

Partisan Donors Hiding under Charity's Banner

The Funders' Committee for Civic Participation claims to be nonpartisan, but is it?

By Tom Johnson

Summary: Few Americans realize it is legal for foundations to fund, and public charities to conduct, voter registration and "get out the vote" drives. The Left engages in both with a vengeance, and the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation is in effect a trade group for donors who want to register voters and bus them to the polls in support of left-wing candidates and causes. Of course, to remain legal, such work must be "nonpartisan." This report takes an in-depth look into what is actually happening.



Eric Marshall, now executive director of the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation, discusses election monitoring on "HuffPost Live," in 2012.

(screen grab: <http://huff.lv/1IGG8w2>)

With the Left, words never mean what they seem to mean. In the realm of 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, which the law requires to be "nonpartisan," left-wing groups hide behind pleasant-sounding neutral language to mask their true intentions.

So before we examine the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation and all its engaging friends, here is a devil's dictionary to help you understand some of the most prominent terms in the left-wing nonprofit world.

A Devil's Dictionary

Democracy: Government run by a liberal, bureaucratic elite that regulates without accountability to the people.

Nonpartisan: Partisan.

Engagement: Getting people to vote for left-wing candidates and causes.

Voter Registration: Working with Democrat-affiliated data companies to microtarget people who agree with you to make sure they are qualified to vote.

Campaign Finance Reform: Denying the American people the right to broadcast their speech in elections by instituting complex regulations governing money in elections that only experts can understand. Exception:

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The speech of elite media corporations is exempt from these restrictions.

Equity: Treating people unequally on the basis of minority status and sex, with a special emphasis on African-Americans and women.

Participation: Getting more people on the left to vote, organize, and lobby to overcome Republicans and those on the right.

Reproductive Rights: Making abortion safe, legal, and common. No “reproductive right” is more important than abortion.

Social Justice: Anything that the Left decides is important, especially laws that promote big government, further separate people on the basis of sex and race, and are the opposite of what conservatives want.

Sustainability: Destroying the American economy by forcing so-called green policies on the people and on businesses through mandates and subsidies to political cronies.

501(c)(3): A tax status that requires groups to act in a nonpartisan manner. Tax rules governing 501(c)(3)s apply only to

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conservative groups. Groups on the left are exempt from IRS scrutiny.

Introduction

“Bringing together grantmakers committed to enhancing democratic participation in all aspects of civic life.” Doesn’t that sound nice? It’s the motto of the Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP), a non-profit project that uses the sweet-sounding language of “participation,” “democracy,” “civic,” “justice,” and so on to mask deeper, progressive motives while still enjoying a tax break.

But no generic language can hide the fact that the FCCP was created by progressives and for progressive causes. From who donates to who runs the organization, the FCCP is as liberal as they come, but don’t tell that to the IRS. (Well, the IRS may already know. The agency only seems to care about conservative groups anyway.) As an aside, I invite the reader to refer to our handy “Devil’s Dictionary” as a tool to interpret exactly what these left-wing groups mean with their neutral language.

What is the FCCP?

At its root, the FCCP is about “civic participation.” As the organization says, “civic participation—the active engagement of people in the decision-making processes that shape their communities and their lives—is critical to a healthy society.” To promote “civic participation,” the FCCP “serves leaders in the philanthropic community working to further this vision with heightened attention to issues of equity and historically disenfranchised and underrepresented communities.” But if you assume that means that FCCP intends to encourage participation by all Americans—including ones who are, say, libertarian, or conservative, or Republican—then you are mistaken.

The FCCP is not a registered nonprofit corporation. FCCP is what lawyers call a fictitious business name, or a DBA (“doing business as”) registered in New York State. It is a project of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit called NEO Philanthropy Inc. NEO was founded in New York in 1983. On its most recent publicly

available IRS filing NEO lays out its mission: “to bring together and strengthen the work of philanthropic institutions, non-profit groups, and other public interest organizations who share a vision of society that ensures justice, dignity and opportunity for all people.”

NEO (or as it was previously known, Public Interest Projects) is funded by heavy hitters of the left-wing philanthropic establishment.

Among them are the Ford Foundation (\$65,361,900 since 2000); Carnegie Corp. of New York (\$40,335,000 since 2003); Open Society Institute and Foundation to Promote Open Society (combined \$12,522,100 since 2001); John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (\$11,436,000 since 2005); John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (\$9,129,750 since 2003); Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program (\$6,671,800 since 2005); W.K. Kellogg Foundation (\$6,349,000 since 2004); JPB Foundation (\$4,350,000 since 2012); Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (\$3,775,000 since 2006); Rockefeller Foundation (\$3,218,500 since 2001); Bauman Family Foundation (\$2,895,000 since 2001); Gill Foundation (\$2,530,750 since 2009); Pew Memorial Trust (\$2,500,000 since 2001); J.N. Pew Jr. Charitable Trust (\$2,500,000 since 2001); Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (\$2,123,500 since 2005); Tides Foundation (\$1,675,736 since 2003); Marguerite Casey Foundation (\$1,565,000 since 2005); Rockefeller Brothers Fund Inc. (\$1,318,779 since 2004); Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund (\$1,165,000 since 2013); Nathan Cummings Foundation (\$958,400 since 2000); Joyce Foundation (\$942,000 since 2000); and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (\$375,000 since 2012).

