1.86 million granted to Onyx Impact. Both of the latter were newly created 501(c)(4) groups.⁴⁵

That means nearly 96 percent of all Democracy Matters Foundation expenses went towards grants to 501(c)(4) groups. DMF is run by Bradley Beychok,⁴⁶ a long-time affiliate of Democratic political operative David Brock.⁴⁷ The group's biggest donors in 2024 were the American Independent Foundation (\$10 million)⁴⁸ and the Voter Participation Center (\$5 million).⁴⁹ The Voter Participation Center, as explained above, is one of the worst partisan offenders in the tax-exempt vote machine, and apparently its largest grant in 2024 went to nothing more than a façade for a 501(c)(4).

Bright Futures Fund

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

Fidelity Charitable Investments Gift Fund, one of America’s largest commercial DAFs went straight for the jugular and made, what seems to be, its first ever grant to a 501(c)(4) rendering itself, or at least one of its accounts, the “blood bag.” And what a 501(c)(4) it was.⁵⁰

Fidelity granted \$37.5 million directly to a 501(c)(4) named Bright Futures Fund in 2024. According to Gabe Kaminsky at *The Free Press*, the Bright Futures Fund was incorporated in late 2023 by an associate of Democratic super lawyer Marc Elias and spent \$182 million in 2024 with tens of millions going to pro-Kamala Harris and Biden super PACs and other Democrat-aligned organizations. Unlike the groups above, however, Bright Futures Fund then granted a combined \$37.5 million to 12 different 501(c)(3) groups, suggesting a little more regard for IRS rules than the other “blood bags.”⁵¹

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

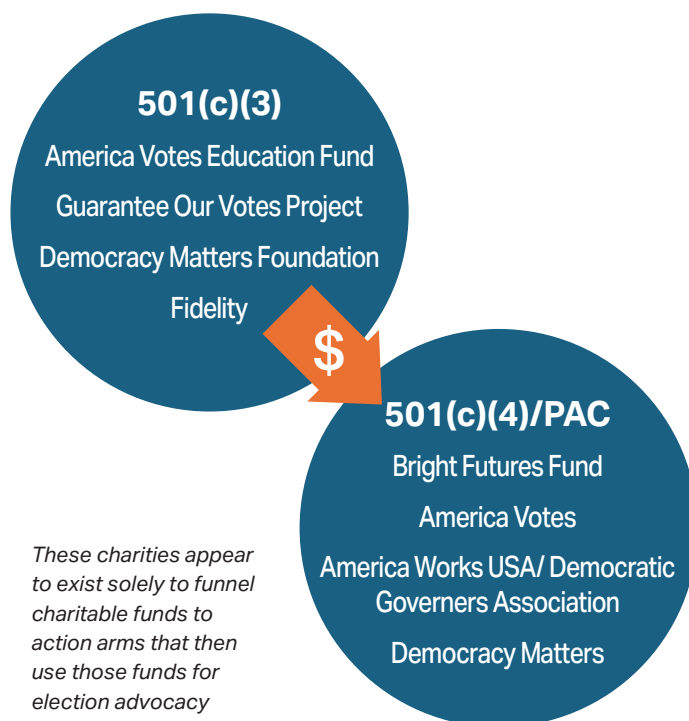
Only time will tell whether this is the first of many commercial DAF grants to 501(c)(4) groups or a one-off. But if this is the start of an industry-wide trend it will mean huge changes for the charitable, “dark money,” and PAC industries.

The “Blood Bag” Tax-Exempt Vote Machine

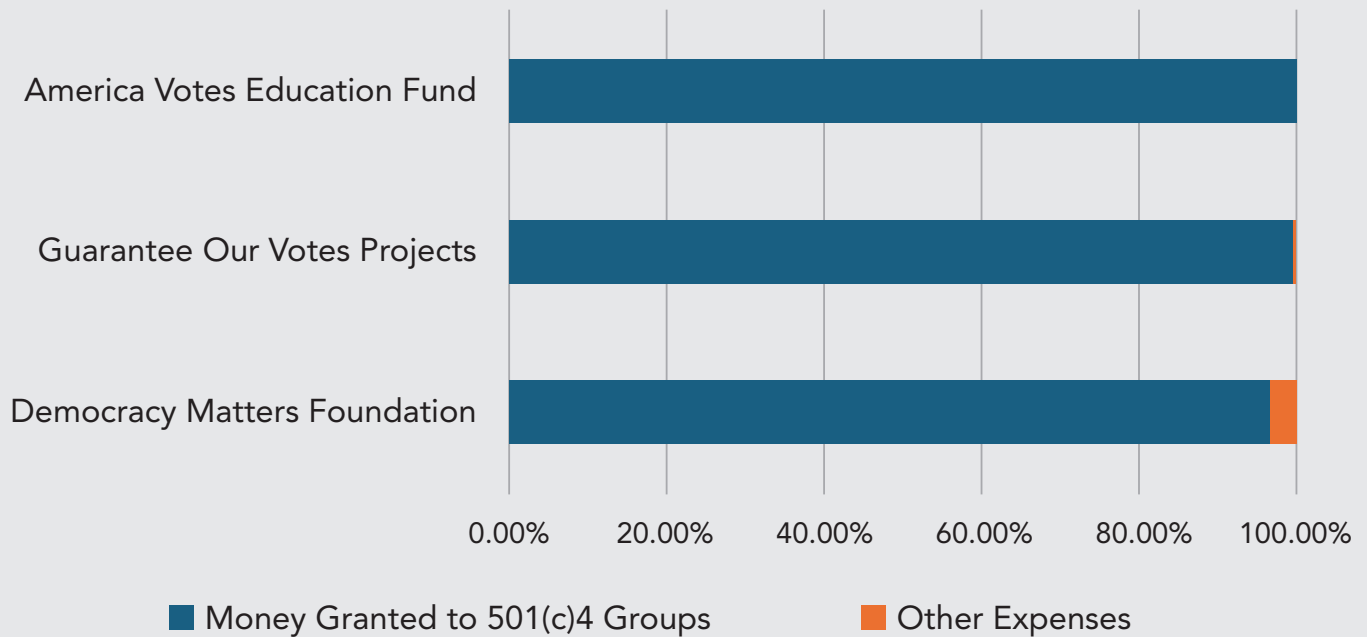
The “blood bag” arrangement is something new. Groups on the left have long used the 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) pairing, but not like this, and this new tactic is concerning. If funding the charitable half of a 501(c)(4) is henceforth to be considered a sufficient tax-exempt function for an entire 501(c)(3),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

Worse yet, the “blood bags” are almost all tied to leading members of the tax-exempt vote machine in some way, suggesting this is the industry’s latest creation in a year when they were already pushing the envelope further than ever before. The vote machine has entire think tanks dedicated to sharing successful strategies so it’s a near certainty that, by the end of the 2026 cycle, the “blood bag” arrangement will have been replicated by numerous funders all over the country.⁵²

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



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



GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF VOTER REGISTRATION

BY PARKER THAYER

The explosion of the tax-exempt voter registration industry from 2020 to 2024 was not solely a function of private donors. The industry has received a generous amount of government funding as well thanks to the Biden administration's frequent grants to openly left-wing political activist groups. Thanks to policies like "Bidenbucks," which tried to turn government agencies into GOTV (get out the vote) machines, government-funded nonprofits started seeking out advice on running voter registration drives like never before.⁵³

In 2021, NonprofitVOTE, a group whose sole purpose is to encourage more nonprofits to do GOTV work, published a Federal Funds and Voter Registration guide that explained how nonprofits can get around the rules that restrict voter registration drives by government-funded entities. The guide explains that nonprofits receiving Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) can't use CSBG funds "to pay for staff or materials to conduct voter registration" or "provide rides to the polls," but can "use CSBG or other funds to do any other kinds of nonpartisan voter engagement activities" as long as the nonprofit's work is "limited" in such a way that it avoids creating a "public perception" that it is "involved in partisan politics." The guide gives similar directions for recipients of Head Start early education funding and AmeriCorps volunteer funding.⁵⁴

Essentially, nonprofits are being encouraged to play a simple shell-game with grant funds, doing voter registration alongside their federally funded work without

actually using federal dollars. It's not a hard scheme to see through since everyone knows that money is fungible, but it satisfies the minimal restrictions of the law and provides enormous utility for politicians who can direct other peoples' money towards organizations they know will contribute, in a big or small way, to friendlier electoral margins.