NEO, according to its IRS filing, has three action funds aimed at advancing its leftist agenda.

First, the Four Freedoms Fund, which “promotes strongly aligned and effective national immigrant rights organizations working to advance immigration policy and reform; immigrant civic engagement and integration;

and defense of immigrant rights” (expenses \$15,762,710; including grants to other groups of \$13,714,340).

Second, the Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice, which “advances policies designed to save money, improve public safety, and lower recidivism; help young people and their families by keeping youth out of the criminal and juvenile justice system; and increase access to alternatives to juvenile incarceration” (expenses \$3,935,000; grants section left blank on the FCCP’s tax filing).

And third, the Communities for Public Education Reform fund, which “supports community-driven efforts working to guarantee educational excellence, equality, and opportunities for every child in low-income communities and communities of color” (expenses \$5,296,031 ; including grants to other groups of \$4,257,244).

As a 501(c)(3), NEO is required by law to limit its engagement in politics and stick to strictly nonpartisan activities. Hence its repeated claim to support only “nonpartisan” efforts that promote civic engagement. So on its face, FCCP is nothing more than an affinity group of philanthropic donors all committed to the same *completely* nonpartisan goal of promoting civic participation and public involvement in politics, however that may be expressed.

The stated goals of the organization are so vague as to be almost devoid of content. Its brochure claims the philanthropy group wants to “develop strong leaders” (who lead which groups to what goals?), “organize and mobilize communities” (to what ends?), “achieve policy impact” (for which nonpartisan policies?), and “engage and education the electorate” (to believe what neutral goals? using what kind of neutral education?). Reading this fuzzy language, you would think FCCP is purely devoted to process, that it eschews any partisan goals, indeed, that it either has no specific goals or doesn’t care a whit what goals any leader, community,

Integrated Voter Engagement

strengthens organizational infrastructure and builds resources – in and out of election cycles – that can be mobilized to win effective public policies, making voter participation relevant and meaningful.



A graphic illustrating “Integrated Voter Engagement” from a Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation brochure.

(source: <http://funderscommittee.org/files/fccp-brochure-2013-sheet.pdf>)

policy, or educational material may have. Still, there’s something ominous and narrow about the brochure’s circular graphic for this participatory process. It suggests the organization just may have some clear and direct, if hidden and unstated, goal.

Beyond FCCP’s public engagement, it conducts regular meetings with its donors, including Monday phone briefings, national conventions, regional gatherings, collaborative work with allies of the organization, and personalized consultation services for donors. The FCCP also conducts working

groups on how to build state infrastructure and how to “solve the problem of money in politics,” all while producing a series of publications.

In the same brochure, FCCP describes its “priority issues” in such a positive way that it’s almost impossible not to support them. Among its main issues are:

Voter Engagement, described as explicitly “nonpartisan” to increase “public education and voter turnout.”

Election Administration/Voter Protection that will raise up vague “best practices” in elections and prevent “engrained systems that...prevent segments of the electorate from exercising their franchise,” i.e., voter ID laws.

Redistricting reform that is meant to make the process of drawing congressional districts less partisan and more competitive.

Campaign Finance Reform to reduce the “influence of money in politics,” because “many believe that the concept of one-person vote is undermined by the influence of money in politics.”

However nice these priorities and initiatives may sound, the reality of the organization is far from this airbrushed façade. From top to bottom, FCCP is staffed, funded by, and connected to left-wing causes hiding under a 501(c)(3) umbrella. And when such a consistently progressive group of partisan people and organizations get together, it's difficult to believe they care only about the process of democracy and nothing for political ends.

In fact, the FCCP tacitly acknowledges that it isn't nonpartisan. As time of writing, its top publication listed is entitled, “How to Speak Nonpartisan,” a guide for grantees and donors on “the dos and don'ts to maintain a nonpartisan presentation by providing speakers with specific examples of what they can and cannot say.” Funny, why would a truly nonpartisan group need training in how to talk in a nonpartisan way? On the other hand, if a group were hyperpolitical, straining to push the edge of every legal envelope that restricts nonprofit politicking, it would need to teach just how far each type of nonprofit may go to achieve partisan policy success.

The problem involves more than just the group's publications. The FCCP is composed of left-wing members, governed by a left-wing steering committee, and run by left-wing staff. It's hard to imagine this is all coincidence, and impossible to claim

that only left-wing groups care about civic engagement (in a truly neutral sense of the term).

Obviously, something here is not right.