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

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

Examples include:

- The National Urban League – The Biden Administration awarded the National Urban League, a veteran left-wing advocacy group, more than \$10.4 million in new grants from 2021 to 2024.⁵⁵ In 2024, according to their 2024 Form 990, government grants accounted for \$35.9 million, or 41 percent, of the League's annual revenue.⁵⁶ During the 2024 election, the League's president spoke on stage at the Democratic National Convention, the League spent \$17.2 million on "civic engagement and leadership empowerment program," and its "Reclaim Your Vote" program made 1.3 million voter contacts, knocked on 248,000 doors, sent over one million texts, and held 143 events.⁵⁷
- UnidosUS – UnidosUS was awarded more than \$12 million in new grants by the Biden administration's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) alone. In the lead-up to the 2024 election UnidosUS invited President Biden to speak at the group's annual conference,⁵⁸ and UnidosUS Action Fund, their 501(c)(4) affiliate, endorsed Kamala Harris after Biden withdrew.⁵⁹ That year UnidosUS registered 126,796 voters through "digital and canvassing efforts in states including AZ, CA, FL, NV, NY, PA, and TX."⁶⁰ The group also runs a "Hispanic

Electorate Data Hub" that tracks polling data, demographic trends, and turnout statistics.⁶¹

- Hispanic Federation⁶² – The Hispanic Federation, which received more than \$95 million⁶³ in new grants from the Biden Administration for programs such as teaching migrant workers how to obtain welfare, and offering "energy resiliency education" in Puerto Rico,⁶⁴ also runs a massive civic engagement program and bragged about "[mobilizing] millions of Latino voters" in 2024 and working with 52 partner organizations to "communicate directly with 2.6 million Latino voters to participate in the 2024 election."⁶⁵ The Hispanic Federation claims it has registered 160,000 and mobilized three million Latino voters since 2016.⁶⁶

These are far from the only organizations with substantial federal funding that have engaged in voter registration and GOTV work, but they are the largest and most notable examples. Other notable federally funded groups such as the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) have gone even further than GOTV work and directly funded ballot measure campaigns or organized protests against law enforcement that turned into violent riots.^{67,68}

A huge number of smaller federally funded nonprofits, such as food banks, community centers, and schools also do tiny chunks of voter registration work that are impossible to track that add up greatly over time. One of the best examples of this was a since-repealed federal policy that allowed work-study programs on college campuses to pay students to do voter registration work, sometimes even while working directly for partisan campaigns.⁶⁹

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

THE VOTING “EXPERTS” ARE FULL OF IT

BY PARKER THAYER

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

In April 2021, a coalition of “nonpartisan” civic engagement groups led by VoteAmerica,⁷⁰ the Voter Participation Center,⁷¹ and the Campaign Legal Center⁷² sued the state of Georgia seeking to block the enacting of S.B. 202, the state’s election integrity bill. In the lawsuit, the plaintiffs alleged many things.⁷³ They claimed that the bill’s goal was “not to improve electoral administration but to suppress turnout.” They claimed the bill created a “disparate impact on minority communities, substantial and unnecessary burdens on the right of all Georgians to vote,” and that it had “intentional discriminatory motivation.”

In press releases about the lawsuit the groups went even further. Voter Participation Center CEO Tom Lopach⁷⁴ said, “provisions in S.B. 202 would make it more difficult to vote, especially for the New American Majority—people of color, young people and unmarried women,”⁷⁵ while Danielle Lang, senior director of voting rights at Campaign Legal Center, said “S.B. 202’s effort to restrict civic engagement groups ultimately punishes voters, who otherwise might not be able to make their voice heard in our democracy.”

Outside of the courtroom, the groups led a feverish opposition and public pressure campaign, seemingly against the entire state of Georgia. The CEOs of Atlanta-based Delta Airlines and Coca-Cola denounced the bill.⁷⁶ More than 100 companies including Amazon, Ford, and Starbucks signed a letter responding to unspecified

legislation they claimed restricted voting rights.⁷⁷ Apple and Will Smith moved the production of a movie out of Georgia.⁷⁸ Even the 2021 MLB All-Star Game was moved from Atlanta to Colorado because Major League Baseball claimed the legislation “disproportionately disenfranchises the Black community.”⁷⁹

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

Not so much.

Much Ado About Nothing

The Voter Participation Center and its allies lost their lawsuit in September 2025,⁸⁰ Atlanta was awarded the 2025 MLB All-Star Game to replace the one the city lost in 2021, and the apocalyptic forecasts of all the “democracy experts” and “voting rights advocates” turned out to be as accurate as Al Gore’s weather forecasts.⁸¹ A record-setting 5.29 million people turned out to vote in Georgia during the 2024 election, which was about 64 percent of all registered voters.⁸² Not only did overall participation set records, the law then-President Joe Biden and others dubbed “Jim Crow 2.0,” coincided with increased turnout from “underrepresented” communities in Georgia while *decreasing* turnout among older white people.⁸³

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

In September 2025, the VPC published the results of research they commissioned on “Voter Participation Among Underrepresented Communities in 2024.”⁸⁴ The research slide deck admits that “Turnout in 2024 was actually higher than turnout in 2020 among UC

groups in some swing states—Georgia, Nevada, and Michigan.”⁸⁵ Georgia’s “Underrepresented” or “UC” turnout, defined as turnout from African American, Latino, Asian, under 35, and unmarried women voters, increased by nearly 200,000 votes, or 6.8 percent, while “non-UC” votes decreased by nearly 180,000, or 9.2 percent. That means Georgia’s “UC” turnout increased while “UC” turnout decreased nationwide and particularly in states like California, New York, and Wisconsin.

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

For example, on September 9, 2025, in a statement on their lawsuit being shot down in court, Tom Lopach, president of the VPC said, “This decision is not what we had hoped for. The provisions in S.B. 202 are dangerous and will make it more difficult for Georgians to vote, especially those in the historically underrepresented communities that we serve—people of color, young people and unmarried women.”⁸⁶ But just eight days later, on September 17th (the date at the top of the memo) the VPC research showed that those “historically underrepresented communities” had no trouble at all voting in 2024 and actually voted *more*.⁸⁷

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

The next month Lopach again ignored the inconvenient findings from his own research when he wrote an op-ed for *Time* claiming that the Supreme Court was putting the right to vote on trial in *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case challenging certain redistricting-related elements of the

Voting Rights Act.⁸⁸ Lopach claimed that “participation among underrepresented voters is slipping—not because they’ve stopped caring, but because states keep putting up new barriers to vote.”

“**Voter Participation Center’s own research shows that relatively few underrepresented voters reported they were stymied by any of the “barriers to vote” that the organization’s CEO alleged in the Georgia lawsuit.**”

But VCP’s research shows indifference really was the cause.⁸⁹ When VPC asked “UC adults” why they didn’t register to vote for 2024, 40.8 percent said they just weren’t interested, 9.9 percent said they weren’t eligible to vote, and four percent said they didn’t think their vote would make a difference.

Another VPC slide has a table revealing the “Top reason for not voting” in 2024 for each demographic surveyed.⁹⁰ For African Americans, Latinos, and unmarried women the top answer was “Not interested,”

and for Asian Americans and people under 35 the top answer was “Too busy.”

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

Lopach then went on to say:

In 2022, voter turnout among people of color, young people, and unmarried women trailed older white voters by 22%.⁹¹ This gap persisted in 2024 when Black voter turnout fell by nearly 240,000 votes. Unmarried women cast 723,000 fewer votes than in 2020. Together, these groups and young voters cast over one million fewer ballots even as turnout among other voters rose by nearly 800,000.

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

The “Experts” That Cried Wolf

Not to be shamed by their hysterical overreactions to Georgia’s election integrity bill, the VPC has now embarked on another media blitz against the proposed SAVE Act, which would require voters to demonstrate proof of citizenship before casting a ballot. VPC has published a half dozen blogs and op-eds advocating against the proposal and produced a new report claiming that 83 percent of voters would not be

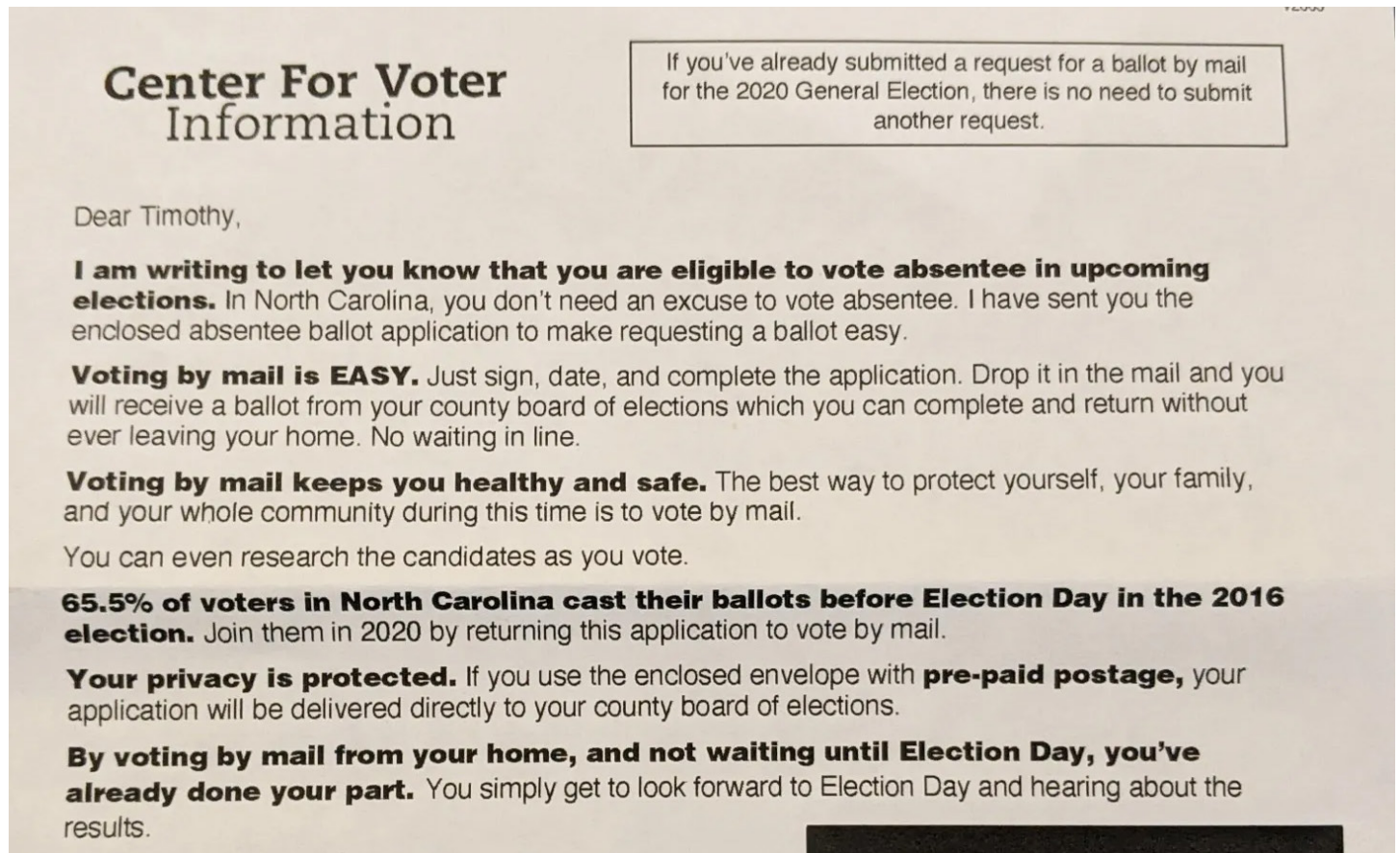
able to register in the same way they did in 2024 if the SAVE Act were passed.⁹² This, they claim will “negatively impact and disenfranchise” a whopping “21 million” American citizens who “do not currently have access to documentary proof of citizenship” while “disproportionately [impacting] already underrepresented groups like women, people of color, trans individuals, and young people.”

Is there any reason VPC should be believed this time?

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

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

Absolutely not.



According to ProPublica, “A North Carolina resident shared an image with [us] showing one of several mailers they received from [the Center for Voter Information.]” Credit: ProPublica via <https://bit.ly/3S1prVN>

THE VOTE MACHINE IS ALREADY PLANNING FOR THE 2030 CENSUS

BY PARKER THAYER

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

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

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

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

The FCCP

The Funders Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP)⁹³ is a coalition of self-styled “democracy defending” activists and donors who convene to discuss strategy for using nonprofits to help Democrats win elections (though they would never admit that goal openly.) The FCCP dates back to 1981 and can be credited as the

pioneer of organized nonprofit get-out-the-vote (GOTV) work, which has now become a billion-dollar-per-cycle industry. For each election year they conduct enormous research, outreach, and planning projects to tell the biggest names in left-wing philanthropy how and where to use millions of tax-exempt dollars to increase voter turnout from “underrepresented” demographics that all happen to favor the Democratic party.

Starting in 2008, though, the FCCP expanded its focus from GOTV to GOTC, or get-out-the-count. According to FCCP records, the project, called the Funders Census Initiative (FCI), began in 2008 with a meeting at the Ford Foundation⁹⁴ headquarters in New York. It was an elite guest list: “Attendees included representatives of the Ford, Hagedorn,⁹⁵ Annie E. Casey,⁹⁶ MacArthur,⁹⁷ Gates,⁹⁸ and Knight⁹⁹ foundations, as well as the Carnegie Corporation¹⁰⁰ of New York, Open Society Foundations¹⁰¹ (OSF), Pew Charitable Trusts,¹⁰² and Atlantic Philanthropies.”¹⁰³

GOTC work, and census policy warfare, these well-endowed donors had realized, “could be conceptualized as the third leg of civic engagement, after voting and redistricting.” By January 2009 the FCI was officially formed, and it wasn’t long before some grew skeptical of its motives. By 2010, *The New American*¹⁰⁴ (a

“

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

”

publication from the right-wing John Birch Society) was writing that the FCI clearly intended “to use the Census drive as a huge tax-supported venture in radical political organizing.”¹⁰⁵

2010 Census

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

Led by activist Terri Ann Lowenthal, a veteran census activist and member of the Obama presidential transition team, FCI served as the bridge between activist groups and the Census Bureau to make sure that big philanthropy was able to insert itself into the

process as much as possible.¹⁰⁶ The FCCP’s report on 2010 brags that FCI created “an unusual, possibly unique, public-private partnership” with the Census Bureau that granted them “unprecedented, close, ongoing contact and collaboration” with Census Bureau staff “at the local, regional, and national levels” thanks to “relationships with Census Bureau staff, in some cases going back decades, which enabled [FCI] to break through bureaucratic barriers and obtain critically important information for nonprofits.” Using this insider information, FCI trained left-leaning nonprofits across the country on the best ways to motivate constituents to take the census, tech tools to improve census turnout, and even “when and how the census bureau would be hiring door-to-door staff,” so that FCI grantees would be able to seed their own operatives into these jobs.

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

2020 Census

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



force,” over 100 donors were recruited to spend more than \$118 million on a “coordinated plan of action” for the 2020 census.¹⁰⁷

To raise that 200 percent increase over the 2010 effort, the FCI and FCCP worked closely with a like-minded new group, the Democracy Funders Collaborative¹⁰⁸ Census Subgroup, a fiscally sponsored project housed at the Arabella Advisors—led New Venture Fund.¹⁰⁹ In a 109-page document titled “Philanthropy and the 2020 Census,”¹¹⁰ the FCCP lays out a detailed history of how planning started as early as 2015, and together, the collaborating networks funded “260 grantee organizations engaged in litigation, advocacy, outreach and other activities.”

Of the \$118 million spent, \$70.3 million went towards GOTC work while \$18.2 million went towards influencing census policy (see pie chart on next page).

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

The GOTC work was largely the same as it was in 2010, but there were some notable changes. First, they shifted away from focusing on a national scale of work and focused more on using local “hubs” that catered to specific demographics and affinity groups to increase turnout from “historically undercounted” people. New digital tactics included “geofencing” of cellphone data to target ads at locations with high concentrations of historically undercounted people; using automated chatbots to recruit census workers and answer questions about the census; and collaborating with the hub group State Voices to develop a texting platform for use by state and local census advocates to reach millions of people with census information.”¹¹¹ Some consultants even developed a Census Digital Academy that offered training session on developing “hard-to-count (HTC)

outreach messaging,” improving “HTC” targeting methods using voter files, and how to convince donors to keep funding GOTC work in the future.¹¹²

The results of the 2020 Census were not good. The reasons for this are manifold, but the most important statistic is that, by the Census Bureau’s own admission, there was massive overcounting, mostly in blue states, and massive undercounting, mostly in red states. The 2010 Census was reported to have a minuscule error rate of less than one percent; in 2020, the census reported undercounting six states and overcounting eight. (See table below.) As Hans Von Spakovsky explained in 2022, the Census Bureau’s post-census survey data¹¹³ for the 2020 count shows that the over and under counts were so egregious that Minnesota and Rhode Island were apportioned two congressional seats that ought to have rightfully been assigned to Florida.