Member Organizations

Like any donor affinity group, the organization is little more than the sum of its member organizations (i.e., donors). Currently, 75 member organizations in the FCCP pool their money for “nonpartisan philanthropy,” but a quick survey of the list shows that these groups are anything but nonpartisan. From Access Strategies Fund to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, these are progressive funders united by a mutual desire to move America leftward. Here is just a sampling of the groups that come together to make FCCP (the complete roster is found at the end of this article).

Access Strategies Fund

Maria and Greg Jobin-Leeds founded the fund in 1999. According to its online history, “Maria and Greg are deeply committed to the power of community-driven philanthropy to advance progressive social change using a race, gender, and economic lens.” A self-professed “social justice” organization, Access Strategies claims that “our country ... must have a diverse and mobilized electorate that inspires debate and dialogue on pressing progressive issues.”

They go on to describe their idea of a progressive society divided up by grievance group instead of united in a common culture, saying they “envision a society where diverse women, communities of color, immigrants, low-income people, and other groups are driving policy at every decision-making table.” Access Strategies is driven by the idea that “policy informed by diverse decision-makers”—that is, not informed by good ideas or common principles, but rather informed by the litany of race, gender, and economic classes—“leads to better outcomes.”

AFL-CIO and SEIU

Here is perhaps the most egregious evidence that FCCP is a partisan powerhouse, not a

“good government” group with innocent civic intentions. The AFL-CIO federation of labor unions and the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) are massive international money boxes for left-wing campaigns and causes from the local to the national level. They dominate all hard political giving in America, and their giving, as well as their perhaps even more valuable in-kind donations of volunteering and communicating, tilt nearly 100 percent to the Democratic Party, and yet they're welcome members of the FCCP. That fact not only gives the lie to the FCCP's claim to nonpartisanship, it also makes nonsense of the group's alleged devotion to reducing the influence of money in politics.

And not only are the AFL-CIO and SEIU mega-donors who cumulatively outspend the Koch brothers—the conservative bogeymen pilloried by the Left—but even worse, these unions often coerce money from their members without the members' consent and spend it in support of candidates and causes the members oppose. There's not much in American life that more directly contradicts the ideal of nonpartisan civic participation than that, but the injustice doesn't seem to trouble anyone at the FCCP.

To appreciate the scale of partisan politicking involved, consider that in the 2014 election cycle alone, the AFL-CIO donated \$29,500 to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, \$25,000 to the (Democratic) House Majority PAC, \$15,250 to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, \$15,000 to the pro-abortion EMILY's List, and around \$10,000 apiece to a string of Democratic House and Senate candidates across America, according to OpenSecrets.org. In fact, over the entire cycle, the AFL-CIO spent over \$1.14 million for Democrats and only \$480 against. On the other hand, it spent over \$1.02 million to defeat Republicans and absolutely nothing to help Republicans get elected. How's that for nonpartisan engagement?

The numbers are similar for the SEIU. President Obama's favorite labor union donated a whopping \$734,913 to the (Democratic)

Senate Majority PAC and \$435,758 to the (Democratic) House Majority PAC. That's on top of \$100,000 the union spent on the organization Battleground Texas, whose sole purpose is to turn the Lone Star State blue. The union spent a mere \$22,363 in favor of Republicans compared to spending over \$2.74 million to defeat Republicans. For Democrats, it spent over \$2.53 million in support and only \$46,888 against.

And let's not forget that these are unions that spend and fight separately to increase the minimum wage, crowding low-experience workers out of the market; to grow government at all levels; to expand abortion; and otherwise to support the entire pantheon of liberal causes.

Annie E. Casey Foundation

As Fred Lucas detailed in the May 2013 *Organization Trends*, the Casey Foundation aimed its crosshairs at the tough-on-crime approach of the 1990s that yielded dramatic improvement in crime and violence in cities across America, especially in the "low-income communities and communities of color" the FCCP claims to care about. The foundation also worked to abolish the death penalty and life sentences for juveniles—both laudable ideas, but undoubtedly political.

Although the political lines regarding criminal justice are blurred in today's politics, the Casey Foundation's donation history reveals a clear liberal bias. As Lucas detailed, "The foundation gives away about \$150 million in grants each year to many left-wing organizations, including the Tides Foundation; Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Inc.; the American Civil Liberties Union; the National Council of La Raza; the Handgun Epidemic Lowering Plan Network; the Children's Defense Fund and the Ms. Foundation for Women."

As noted in the June 2012 *Foundation Watch*, the Casey Foundation spends significant resources advocating for more government-sponsored welfare entitlement programs. Not to mention the fact that the Casey Founda-

tion funded the infamous Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) for nearly a decade.

The Arca Foundation

As Matthew Vadum reported in the October 2011 *Foundation Watch*, the Arca Foundation is a smaller philanthropy that "has been on the cutting edge of radical left-wing causes, embracing Fidel Castro's Cuba, the Palestinian cause, Saul Alinsky-inspired community organizing, and the never-ending social justice campaigns of the Left."