2020 Census Miscalculations

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

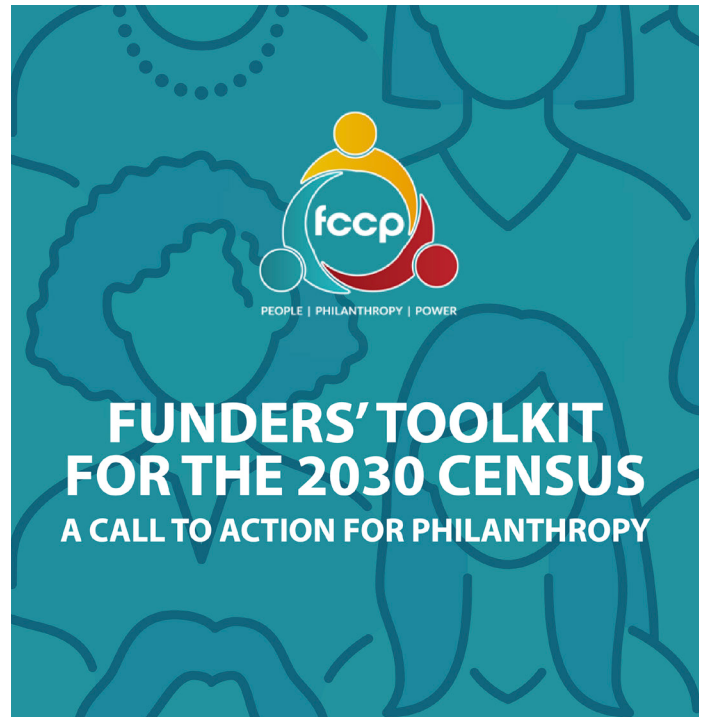
Source: US Census Post-Enumeration Survey

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

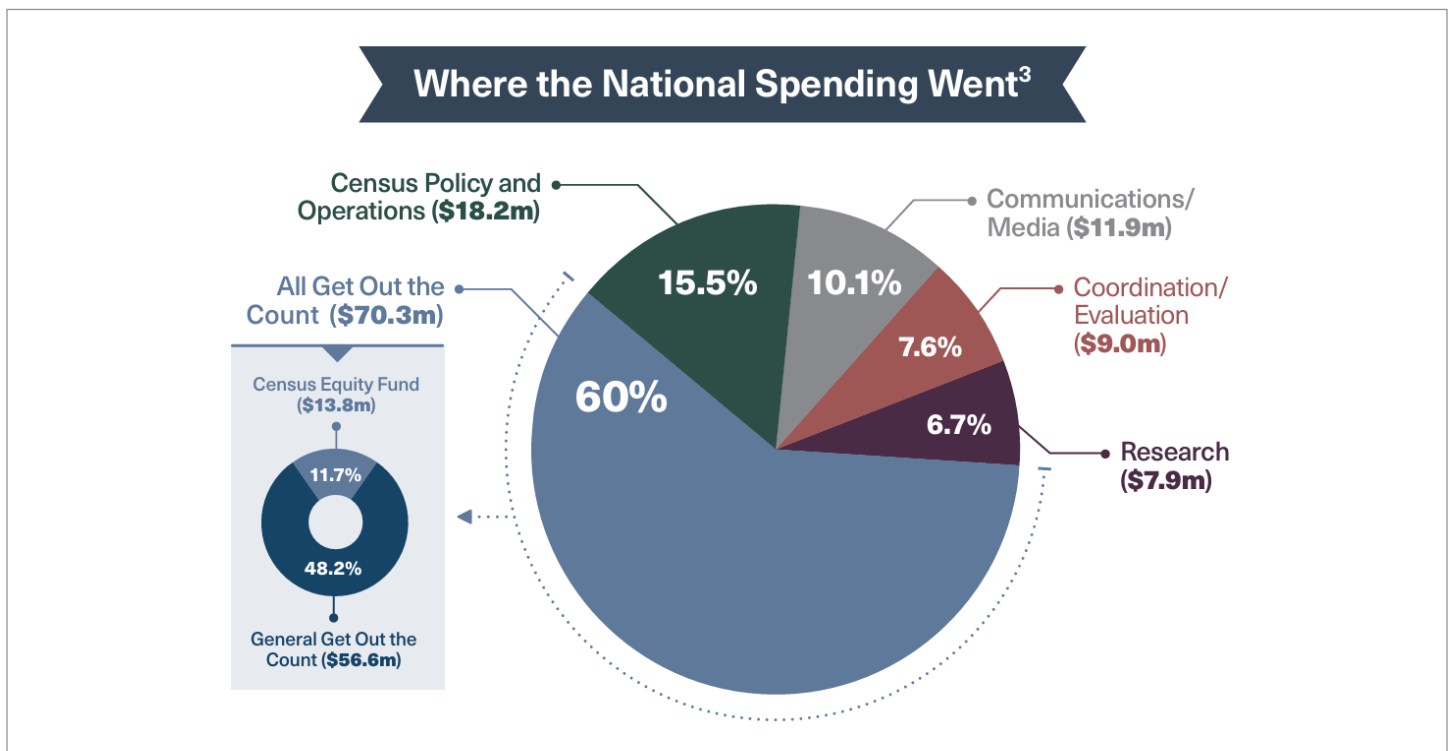
2030 Census

The FCCP and its allies seem to have given themselves a pat on the back from the “tour de force” that produced the worst census in modern American history and are already well into the planning process for 2030. The Funders’ Toolkit for the 2030 Census¹¹⁴ has already been posted. The toolkit provides prewritten memos¹¹⁵ for encouraging donors to fund GOTC work, fill-in-the-blank op-eds¹¹⁶ calling for more census related activism, a “Census 101” one pager¹¹⁷ template with “What is Census 2030 and why does it matter for *[Your State]*?” at the top, and even a prewritten job description¹¹⁸ for a census fund coordinator. There are also links to best practices for GOTC¹¹⁹ and a list of left-leaning census partners including Asian Americans Advancing Justice,¹²⁰ Color of Change,¹²¹ Faith in the Public Life,¹²² National LGBTQ Task Force,¹²³ National Urban League,¹²⁴ and State Voices.

The toolkit doesn’t shy away from the electioneering impacts of census work either. One of the first paragraphs states, rather bluntly, that “Our state and local voting districts are drawn using census data, which directly correlates to who is elected to lead our communities.” One might reasonably ask whether “who is elected”



should be a concern of, much less primary motivating considerations for, a “nonpartisan” GOTC group, but FCCP advertises that the census is important because of the “4 D’s ... Data, dollars, districts, and decisions.”



ENEMIES OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

BY FRED LUCAS

A movement of nonprofits and political committees funded from the left, but with token Republicans on the payroll, has been engineering an end run around the Constitution that would elect presidents by a national popular vote majority instead of the Electoral College majority.

Imagine a different election night 2024, one in which Donald Trump is staring at a historic landslide.

So, maybe the president says they're all landslides. But in this case, by the *Electoral College* numbers, Trump approaches the landslide territory of Ronald Reagan and Franklin Roosevelt.

California normally takes days to tally votes, but in this scenario the state might not bother counting for the presidential race because its 54 electoral votes might be won by Trump before California can finish tabulating ballots. Trump will take California despite its former U.S. senator and attorney general Kamala Harris winning her home state with nearly 60 percent of the popular vote.

Trump would also take the electoral votes of New York, Illinois, Massachusetts and other blue states, despite Harris scoring convincing popular vote wins in those states as well.

All told, Trump wins 520 electoral votes to Harris's 18.

This alternative world (which must sound great to MAGA supporters and surpasses even Trump's most superlative hyperbole) is ironically sponsored by progressives and Democrats. Examples include groups aligned with the former Arabella Advisors,¹²⁵ Pierre

Omidyar,¹²⁶ the American Civil Liberties Union,¹²⁷ the Soros network,¹²⁸ the Tides Foundation,¹²⁹ bankroller Stephen Silberstein¹³⁰ and his foundation,¹³¹ former Democratic Sen. Al Franken and former Attorney General Eric Holder.¹³²

At least, the theoretical outcome would have been brought to you by this cast of characters if they had gotten what they wanted regarding the allocation of electors during the last election.

They are among individuals and entities that have propped up the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which would identify more with the left-leaning "resistance" than with MAGA.

If implemented, the NPV Compact would award all electoral votes from all states within the compact to the winner of the national popular vote, regardless of which candidate won the popular vote within each individual state. The stated goal of this end-run around the U.S. Constitution is to avoid close elections where the "winner" of the currently irrelevant national popular vote ends up losing the election by failing to win the constitutionally crucial minimum majority of 270 Electoral College votes.

The alleged problem this supposedly solves has happened just five times over sixty American presidential elections, and only twice since the election of 1888. Notably, the beneficiaries in the two cases that anyone alive can remember (Bush in 2000 and Trump in 2016) were both Republicans. It should be no surprise that the NPV movement is animated more by partisan goals than policy objectives.

The face of the movement has been National Popular Vote, a 501(c)(4) group that lobbies state legislatures to join the compact.¹³³ But the movement is deeper than the NPV and its sister organizations. There have been other groups outside the NPV umbrella created to promote abolition of the electoral college; and still others, such as the League of Women Voters,¹³⁴ Fair Vote,¹³⁵ and Common Cause,¹³⁶ that support the compact, but as one of many legislative items.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact has been driven mostly by Democrats perceiving an advantage from a popular vote. Though, the NPV organization has some outspoken Republican supporters.

The hypothetical 520 electoral votes won by Trump in the example above would have occurred only if the 18 states plus the District of Columbia that had joined the compact before the 2024 election had given their combined 209 electoral votes to the popular vote winner, which was Trump. This did not happen because the compact is not triggered until enough states join to equal 270 votes—a majority of the Electoral College. So, Kamala Harris ended up taking those NPV-endorsing states and kept the 209 electoral votes that her campaign had earned.

But NPV is getting closer to the 270 majority. With the addition of Virginia in April 2026 (yet another state won by Harris in 2024), the compact states now have a combined 222 electoral votes.

If the trigger hadn't been required in 2024, and every state in the compact at the time had awarded the 209 electoral votes to Trump, then it would have caused that lopsided Trump triumph that—in all fairness—would not

have been reflective of the current political environment. Love Trump or hate him, no one would accuse him of being such a unifier that he deserved a 520-18 electoral vote mandate.

And, whatever you say about Harris, any candidate who legitimately wins 226 electoral votes in the traditional Electoral College doesn't really deserve to be cast into the dustbin of history alongside Walter Mondale and Alf Landon, though that's what the compact would have done if in effect for 2024.

At the end of the day, the benefit of the Electoral College is that it preserves a balance for large and small states and ensures a level of state power over the executive branch.

Compact champions on the left who find Trump insufferable ought to imagine what his bravado might have been like if he could have claimed 520 electoral votes. But that potential scenario doesn't seem to have slowed down the NPV movement.

Although a popular vote election obviously wouldn't advantage either political party and the movement is ostensibly nonpartisan, only blue states have joined the compact so far. Moreover, most of the big money behind the NPV movement has come from institutional donors on the left.

Self-Inflicted Electoral Harm

Thanks to Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger, the national popular vote compact is just 48 electoral votes shy of going into effect. Spanberger signed an NPV bill from the Democratic legislature in April.¹³⁷ At this point, 19 states and the District of Columbia have joined the compact, and all of them have voted for the Democrat in each presidential election going back to 2008.

“
The benefit of the Electoral College is that it **preserves a balance for large and small states and ensures a level of state power over the executive branch.**
”

Spanberger told WFXR, “This is a very straightforward, long-term plan to get us to a point where the United States is frankly what most people think it is, which is a place where every person’s vote counts the same as every other person’s vote.”¹³⁸

“Fake Moderate Spanberger just signed a bill to render Virginians’ vote for president NULL AND VOID!” responded the Virginia Republican Party on X/Twitter.¹³⁹

“Virginia’s Electoral College votes will go to the winner of the national popular vote—no matter who wins the popular vote in our Commonwealth,” added the Virginia GOP. “This is an unconstitutional assault on our democracy.”

Despite inching closer, the compact is not likely to go into effect soon because the movement is running out of blue states to sign up. But red states have turned blue and blue states red over the decades.

This is an extremely short-sighted move for Virginia, which has the potential to be a swing state—drawing campaign visits from presidential candidates, and increased media presence. Being a battleground is good for a state’s bottom line, since it brings people and money, which means revenue. That’s something a governor and lawmakers should care about.

Take a look at the numbers.

Virginia is a state Harris carried by just five percentage points in the last election, compared to 2020 when Joe Biden carried the state by ten. Some pre-election polls had it as close as two points, and Trump thought it was worth his time to stump in the Old Dominion.

Also, former Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin left office with a favorable reputation among commonwealth voters, and he’s been mentioned as someone who could be on a national ticket in 2028. That would make the state even more competitive.

Virginia also has an important place in the history of the American republic. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe saw the wisdom of the Electoral College.

Does Spanberger think she knows better?

In 2019, then-Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, vetoed a bill from



In April 2026, Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger signed the National Popular Vote compact, bringing the agreement to just 48 electoral votes shy of going into effect. Image source: Official Flickr Album of Gov. Spanberger (pictured in a different bill signing on March 26, 2026).

the Democratic legislature to join the national popular vote compact, recognizing the relatively small state's place as a battleground. He said,¹⁴⁰ "In cases like this, where Nevada's interests could diverge from the interests of large states, I will always stand up for Nevada."

Sisolak, as governor, placed his state above the perceived interests of his party. Spanberger has thus far been unable to do that despite campaigning as a centrist.

Then there's Maine, one of two states where electoral voters are divided by congressional district (the other being Nebraska). Maine Gov. Janet Mills, a Democrat, recognized that the split electoral votes allowed Maine to punch above its weight in a presidential race when it came to drawing candidates to campaign in the state. Though seeing the headwinds in her party, she didn't sign or veto the NPV bill, allowing it to become law without her signature.

"Opponents have raised legitimate questions about whether presidential candidates would want to visit Maine knowing that, under a winner-take-all system, their chance to win our electoral votes declines and, as a result, their time would be better spent elsewhere," Mills said in an April 2024 statement.¹⁴¹

Leading the Pack

Lottery scratch-card inventor John Koza and election lawyer Barry Fadem, both Democrats, launched the Lafayette, California-based National Popular Vote in 2006 to lobby state legislatures to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which at the time was merely an academic ideal.¹⁴²

There is an industry of nonprofits devoted to this end-run around the Electoral College. The Institute for Research on Presidential Elections is a 501(c)(3) education arm for NPV.¹⁴³ Another group, Conservatives for National Popular Vote, was also launched with some of the same personnel.¹⁴⁴

National Popular Vote's most recent publicly available IRS filing, covering 2024, shows \$1.48 million in

revenue, \$1.44 million in expenditures, and \$99,884 in net assets.¹⁴⁵

NPV issued a \$20,000 grant to Maine Citizens for Clean Elections in 2024. Maine entered the compact that year.¹⁴⁶

In 2024, the Democracy Fund Voice,¹⁴⁷ a left-of-center group within the philanthropy network of eBay chairman and founder Pierre Omidyar,¹⁴⁸ contributed \$150,000 to National Popular Vote according to the Democracy Fund Voice IRS filing.¹⁴⁹ Omidyar founded Democracy Fund Voice as the 501(c)(4) advocacy arm to the Democracy Fund, a 501(c)(3).¹⁵⁰ The organization is mostly funded by Omidyar, whose reported net worth is more than \$10.5 billion, according to *Forbes*.¹⁵¹

In 2023, the American Civil Liberties Union, despite its ostensible mission to defend the Constitution, gave \$24,000¹⁵² to National Popular Vote's effort to undermine the Constitution's primary method for electing presidents. The ACLU's IRS filing says the funding was for "design, sampling, fieldwork, data collection, analysis, and presentation of results of a poll on National Popular Vote policy."

Koza was the primary funder of the movement early on. He was the co-founder and CEO of Scientific Games, Inc. He and Fadem were active in the 1980s in lobbying state legislatures to adopt state lotteries through ballot initiatives. They've done much the same thing with the popular vote idea—though only one state has put it to the voters.

The concept itself began after George W. Bush's win over Al Gore in 2000, in which Gore won the popular vote by half a percentage point and Bush narrowly won the Electoral College. Law professor Robert Bennett of Northwestern University wrote a 2001 academic paper titled "Popular Election of a President Without a Constitutional Amendment," providing the framework for the compact. After that, an article by Akhil and Vikram Amar, brothers who were professors at Yale Law and University of California Hastings College of Law respectively, argued in favor of the interstate compact.

It took five years for Koza and Fadem to put political muscle behind it. The two co-wrote the book *Every Vote Equal* in 2006, to promote the proposal, then started National Popular Vote to lobby for the plan shortly after.

Koza helped seed the National Popular Vote nonprofit with his own money and some from Paychex billionaire Tom Golisano. Stephen M. Silberstein, who in 1978 founded computer software company Innovative Interfaces Inc., also became a major donor and serves on the board of NPV.

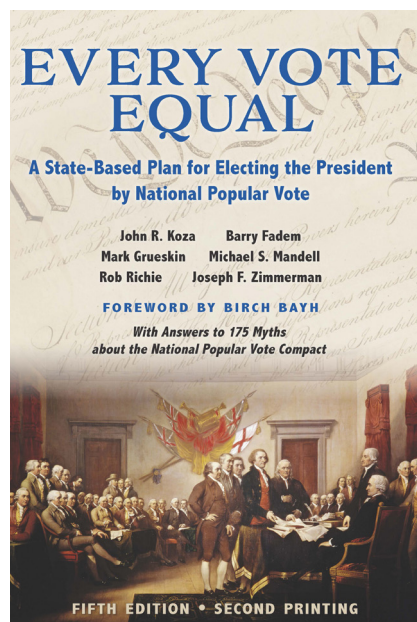
Koza is board chair of NPV. He is also the chief financial officer and the board treasurer for the Institute for Research on Presidential Elections.¹⁵³

Fadem, the election lawyer and co-author with Koza of *Every Vote Equal*, is the president of National Popular Vote. Fadem is a partner in the law firm of Fadem & Associates in Lafayette, California, and specializes in campaign and election law.

Saul Anuzis is the chief of staff for National Popular Vote.¹⁵⁴ He is president of 60 Plus, a conservative seniors organization.¹⁵⁵ He is a former chairman of the Michigan Republican Party and has worked for Newt Gingrich at American Solutions and for Jack Kemp's 1988 presidential campaign. Anuzis was also an advisor to the Ted Cruz 2016 presidential campaign.

Matthew Schweich is the campaign manager for NPV. Separately, he is the deputy director of the Marijuana Policy Project, which advocates for legalizing cannabis at both the state and federal level.¹⁵⁶

Members of the NPV advisory board include Al Franken, a comedian who resigned from the U.S. Senate over a sexual harassment scandal, former Obama administration Attorney General Eric Holder, anti-Trump former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele, and Obama administration Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano.¹⁵⁷



Lottery scratch-card inventor John Koza and election lawyer Barry Fadem launched the National Popular Vote nonprofit after publishing the first edition of *Every Vote Equal* (pictured left) in 2006.