Begun by a progressive tobacco heiress, the Arca Foundation uses the same left-wing buzzwords of "organized" citizenry, "social justice," and "equity," and has given funds to everyone from the former Communist regime in Nicaragua to radical environmentalists to anti-corporate activists.

The current and long-time executive director is Anna Lefer Kuhn, a former program officer at the Open Society Institute, another FCCP member organization founded and funded by George Soros.

The Arkay Foundation

Not to be confused with the Arca Foundation, this philanthropy is yet another left-wing organization. According to its history page, its goals are the same lefty pet causes of economic equity, social justice, environmental protection, and reducing the "influence of money in the U.S. political process."

Under the leadership of president Marian Penn, and along with her husband, famous California lawyer and director of the foundation, William H. Soskin, the Arkay Foundation has become a member of the Democracy Alliance, an invitation-only club whose members are required to give \$200,000 every year to pro-Democrat super PACs and other influential left-wing organizations like George Soros's Media Matters and the Center for American Progress.

Over the years, the Arkay Foundation has also funneled, according to the Washington Free Beacon, nearly \$1 million into the

liberal Tides Foundation and Rockefeller Financial Advisors.

Atlantic Philanthropies

Since its founding in 1982, Atlantic Philanthropies has donated more than \$7 billion to various causes. Though it was created by a man named Charles Feeney whose politics are mostly liberal, little is known about his opinions save that he has generally supported left-wing causes (see *Foundation Watch*, June 2011). But under the leadership of president Gara LaMarche, beginning in 2006 Atlantic Philanthropies took a more activist turn.

LaMarche had held leadership posts in the ACLU before becoming director of programs at Soros's Open Society Institute. He is also a regular contributor to the *Nation*. Under LaMarche's leadership, Atlantic Philanthropies partnered with the Obama administration and became a political powerhouse by joining together with other major organizations to create Health Care for America Now (HCAN), which played a prominent supporting role to help enact Obamacare, and Main Street Alliance, a pro-big government small business organization. HCAN, examined in the August 2010 *Foundation Watch*, received a whopping \$27 million from Atlantic Philanthropies to have Obamacare become law. So much for getting money out of politics.

LaMarche left Atlantic in 2011 and returned to the Soros empire (he is president of the Democracy Alliance now), but whether pre- or post-LaMarche, Atlantic Philanthropies pours millions of dollars into activist groups

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FoundationWatch

like the ACLU, the Advocacy Fund (formerly the Tides Advocacy Fund), the anti-gun Alliance for Justice, the “racial justice” and big-government health care reform Center for American Progress Action Fund, the left-wing think tank Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, pro-open borders National Council of La Raza, and more. (For a more detailed list, see the April 2015 *Foundation Watch*.)

Bauman Foundation

The Bauman Foundation was founded by Lionel R. Bauman, who donated large sums to “progressive social justice,” environmental causes, and more. Its board is staffed by progressive heavyweights, including Hillary Clinton booster David Brock, the founder and CEO of Media Matters who helps run not one but two multimillion-dollar Democrat super PACs. Another one of its board of directors, Anne Bartley, helped found the FCCP and Democracy Alliance. Amy Bauman, another board member, co-authored a book called *Cracks in the Armor: The Unspoken Lives of White Privilege*.

According to a December 2014 *Foundation Watch* profile, the Bauman Foundation has donated over \$1.9 million to the far-left activist group Center for Community Change, over \$1.6 million to Project Vote, the allegedly nonpartisan voter registration machine of ACORN, \$450,000 to the now-defunct ACORN arm American Institute for Social Justice, \$150,000 to the radical community organizing group the Gamaliel Foundation, and more.

From open borders and amnesty, to quashing voter ID laws, to extremist environmental advocacy to ban “fossil fuels,” the Bauman Foundation has spent millions in an effort to create a more progressive society by political means.

Brico Fund

The Brico Fund was started by Milwaukee heiress Lynde Uihlein and, according to Media Trackers, “is responsible for funding a host of progressive causes and organizations in Wisconsin, including the *Wisconsin Democracy Campaign*.” According to Open

Secrets, persons associated with Brico form one of the largest donor groups supporting Democratic candidates and progressive causes in the state of Wisconsin. Brico Fund’s current executive director, Anne Summers, not only sits on the steering committee for FCCP, but also sits on the boards of the left-wing groups Progress Now and State Voices.

The fund focuses on three main issues: environmentalism, progressivism, and art programs “that encourage awareness of and engender dialogue about matters of relevance to communities within the local environment.”

According to its website, the Brico Fund “embraces a strategy that takes a long-term approach to develop and align progressive capacity to achieve collective impact in Washington.”

Democracy Alliance

This secretive left-wing donor group was founded in 2005 by George Soros and the late Peter B. Lewis precisely to win political battles. Soros was bitter that the tens of millions of dollars he’d put behind Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry hadn’t toppled President George W. Bush in the 2004 election. The Democracy Alliance was created to pool money from left-wing fat cats that could be used to expand the progressive nonprofit infrastructure, so these supposedly nonpartisan activist groups could win elections that the Democratic Party seemed unable to win.