Educating Against the College

The Institute for Research on Presidential Elections, or IRPE, is the 501(c)(3) education arm of National Popular Vote and was also launched in 2006 along with NPV.¹⁵⁸ Also founded by Koza, the organization has the same leadership as NPV. Unlike the NPV, which lobbies for states to join the compact, the institute is significantly limited by tax law in any lobbying for votes in favor of the compact. So it only produces information and research supporting the cause.

A 2017 *Politico* article claimed that if the Electoral College is scrapped, it won't come from a constitutional amendment in Congress.

"Instead, the most viable campaign to change how Americans choose their leader is being waged at booze-soaked junkets in luxury hotels around the country and even abroad, as an obscure entity called the Institute for Research on Presidential Elections peddles a controversial idea: that state legislatures can put the popular-vote winner in the White House," reported *Politico*.

The IRPE reported revenue of \$684,178 for 2024, the most recent year that an IRS filing is available, and \$883,693 in expenditures.¹⁵⁹ (The obvious net revenue

loss has been a recurring feature for most of IRPE's annual IRS filings, but the net asset deficits this has created have been kept in check by new donations the following year.)¹⁶⁰

During 2023,¹⁶¹ IRPE contributed \$40,000 to Demand Progress Education Fund, the sister organization to Demand Progress Action and Demand Progress PAC.¹⁶² According to the education fund's website, it was a project of the New Venture Fund until 2022.¹⁶³ The New Venture Fund was the largest 501(c)(3) organization in the former Arabella Advisors¹⁶⁴ network, now known as Sunflower Services.¹⁶⁵

A longstanding donor to the popular vote cause, the Stephen M. Silberstein Foundation¹⁶⁶ contributed \$140,000 to the IRPE in 2024.¹⁶⁷ That same year, the Coit Family Foundation, a 501(c)(3) grant maker in Walnut Creek, California, contributed \$75,000 to the IRPE,¹⁶⁸ and one or more of the account holders at the Vanguard Charitable Fund¹⁶⁹ donated a total of \$30,000.¹⁷⁰

Patrick Rosenstiel is the chairman of the Institute for Research on Presidential Elections and has been an NPV spokesman.¹⁷¹ He was the chairman of the 1996 Steve Forbes presidential campaign and leads the law firm Ainsley-Shea. He's the former executive director of the Trade Alliance to Promote Prosperity.

Reaching for the Right

So far, only blue states, most of which have a Democratic governor and Democratic-controlled House and Senate, have joined the compact. As mentioned, every state which has thus far joined the compact voted for Harris in the last election.

NPV supporters know they'll need red states to hit the 270 electoral votes and have hired numerous Republicans to make the case. The hierarchy of the NVP includes several Republicans, including Anuzis, Rosenstiel, and former California state Sen. Ray Haynes, a former national chairman of the American Legislative Exchange Council.¹⁷²

It's notable that in past years a bill to join the compact has passed one legislative chamber of red-leaning states such as Arkansas, North Carolina, and Oklahoma, as well as the battleground states of Michigan and Arizona.

So, it's an achievable goal.

In February 2020, the Conservatives for National Popular Vote was established, based in St. Paul, Minnesota, and run by Rosenstiel. The group hasn't been active, with no updated posts on its website since 2023. It doesn't have tax exempt status, and it's not clear if it's a sister organization to NPV.¹⁷³

But it was an attempt to reach out to conservatives.

The group's website features a comment from President Donald Trump speaking on *Fox & Friends* and asserting that, "I would rather have the popular vote because it's, to me, it's much easier to win the popular vote." Conservatives for NPV contend America is a center-right country, and that conservatives would turn out in bigger numbers under a popular vote system in states such as California or Massachusetts, where they might feel their votes don't currently count in a presidential election under the Electoral College system.

Conservatives for National Popular Vote also notes that fewer than 60,000 votes could have shifted Ohio in 2004 and given John Kerry the presidency despite George W. Bush's 3 million vote national victory.¹⁷⁴ The group also contends that the population of the nation's 100 largest cities is roughly equal to the population of rural America, which supposedly means that a national popular vote election wouldn't advantage the urban areas.

After Spanberger signed the NPV measure in Virginia, Rosenstiel said it was one time that she got it right.

"I believe that our ideas are better, more aligned with most voters, and can win presidential elections. President Donald Trump bolstered this belief when he won the national popular vote in 2024," Rosenstiel wrote

in an April *Washington Examiner* op-ed. He argued the compact preserves the Electoral College but recognizes that the Constitution gives states plenary authority to award electors.¹⁷⁵

“The national popular vote will force the GOP to campaign in every precinct and is essential to building and maintaining a center-right majority in the United States,” he added.

Big Left Donors to Ballot Initiative

Neither National Popular Vote nor the Institute for Research on Presidential Elections fully disclose their donors and aren’t required to under the laws governing c3 and c4 groups. But a 2020 referendum in Colorado offers a strong glimpse of the organizations and individuals backing the effort.

When the compact was on the ballot in Colorado in 2020, the North Fund,¹⁷⁶ a lobbying group affiliated with the former Arabella Advisors (now known as Sunflower Services), contributed \$250,000¹⁷⁷ to the initiative, according to Ballotpedia. Another Arabella appendage, the Sixteen Thirty Fund¹⁷⁸ spent \$147,346 on getting Colorado into the compact, according to the Colorado Secretary of State’s office.¹⁷⁹

Stephen Silberstein, the NPV board member and head of the foundation in his name that has contributed hefty amounts to the NPV and IPRE organizations, also gave \$500,000 to the Colorado ballot initiative, the Colorado Sun reported.¹⁸⁰ Koza contributed \$95,015 to the effort, according to OpenSecrets. These donations surpassed National Popular Vote itself, which donated \$69,579 to get a “Yes” vote on the ballot measure.¹⁸¹

Additionally, the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees,¹⁸² a typically left-leaning government employee union, gave \$50,000.¹⁸³

The measure passed with just 52 percent, despite supporters outspending opponents \$5.4 million to \$1.7 million in a solidly blue state. It’s reason enough to think that a big chunk of the public sees the virtue of keeping



the Electoral College and retaining a stronger electoral voice for the individual states.

NPV supporters attempted to get a ballot initiative in Michigan, but were unsuccessful.¹⁸⁴ Still a look at the donors to the Michigan effort shows support for the change came heavily from donors in coastal areas, as the Capital Research Center previously reported.¹⁸⁵ Much like Nevada, why would Michigan want to give up its privileged spot as a battleground that attracts presidential candidates and national media every four years?

Donors to the Michigan effort included Koza, a resident of California, who gave \$259,000. Sarah O’Neill, the daughter-in-law¹⁸⁶ of Berkshire Hathaway’s Charlie Munger, contributed \$50,000 from New York City. Joseph Steinberg, a New York investment banker, gave \$40,000. Alex Rigopulos, a billionaire residing in Massachusetts who brought the world Guitar Hero, contributed \$25,000, as did Dagmar Dolby, California’s billionaire heiress of the Dolby fortune.

Before the Compact Concept

One of the first advocates for ditching the Electoral College for a popular vote is the People’s Choice for President. Also a 501(c)(4), the group was founded in 2000, predating the NPV, and even the concept of an interstate compact.

People’s Choice does not appear to have filed a full IRS report¹⁸⁷ since 2020, when it reported just \$5,000 total revenue, and did not report receiving any revenue for nine of the seventeen years between 2004 and 2020.



The last major donation year was 2017, when the group reported receiving a little more than \$1 million. This was the year right after Donald Trump won the electoral college without winning a popular vote plurality. Perhaps not coincidentally, there are no publicly available full IRS filings from People’s Choice for 2015 and 2016, implying little revenue received and very limited activity during those years.

The People’s Choice for President Institute, an affiliated 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit, was also created after the 2016 election and has reported receiving a combined total of just less than \$1.2 million through 2024, the last year for which a full IRS filing is available. An individual named Sam George is listed as the principal officer of both groups on their most recently available tax documents.¹⁸⁸

When active, People’s Choice for President listed its mission as “changing the method of electing the President from an electoral college to a direct election.”

But recent activity has been sparse. The last publicly available IRS report for the People’s Choice for President Institute, covering 2024, is an IRS Form 990EZ, which is filed by small nonprofits with limited annual revenue and assets. It reports just \$103,470 revenue collected for the year, expenses of \$115,054 and net assets of \$297,753.¹⁸⁹

The last publicly available full IRS filing for People’s Choice for President, covering 2020,¹⁹⁰ reports grants of \$10,000 to National Popular Vote and \$100,000 to America’s Votes,¹⁹¹ a progressive group that supports expansion of voting access. The combined \$110,000 in grants was 38 percent of the group’s total reported annual expenses of \$286,730. This was a year when the group reported only \$5,000 total revenue, and zero revenue for the two preceding years.

Both groups reported having no website in their respective, most recently available, IRS filings.

Controversial PAC

At least rhetorically, National Popular Vote and its affiliate organizations don’t want to get rid of the Electoral College, which would require an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Rather, the groups say that state legislatures have wide latitude within the U.S. Constitution to take plenary authority in determining how electoral votes are awarded.

However, other groups make no bones about wanting to abolish the Electoral College. In fact, it's in the name of a political action committee.

The Abolish the Electoral College PAC's website explains it is "a grassroots organization dedicated to mobilizing supporters, electing candidates, and partnering with impactful organizations that work to support reform and abolishment of the Electoral College."¹⁹²

The PAC describes the Electoral College as "a system that was created nearly 240 years ago with a compromise to ensure power remained in the hands of wealthy landowners to placate an inherently evil system of slavery."

Rory Steele was listed as the treasurer of the Abolish the Electoral College PAC in the 2022 cycle.¹⁹³ He was reportedly a former campaign manager for the 2016 Senate campaign of Kamala Harris but was replaced in a campaign staff shakeup.¹⁹⁴

In the 2024 cycle,¹⁹⁵ Christopher Koob¹⁹⁶ was listed as treasurer of the Abolish the Electoral College PAC. Koob was also listed¹⁹⁷ as the treasurer of the REV UP PAC,¹⁹⁸ which advocates for turning out the vote of disabled people.

The PAC's website makes this claim: "Abolish the Electoral College endorses the position that the quickest way to achieve replacement of the Electoral College is to focus on passage of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact."

It continues: "Abolish the Electoral College will seek out and support candidates at all levels of our government, but especially candidates and elected leaders in our state legislative bodies, who support passage of the NPVIC."

Critics say otherwise.

According to an October 2021 investigative piece by Sludge,¹⁹⁹ the Abolish the Electoral College PAC raised more than \$1 million and donated only \$2,500 to candidates. The remaining amount went to salaries.

“

The National Popular Voter Interstate Compact was **supercharged after Trump beat Hillary Clinton, with blue states jumping on board.**

”

A "Note from the AEC Team"²⁰⁰ posted on the website in January 2022 didn't directly mention the *Sludge* article, but stressed the PAC that was founded in 2019 was investing in infrastructure for the long fight:

Over 80% of the resources raised from your contributions have gone directly to build and support infrastructure and programmatic expenses that further our mission of electoral change and voting rights reform," the note to supporters said. "As this infrastructure becomes more solidified and efficient we will drive administrative expenses and costs even lower so that an even larger percentage of our donor contributions go directly to successful advocacy and direct programmatic expenses.

The note continued: "We focused on state legislative candidates in Michigan and Pennsylvania, and contributed to a successful initiative campaign in Colorado that affirms the Colorado legislature's decision to support the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact."

In 2024, the Abolish the Electoral College PAC contributed \$25,000²⁰¹ to the State Democracy Defenders PAC²⁰² and \$16,000 to the For the Majority PAC, both Democratic political action committees, according to Open Secrets²⁰³ which tracks money in politics. During that same election cycle the PAC contributed \$5,000 to the campaign of Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-OR), \$2,000

to House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), and \$500 to Rep. Greg Landsman, (D-OH).

The PAC raised \$773,310 and spent \$773,399. That's less than the 2022 cycle, when it raised \$787,663 and spent \$938,138. In the 2020 cycle, the PAC brought in \$795,761 in donations, and spent \$598,939. The larger donors to Abolish the Electoral College haven't been major political players.

'Barrier to Democracy'

The National Popular Voter Interstate Compact only had nominal success for the first 10 years of its campaign, but was supercharged after Trump beat Hillary Clinton, with blue states jumping on board.

The belief on the left was that it would do away with the GOP's built-in advantage in the Electoral College. Never mind that before the 2016 election experts such as the Cook Political Report said Democrats started off with a near-automatic 242 electoral votes in their pocket,²⁰⁴ and George Will fretted this "blue wall" threatened the existence of the Republican Party.²⁰⁵

For all practical purposes, presidential elections do reflect the will of the majority. Only five presidents were elected without winning the popular vote—and even that oversimplifies the matter.

The presidential election of 1824 was the first instance of a popular vote "winner" losing the Electoral College. But popular voting was a new concept, and many states

still weren't doing it. Electoral vote winner (and thus) President John Quincy Adams might have also carried the popular vote if the state of New York allowed for it that year.

The 1876 election was fraught with so much fraud and voter suppression in the South that it's difficult to discern who won the contested states. The 1888 contest that saw Benjamin Harrison defeat incumbent Grover Cleveland also saw Harrison win a much larger geographic area. The 2000 election probably offers no real lessons because it was so close and so unusual.

The overwhelming majority of Clinton's 2.9 million national popular vote margin in 2016 could have been swallowed up within just her 4.3 million vote edge in California. The Electoral College was designed to prevent large states from overwhelming the will of the rest of the country and it performed exactly as intended.

The Electoral College might be much like gerrymandering, or perhaps the Senate filibuster, with the righteous indignation depending on whose ox is being gored. Despite the history of Rutherford B. Hayes, Harrison, Bush, and Trump, eventually a Republican is likely to come out on the short end—prompting many in the GOP to demand its demise, while Democrats celebrate it.

The benefit of the Electoral College is that it preserves a balance for large and small states and ensures a level of state power over the executive branch.

RANKED CHOICE VOTING IS DOWN, BUT NOT OUT

BY PARKER THAYER

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

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

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

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

RCV in 2024

In November 2024 voters simultaneously rejected RCV or RCV-adjacent policies in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Arizona, while voters in Missouri approved a constitutional amendment codifying a formal ban on ranked-choice voting.²⁰⁶

These weren't just small losses, they were devastating routs. In deep blue Colorado, Proposition 131, which would have replaced partisan primaries with "jungle" primaries and implemented RCV in general elections, failed despite a massive \$14 million fundraising haul that made it one of the most expensive ballot measures in state history.²⁰⁷ Similar to Proposition 131, Question 3 in Nevada would have created chaotic top-five primaries and ranked-choice general elections that included the five best finishers from the primaries.²⁰⁸ Things initially looked good, since the proposal had passed once in 2022, but it needed to pass again in 2024 to become law. The measure failed the second time around, making Nevada an especially devastating loss because it proved that voters who had once been open to the concept of RCV had reversed course completely when faced with the reality of RCV.

Idaho's Proposition 1, which proposed top-four primaries and ranked-choice general elections, was rejected by an astounding 70 percent of voters.²⁰⁹ Oregon's Measure 117, which would have adopted RCV in federal and state elections, also failed.²¹⁰ Arizona's Proposition 140, while not a strictly RCV-only proposal, would have created a "jungle" primary structure while introducing the possibility of RCV in the general elections in the future.²¹¹ Even the possibility of RCV was undesirable for voters, though, and the proposal went down 41 percent to 59 percent. Missouri's Amendment 7, which proposed the combined package of codified voter ID requirements and an RCV ban also passed with flying colors, garnering nearly 70 percent of the vote.²¹²

RCV in 2025 and 2026

Following a spectacular string of losses at the ballot box

in 2024, the RCV movement moved right along to losing in the legislatures.

In 2025, Arkansas, Kansas, North Dakota, Wyoming, and West Virginia passed and signed legislation banning the use of RCV in local, state, and federal elections; joining Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi who had all done the same in 2024.^{213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218}

RCV’s first loss in 2026 was neither at the ballot box, nor the legislature, because it didn’t make it that far. The Rank MI Vote campaign, which aimed to put a constitutional amendment to bring ranked-choice voting to Michigan elections on the 2026 ballot, failed to get the necessary signatures.²¹⁹ Rank MI Vote did not give up though, promising to try again for the 2028 ballot. Then, in March 2026, Rank MI Vote activists were heckled and unceremoniously expelled from the Michigan GOP amid cries of “shame” and “communists.” Needless to say, it was not the shot in the arm that RCV needed.²²⁰

In February 2026, Indiana became the 18th state to ban RCV by passing SB0012.²²¹ One month later, Ohio became the 19th when Governor Mike DeWine signed Senate Bill 63 prohibiting the use of RCV, even in city or township elections, and imposed the threat of a loss of funding on any city or county that continued to use RCV.²²²

RCV is Still Holding On

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

The most important recent win was in Alaska, where voters very narrowly rejected Ballot Measure 2, an effort to repeal the state’s open-primary and ranked-choice general-election system, by less than 1,000 votes.²²³ By winning, RCV managed to hang on to the state that has been its crown jewel since RCV was first instituted by ballot measure in 2020. A razor-thin margin like that hardly inspires confidence, but RCV supporters also managed to pick up another win in Washington, D.C., where voters overwhelmingly approved Initiative 83, setting a course for the city to begin using it in the 2026 primary.²²⁴

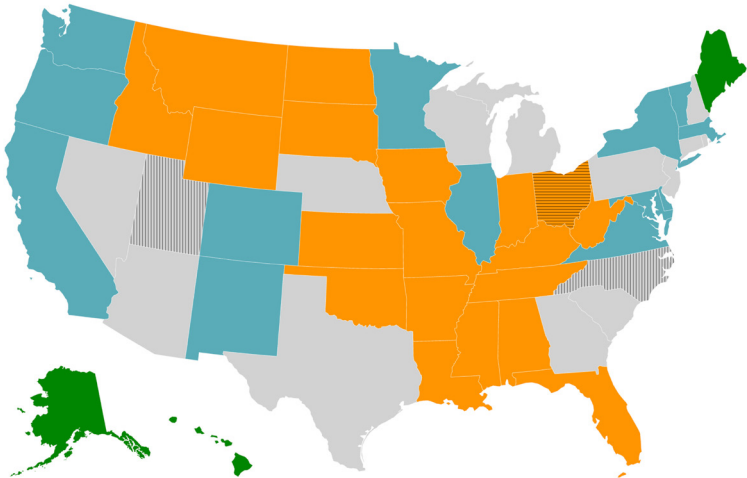
In other words, RCV is fading fast, but it’s not dead yet. And with Alaska putting a repeal of RCV on the ballot again in 2026, the movement is probably going to have to make its last stand. Without Alaska, RCV will be reduced to a fad that clings to the edges of urban progressive areas, low-salience local elections, and enclaves where the activist class propping up RCV can focus its resources.