The Alliance is registered as a *taxable* nonprofit corporation in the District of Columbia in order to prevent public scrutiny of its finances. A group of about 80 to 100 left-wing donors meet regularly under its auspices, and you too can be a “partner” if you promise to donate at least \$200,000 or more each year to the finest left-wing groups and causes, as identified by the Alliance.

The funds don’t flow through the Alliance itself, but are given directly by individuals, foundations, and rich unions. The left-of-center news website Vox found that between

2005 to 2013 alone, Alliance members donated \$541.8 million to left-leaning organizations, including Progress Now, the anti-Bush VoteVets, the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, the New Organizing Fund, YearlyKos/Netroots Nation, the AFL-CIO affiliate WorkingAmerica, Young Democrats of America, Center for American Progress, Media Matters for America, Progressive Majority, Center for Progressive Leadership, ACORN, EMILY’s list, the failed left-wing talk radio network Air America, the Sierra Club, the pro-big government Center for Community Change, the data warehouse of the Democrat Party Catalist, Progressive States Network, and many, many more.

General Service Foundation

The General Service Foundation, based in Colorado, states that its “core values include a commitment to democracy, human rights, social justice, diversity, equity, and access to appropriate information and resources.” Its main program areas are “human rights and economic justice” (i.e., redistribution) and “reproductive justice” (i.e., abortion at will at taxpayer expense).

On its “Reproductive Justice” page, the philanthropy states that “access to safe abortion is an integral component of a reproductive health agenda,” and that it wishes to “ensure that all women and girls in the U.S. have the power and resources to make healthy decisions about their bodies, sexuality, and reproduction.”

In its “economic justice” work, it “supports organizations involved in capacity building, advocacy, organizing, and leadership development in order to empower low-wage workers within the United States and Mexico.”

The Joyce Foundation

Valerie Jarrett, a senior Obama advisor, used to head the Joyce Foundation, and Barack Obama sat on the board from 1994 to 2002, which should be enough to convince anyone that this group is a mighty and radical left-wing machine.

Though the organization started as a proponent of free enterprise founded by the Republican David Joyce, today the foundation checks about every liberal box. As *Foundation Watch* noted in February 2014, it is anti-gun, pro-union, anti-free markets, anti-First Amendment (it supports heavy regulation of political speech), anti-voter ID laws, pro-radical environmentalism, and otherwise the tool of big government liberals devoted to making the Great Lakes region even more progressive than it already is.

MacArthur Foundation

Though not as brazenly liberal as some of its peers, MacArthur is far from the “independent” and “nonpartisan” organization that it makes itself out to be. Grantees of the foundation fight to increase environmental regulations, oppose the death penalty, expand failed public housing programs, and overall want a larger government bureaucracy.

According to Discover the Networks, the founder of the MacArthur Foundation, John D. MacArthur, was a conservative who supported free markets and hated regulation. But after MacArthur died in 1978, the foundation took a turn. First a few liberals were allowed on the board, and by 1981 the organization was run completely by the Left. The Left seems forever able to use other people’s money for things they didn’t want; MacArthur’s new grantees included the American Federation of Teachers, Arms Control Association, Brookings Institution, Catholics for Choice, Center for Reproductive Rights, Environmental Defense Fund, Greenpeace, National Council of La Raza, National Public Radio, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the Tides Center and Tides Foundation, and the Urban Institute, to name a few.

Open Society Foundations

Founded and funded by George Soros, the Open Society Foundations are an international organization which say they are devoted to building “vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens.”

But however neutral Open Society’s public façade may be, the groups and causes sup-

ported by the foundation betray Soros’s left-wing agenda. For example, the Open Society institute gives money to the National Council of La Raza, the Center for Community Change, Media Matters, the left-wing Gamaliel Foundation, the pro-big government American Institute for Social Justice, the single-payer advocate Health Care for America Now, Catalist, Progressive States Network, Progressive Change Campaign Committee, Catholics for Choice, the Urban Institute, the Tides Foundation, and more.

Pew Charitable Trusts

The Capital Research Center’s Scott Walter accurately described the Pew Charitable Trusts as “indefatigable in its efforts to shape—even circumscribe—Americans’ political speech.” The progressive utopia is one where the masses silently follow the rulings of “expert” elites in everything from whom to vote for to what to listen to and even what to eat.

To that end, Pew is always looking for new ways to centralize power (preferably in Washington) to dictate how the world works. It has supported campaign finance reform that devolves into complex regulations understandable only by, you guessed it, elites, and bypassed entirely by elite outlets like NPR and the *New York Times*. The philanthropy supports “civic journalism” that focuses less on telling the facts than on shaping media narratives. And it wants government to regulate the Internet with “net neutrality” rules. Whether it’s elections, print media, or online information, Pew’s view is that its experts that should tell us peons what to think.

Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Funded with the fortune of an ardent capitalist, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund is now an anti-capitalist institution. The philanthropy has donated millions of dollars to environmentalist causes that aim to increase the regulatory power of government at the expense of businesses.

Ironically for an organization funded by a man who made his money in oil, the fund’s main focus is radical environmentalism. At

one point in 2004, it joined with a movement to require companies to list their “environmental liabilities.” Driven by its environmentalism, the fund donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in 2003 and 2004 to defeat President Bush because of his environmental policies.

The Wallace Global Fund

The Wallace Global Fund claims to be part of an “asset activist movement” to “ensure that our investments align with our mission to create a sustainable planet where social justice and respect for human rights can flourish.”

What does such a world look like? First, it demands that we reject the fuel source that allowed us to build modern civilization: oil. The Wallace Global Fund has a “divest-invest” strategy where it pushes for divestment from all fossil fuel-related organizations and investment in green environmentalism.

Second, this vision demands that we rally against the wealthy elites. In the philanthropy’s view, the people don’t direct America, but instead power belongs only to “a relative handful of wealthy men.” (Apparently wealthy women have no part in disenfranchising their fellow citizens.)

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Founded in 1930 by the breakfast cereal tycoon, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation was originally devoted to helping impoverished children. Today, however, the organization also engages in left-wing activism in an effort to combat “white privilege” and “structural racism,” to name a few of its focuses. The May 2013 *Foundation Watch* shows the extent to which the Kellogg Foundation has become a liberal bank account. Grant recipients include the ACLU, ACORN, Center for Community Change, National Council of La Raza, National Public Radio, the Tides Foundation and its affiliated Tides Center, the United Nations Foundation, the Urban Institute (there seems to be a trend here), and more.

One of the philanthropy’s most notable campaigns in recent years was its “mission

for racial equity” that sought to combat the “structural racism” plaguing our society. This includes educating people about white privilege and confronting the institutionalized policies that supposedly yield racist outcomes.

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Though the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation of North Carolina claims to not engage in politics, that’s not what the Left’s internal memos say. In 2013, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was mired in controversy when a leaked strategy memo revealed the truth that this supposedly nonpartisan nonprofit and its grantees were engaged in the most brazen of partisan activities.

The memo included recommendations on how to cripple the leaders of the state’s Republican Party, conduct investigations into state GOP leaders, and engage in liberal voter registration. This all appeared to directly violate the requirement that 501(c)(3)s refrain from engaging in partisan activities (see *Organization Trends*, April 2013).

The memo was circulated by the state’s umbrella group for the Left, Blueprint North Carolina, which was created by and half-funded by Z. Smith Reynolds. When the memo scandal broke, the foundation pretended to be shocked, and Blueprint North Carolina changed its story for the press, deciding that the memo was written by a 501(c)(4) group.

Meanwhile, the foundation also donates money to various left-wing organizations like the American Institute for Social Justice (an ACORN affiliate), NARAL, Planned Parenthood, and a National Council of La Raza look-alike, El Centro Hispano.

The Steering Committee

The steering committee for FCCP is pulled from the ranks of the member organizations, and it’s a safe bet that these top-level employees share the politics of their respective

foundations. Here’s a quick list of the current members of the FCCP steering committee:

Marcia Avner is a member of the Bauman Foundation board of directors where she helps guide the organization on social justice and environmental activism. According to the foundation, she acts as a “consultant whose practice includes advocacy strategy, issue campaign design, organizing, lobbying, and media training, curriculum development, and facilitation”—and doesn’t that sound nonpartisan?

Allison Barlow is the director for the Democracy and Media Program at the Wallace Global Fund, the divest-invest anti-fossil fuel organization. She is a former co-chair of the FCCP.

George Cheung is a senior program officer at the Valerie Jarrett/Obama-connected Joyce Foundation where he works on its Democracy Program. He is a graduate of Brown University and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Renee Fazzari is a program officer at Colorado’s pro-abortion General Service Foundation where she manages a grantmaking program “aimed at building civic engagement and the progressive sector in Colorado,” according to the FCCP. She also helped market and advise a sustainable office start-up called “thegreenoffice.com.”

Keesha Gaskins is a director for the Democratic Practice-United States Program of the environmentalist Rockefeller Brothers Fund. She is a long-time organizer who used to work as an executive director for the League of Women Voters in Minnesota.

Cuong Hoang is a director of programs at Mott Philanthropic, the only organization not detailed above. This relatively new organization was founded in 2008 by Julia Mott Toulmin, who has also been associated with Boston’s Stoneman Family Foundation and Linde Family Foundation. The group’s website says only that it “helps individuals and family foundations maximize their philanthropic impact through the creation and development of custom and targeted long

term philanthropic strategies, action plans, and overall foundation management.”

Laleh Ispahani is a co-chair of the FCCP steering committee and director of the Open Society Foundation’s Democracy Fund. She spent six years as senior policy counsel at the ACLU working on “racial justice and human rights.”