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

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

- Color legend
- No state laws addressing RCV, not in use for general elections (15 states)
 - RCV used statewide for some elections (3 states)
 - RCV used (or scheduled for use) in some localities (13 states)
 - RCV prohibited (19 states)
 - Municipalities can adopt RCV but must lose state funding if they do so
 - Pilot program expired

Source: Ballotpedia



“
Voters don't like RCV.
Legislators don't like
RCV. **RCV has been
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”

The Donors Keeping RCV on Life Support

Through all the highs and (mostly) lows the RCV movement has been kept alive by a small network of left-leaning donors and activists who have refused to give up on the dream that once allowed Alaska to elect a Democrat in a statewide election. That fleeting victory seems to have created an addiction, and many donors are still happily forking over cash to the floundering cause.²²⁵

The most notable backer of RCV is probably Unite America, a Denver-based political action committee (PAC) that promotes open primaries and ranked-choice voting as a cure-all for America's political and cultural woes.²²⁶ In Colorado, Unite America gave roughly \$4.7 million to support Proposition 131.²²⁷ The proposition's individual backers included former DaVita CEO Kent Thiry, Walmart heir Ben Walton,²²⁸ Netflix co-founder Reed Hastings,²²⁹ video game magnate Marc Merrill,²³⁰ and Fox heiress Kathryn Murdoch.²³¹

The same donor network showed up again in Nevada and Alaska. In Alaska, the 2024 campaign to keep RCV alive raised more than \$12 million, while the campaign to end it raised barely \$120,000.²³² Unite America was once again one of the top donors, and was joined by Article IV,²³³ a Virginia-based nonprofit, and Action Now

Initiative,²³⁴ Texas-based “dark money” group funded by hedge-fund manager John Arnold.²³⁵ Even with that 100-to-1 funding advantage provided by out-of-state groups RCV was only able to hold on by less than one percent.

Nevada followed the same pattern: the pro-Question 3 campaign was once again funded heavily by Article IV and Unite America. Interestingly one of the leading donors to the anti-Question 3 campaign was the Nevada Alliance, another left-leaning group. Opposing RCV is becoming bipartisan.²³⁶

RCV activists get around quite a lot. The top donor to the failed Rank MI Vote campaign, for example, was Doug Robbins, who was formerly a pro-RCV activist in Alaska before he packed up and began to champion the cause in Michigan.²³⁷ Robbins contributed \$100,000 to the Rank MI Vote committee. It seems like RCV might need him back in Alaska before long, so only time will tell if he remains a Michigander long enough to try and put RCV on the ballot in 2028.²³⁸

It's Time to Let RCV Go Into the Light

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

Because there are donors who want it.

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

MAJOR DONORS TO THE VIRGINIA REDISTRICTING BALLOT MEASURE

BY ROBERT STILSON

It was the most expensive ballot measure in state history, and supporters of gerrymandering were by far the biggest spenders.

In April, voters in Virginia narrowly approved a constitutional amendment that would have suspended the state's independent bipartisan redistricting commission and allowed the Democrat-controlled General Assembly to draw new federal Congressional districts ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.²³⁹ The aggressively gerrymandered map which had been proposed could have yielded a U.S. House delegation of ten Democrats and just one Republican.²⁴⁰ Virginia's current delegation consists of six Democrats and five Republicans.

Two weeks later, the Supreme Court of Virginia struck down the amendment on procedural grounds, invalidating the ballot measure.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, it was by far the most expensive in the state's history.²⁴² Both sides raised tens of millions of dollars, though public disclosures reveal that the new map's supporters were significantly better-resourced than its opponents. Here is what is known about their respective finances and funders.

Supporters

The campaign in favor of the gerrymandering amendment was led by a committee called Virginians for Fair Elections.²⁴³ Data compiled by the Virginia Public Access Project as of May 4 reported²⁴⁴ that it had raised a total of \$66,121,864, while official state campaign finance disclosures²⁴⁵ reported \$65,121,496 worth of large contributions from February 6 through April 24. Of these large contributions, \$63,240,000 was in cash, with the remainder being in-kind. The vast majority (94 percent) of these in-kind contributions came from the

Democratic Party of Virginia and the activist group New Virginia Majority.²⁴⁶

Just five groups—all of which are organized as 501(c)(4) nonprofits—accounted for over 96 percent of all large cash contributions reported by Virginians for Fair Elections from February 6 through April 24:

- House Majority Forward²⁴⁷ (\$39,300,000): an advocacy group that is formally affiliated with House Majority PAC²⁴⁸—the self-described “only Super PAC solely focused on electing House Democrats.”²⁴⁹
- The Fairness Project²⁵⁰ (\$11,725,000): a group that supports left-of-center ballot measures nationwide, and whose major funders have included the SEIU United Healthcare Workers West²⁵¹ labor union, the Sixteen Thirty Fund,²⁵² and the Hopewell Fund.²⁵³
- Fund for Policy Reform²⁵⁴ (\$5,000,000): a 501(c)(4) that exists within the Open Society network funded by George Soros.²⁵⁵ It is also the sole source of funding for the Open Society Action Fund, which conducts the network's more explicitly political grantmaking.²⁵⁶
- American Opportunity Action²⁵⁷ (\$3,500,000): a new nonprofit that received its 501(c)(4) tax-exempt status from the IRS in September 2025. No public financials for the group are yet available, though an April 2026 New York Times article described the group as “perhaps the newest big player in dark-money politics.”²⁵⁸

- Global Impact Social Welfare Fund (\$1,500,000): a 501(c)(4) that exists under the Global Impact Ventures organizational umbrella, and which receives major funding from an associated 501(c)(3) called Global Impact.^{259, 260, 261}

Opponents

The largest committee formed to oppose the gerrymandering amendment was Virginians for Fair Maps RC.²⁶² The Virginia Public Access Project's data as of May 4 reported that it had raised a total of \$21,833,564,²⁶³ while official state disclosures reported \$24,065,000 worth of large contributions from March 2 through April 20—all of which was in cash.²⁶⁴ Nearly all (over 97 percent) of this money came from a separate but identically named group called Virginians for Fair Maps. This makes it impossible, at least for now, to trace the funding trail further.

Opponents of the amendment also operated through a second committee called Justice for Democracy. The Virginia Public Access Project's website reported²⁶⁵ as of May 4 that Justice for Democracy had raised \$7,670,000, while official state disclosures listed²⁶⁶ \$10,170,000 worth of large contributions from March 10 through April 24—all cash. Over 95 percent of these large contributions came from a 501(c)(4) nonprofit called Per Aspera Policy Inc. Little information is available regarding Per Aspera's funding. It raised \$2.9 million in 2024,²⁶⁷ but just \$92,399 in 2023.²⁶⁸ Though billionaire Peter Thiel has reportedly contributed to the group in the past, a source told Mother Jones that he has had “nothing to do with it”²⁶⁹ for years and was not among Per Aspera's current donors.²⁷⁰ If true, this would make Virginia attorney general Jay Jones' public claim that Thiel was “spending millions in Virginia” on the redistricting measure a false one.²⁷¹

“

Some of the very same groups and networks that supported the Democrat-driven gerrymandering attempt in Virginia are currently opposing it in Missouri. **Such is the hypocrisy of politics.**

”

Looking Ahead

As of this writing, multiple other states have also embarked on mid-decade redistricting efforts. One illustrative battleground is Missouri, where a Republican-led effort could potentially face a ballot referendum in November.²⁷² Some of the very same groups and networks²⁷³ that supported the Democrat-driven gerrymandering attempt in Virginia (including American Opportunity Action, the Fairness Project, the Global Impact Social Welfare Fund, and the Open Society Action Fund)²⁷⁴ are currently opposing it in Missouri. Such is the hypocrisy of politics.²⁷⁵

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