Anna Lefer Kunn is the second co-chair of the FCCP steering committee and is an executive director of the Arca Foundation. There she works to “advance social justice and human rights in the U.S. and abroad.” Ensuring that both co-chairs have a visible Soros connection, Lefer Kunn was formerly a program officer at the Open Society Foundation “where she conceived of and led a multi-year initiative that helped to build a movement of diverse, progressive youth activists leading on social justice issues.”

Esther Nieves is the director of community engagement and leadership at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation where she “identifies and support opportunities for affecting positive systemic change within communities and in the execution of programming efforts aligned with the foundation’s goals,” according to the FCCP.

Anne Summers is CEO of the Brico Fund. She previously worked as legislative aide for a Democrat in the Wisconsin state assembly and was vice president of development at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin.

Joy Vermillion Heinsohn is a director for programs at North Carolina’s Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

The Staff of the FCCP

Unsurprisingly, the staffers who run the day-to-day operations of the FCCP share the political leanings of the steering committee that dictates its overall strategy. Here is a sampling of staff members:

Eric Marshall formerly directed election administration and voting rights efforts at the Soros-funded State Voices group before becoming the executive director at FCCP.

He also “led the nation’s largest non-partisan voter protection coalition.”

Irene Schwoeffermann is the program director at FCCP and previously worked for the definitively partisan Congressional Black Caucus. She has a full résumé of African-American activism including stints at the Student of Color Campus Diversity Project, the Program Association for the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, and the Portland African American Leadership Forum.

Alexandra Russell is a consultant and is the FCCP’s Money and Politics Working Group director. She runs a donor table called the Progressive Massachusetts Funders Collaborative and directed the Barbara Lee Foundation, “funding initiatives to advance women’s political leadership and to endorse and support female pro-choice candidates.” (Editor’s note: The foundation is not associated with the Democratic congresswoman from Berkeley, California, with the same name.)

Is it time for 501(c)(3) laws to change?

It is abundantly clear the FCCP is a progressive organization with progressive goals, regardless of what its whitewashed website says. Yet the IRS is very clear on what 501(c)(3)s cannot do. For clarity, I will quote the IRS exactly:

Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity. Violating this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt

status and the imposition of certain excise taxes. ... Voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that (a) would favor one candidate over another; (b) oppose a candidate in some manner; or (c) have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.

But, as with the FCCP, the claims of so many left-wing 501(c)(3)s that they are nonpartisan is dubious at best.

In fact, the idea that 501(c)(3)s register voters in a nonpartisan fashion is laughable. As Scott Walter wrote at *PhilanthropyDaily.com*, “In front of a DC audience that knows how voter registration actually occurs these days, I got laughs—and nods from [Democrat] pollster Celinda Lake—when I asked [Public Citizen’s] Lisa Gilbert if she could name a single 501(c)(3) in America that is genuinely nonpartisan in its voter registration; that is to say, one that doesn’t use sophisticated data to register persons who are highly likely to vote in the way that the registering group desires? I believe you can see even Ms. Gilbert crack a smile before she composes herself” and pretends this is not a problem (<http://www.philanthropydaily.com/lies-damned-lies-and-polls/>).

With the rise of modern technology, the Internet age, and vast amounts of data on each individual person in the U.S., there is a reason for Ms. Gilbert’s smile. Microtargeting means using data like voting history, consumer history, organization memberships, etc. to pinpoint exactly the voters and donor your political campaign most wants to reach. The techniques originated in advertising but work in voter registration and Get Out the Vote efforts, too. Microtargeting is one ostensibly nonpartisan 501(c)(3)s can just “happen” to connect with, register, and bus to the polls those exact voters who would vote for Democrats.

An organization called Catalist LLC is at the forefront of this new political targeting (a full exposé on Catalist can be found in *Organization Trends*, November 2012). As

Organization Trends noted, “over 90 organizations, campaigns, and committees” used Catalist’s services in 2008 alone, and “progressive organizations, the Obama campaign, and federal party committees attempted to contact more than 106 million people” using Catalist’s data. “This means that the progressive community attempted to contact over 46% of the U.S. adult population” through phone, mail, Internet, or in person.

With a tool like this available, left-wing 501(c)(3)s can hide behind all the neutral language they want and still reach out to exactly the people they need to win.

So, if 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is being misused to mask clearly partisan organizations, it begs the question: is it time to change tax-exempt laws?

At the very least, greater oversight is needed to make sure that tax law isn’t being co-opted for partisan purposes. But given the demonstrated partisan bias of the IRS, the chance that the IRS would conduct nonpartisan oversight is even more laughable than the idea that 501(c)(3) organizations conduct nonpartisan voter registration.

Tom Johnson is the pseudonym of a Capitol Hill staffer.

FW

(NOTE: The complete list of FCCP member organizations follows on pages 10 and 11.)

COMPLETE LIST OF FCCP

Access Strategies Fund	Ford Foundation
AFL-CIO	Foundation for Civic Leadership
Agua Fund	General Service Foundation
Annie E. Casey Foundation	Gill Foundation
Arca Foundation	Hagedorn Foundation
Arkay Foundation	Helenia Fund / Barden-Cole Foundation
Atlantic Philanthropies	Hispanics In Philanthropy
Bauman Foundation	Hull Family Foundation
Brico Fund	James Irvine Foundation
California Community Foundation	Joyce Foundation
California Wellness Foundation	Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment
Carnegie Corporation of New York	Latino Victory Foundation
Color of Democracy Fund	Leland Fikes Foundation
CrossCurrents Foundation	Leonard and Sophie Davis Fund
Democracy Alliance	Lisa & Douglas Goldman Fund
Democracy Fund	MacArthur Foundation
Douglas H. Phelps Foundation	Marguerite Casey Foundation
Emanuel & Pauline A. Lerner Foundation	Media Democracy Fund
Ettinger Foundation, Inc.	Mertz Gilmore Foundation
Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund	The Minneapolis Foundation

M E M B E R O R G A N I Z A T I O N S

Minnesota Council on Foundations

Summer Fund II

National Education Association

Thornburg Foundation

Needmor Fund

Unbound Philanthropy

NEO Philanthropy

Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program
at Shelter Rock

New Community Fund

Voqal

Northwest Health Foundation

W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Open Society Foundations

Wallace Global Fund

Ottinger Foundation

Wallace H. Coulter Foundation

Panta Rhea Foundation

Washington Progress Fund

Pew Charitable Trusts

Wieboldt Foundation

Proteus Fund

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Quixote Foundation

Women Donors Network

Rappaport Family Foundation

Womens' Foundation of California

Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Woodbury Fund

Rockefeller Family Fund

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Sapelo Foundation

Service Employees International Union

Solidago Foundation

Southern Partners Fund

Stoneman Family Foundation

PhilanthropyNotes

More than 2,000 nonprofits, businesses, associations, and other organizations signed a letter last month asking Congress to approve expired and expiring tax provisions known as “tax extenders,” the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reports. **Independent Sector**, **Feeding America**, and the **Land Trust Alliance**, among others, urged Congress “to act immediately on a seamless, multiyear or permanent extension” of the tax-related provisions. “Tax breaks designed to encourage food donations to food banks, land donation for conservation, and charitable gifts from individual retirement accounts are part of the more than 50 temporary tax provisions that expire annually,” the newspaper reports. “Another provision would simplify the excise tax on private foundations to 1 percent on net investment income.” Failing to renew the tax provisions would lead to a tax increase and “inject instability and uncertainty into the economy and weaken confidence in the employment marketplace,” according to the letter.

Tennis star and charter school booster **Andre Agassi** has started a new private-equity real-estate fund that wants to generate \$400 million from high net worth investors to underwrite dozens of new charter schools across the nation, the *Wall Street Journal* reports. This is the second charter school financing plan that Agassi has created with **Bobby Turner**, who created the social-impact investment firm **Turner Impact Capital**. The first plan, which was rolled out four years ago, has helped develop 50 schools in Philadelphia, Detroit, and elsewhere. The new fund has already raised upwards of \$150 million in commitments, the newspaper reports.

The **Association of American Medical Colleges** says medical colleges raised 7.8 percent more in 2014 than in 2013, according to its annual survey of members, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reports. In 2014, institutions raked in \$59.8 million in gifts on average compared to the previous year, when they took in \$55.4 million on average. Donations to public medical colleges rose from an average of \$38.5 million to \$41.1 million, while those to private colleges increased from \$79.9 million to \$84.5 million. The association says 139 of its 158 member medical institutions participated in its 2014 survey. The higher level of donations to medical colleges mirrors rising donations to higher education. “In 2014, charitable contributions to colleges and universities climbed 10.8 percent to \$37.45 billion, according to the Voluntary Support of Education survey published annually by the Council for Aid to Education,” the newspaper reports.

Goldman Sachs WATCH

Although Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein has been bullish on the People’s Republic of China for years, he told the *Wall Street Journal* last month that the country’s leaders have been dealing with market forces in an amateurish way. Blankfein said it was a “ham-handed way they dealt with the collapse,” a reference to government intervention when the country’s stock market plummeted twice in recent months. “They don’t have a lot of experience at this market stuff.” As recently as July, Blankfein had argued that China represented a good investment opportunity.

Blankfein also took shots at billionaire Donald Trump, who at press time was leading in polls for the GOP 2016 presidential nomination. “I can find fault with some of the things that seem wacky to me that he says,” Blankfein said. “It’s hard to imagine his finger on the button. That blows my mind.” Blankfein added he is a Democrat. Trump is popular among hedge fund managers, but he has vowed to raise taxes on hedge funds. “They’re paying nothing and it’s ridiculous. I want to save the middle class,” Trump said in August. “The hedge fund guys didn’t build this country. These are guys that shift paper around and they get lucky.”