Testimony before the
Georgia Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on State Elections Processes

Chaired by Sen. William Ligon (R-Brunswick)

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December 3, 2020

Chairman Ligon and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the issue of a private interest group selectively funding Georgia election offices.

I applaud your investigating all sorts of election irregularities, but even if, for the sake of argument, not one vote in the whole state were fraudulent or miscounted, you would still have the problem I describe, and it did not occur only in the past. As we speak, the same private funding continues to be offered to local Georgia election offices by a supposedly "nonpartisan" nonprofit, itself funded to the tune of $350 million from the billionaire family of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg.[1]

Why should this disturb you and the citizens of Georgia? I can answer that with a simple question: Does every one of you, facing your next election, know that some geographic locales hold more votes for you than others? Do you know the demographic characteristics of your most likely voters – their ages, marital status, sex, race, and the like?

Of course you do. That's how you and every candidate build electoral majorities and win. Political activists in and out of the official political parties know these simple truths as well, and they use ever more sophisticated microtargeting to exploit their knowledge.

That's fine when the activists are connected to our political parties, or when they're in groups like the National Rifle Association or Planned Parenthood, whose legal status publicly acknowledges that they intend to influence public policy, register voters, and otherwise engage in political battles in ways that often end up helping or hurting our political parties' election chances.

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[1] https://www.techandciviclife.org/georgia-open-call/

By contrast, it's not right when in Georgia and other battleground states, you have political parties, and elections, significantly helped by the type of nonprofit that's not supposed to get in the middle of elections, the so-called 501(c)(3) nonprofit that's supposed to be charitable, educational, religious—and strictly nonpartisan.

I do not want to see donors or (c)(3) nonprofits anywhere on the political spectrum subtly manipulating elections through gifts to government offices. But this year in Georgia, tens of millions of dollars, from that single billionaire family, the Zuckerbergs, first flowed into a (c)(3) nonprofit called the Center for Tech and Civic Life,[2] and then those millions flowed into dozens of Georgia counties' election offices. Not all of them; only 44 of the state's 159 counties, according to CTCL's limited public reports.[3] More than two-thirds of counties received nothing. That money made a dramatic difference in your election this November, and it was not a nonpartisan difference.

You should not be surprised the Center's results were partisan, because its leaders all come from a Democratic-aligned group, the New Organizing Institute, which was so successful boosting that political party in elections that the *Washington Post* gushed it was "the Democratic Party's Hogwarts for digital wizardry."[4] Online messaging and all forms of voter outreach were its bread and butter. These wizards know how to turn the right people into registered voters and get them to the polls for their favored candidates.

The Capital Research Center has not been able to verify all the funding the Center for Tech and Civic Life gave Georgia counties, because the Center is not disclosing its grants to us or the Associated Press or other inquirers, even though it will have to reveal them in its next IRS filing. But using local government records and news accounts, we have captured many of the grant amounts, including what are likely the largest ones, given to the largest urban areas. And we have correlated those with the official vote totals for the counties involved.[5]

As I read our top findings, ask yourself: Do these numbers sound nonpartisan? Should private interest groups like this, backed by a billionaire or two, be allowed to pick and choose where to boost election funding and turnout in the Peach State?

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[2] See https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/center-for-tech-and-civic-life/
[3] https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1E7P3owIO6UlpMY1GaeE8nJVw2x6Ee-iI9d37hEEr5ZA/edit#gid=1993755695
[4] Brian Fund, "Inside the Democratic Party's Hogwarts for Digital Wizardry," *Washington Post,* July 8, 2014.
[5] Scott Walter, "Georgia Election Officials, a Billionaire, and the "Nonpartisan" Center for Tech & Civic Life

- Perhaps hoping to forestall criticisms like mine, CTCL funded more counties won by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump than by Democratic candidate Joe Biden: 27 versus 17.

- But that's misleading. A better comparison: CTCL funded 21% of Trump counties versus 55% of Biden counties. A Biden county was over two-and-a-half times more likely to receive funding.

- Nine out of ten of CTCL's largest known grants went to Biden counties.

- Look at the ten counties with the greatest shifts[6] to the Democratic presidential candidate in their voting from 2016 to 2020: Nine of the ten received CTCL grants.

- These nine grantees averaged a 13.7% shift toward the Democrat. Two of those counties (Cobb and Gwinnett) were among the four counties that delivered Biden the most votes.

- Of the four counties that gave Biden 100,000 or more votes, CTCL funded all four (Clayton, Dekalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett).

- And it funded those counties lavishly. Per capita, those counties were funded between $4.38 and $10.47 for every man, woman, and child.

- By contrast, so far as is currently known, only one county won by Trump was funded above one dollar per capita (Cherokee) – and that county's Democratic vote leapt up 70%, compared to a 24% rise in its Republican vote. Trump counties like Carroll, Camden, and Lumpkin got around a half-dollar or less.

- Biden carried 33 counties that delivered him 10,000 or more votes. CTCL funded 70% of them.

- By contrast, Trump carried 46 counties that gave him 10,000 or more votes, but CTCL funded only 20% of them.

- That means the most vote-rich counties for Biden were three-and-a-half times more likely to be funded than Trump's most vote-rich counties.

- Totaling votes in all the 44 counties CTCL funded, the Republican presidential vote rose 207,000 over the last election. The Democratic presidential vote jumped by 530,000, or more than two-and-a-half times the Republican rise.

- But it is the pattern of vote-shifts that best reveals how this private group influenced your election. Nine counties were both top vote-producers for Trump and also recipients of

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[6] https://www.Politico.com/2020-election/results/georgia/

CTCL funds. *Five of these nine counties were among the top ten most blue-shifting counties in the state.*

Of course, the Center for Tech and Civic Life is not the only factor in this year's elections in Georgia, but I insist it is not a small factor. I urge you to investigate every dealing it had with every county. Did the contacts begin from the Center's side? What preconditions did the Center put on its funds?[7] Did the counties fulfill their budgetary and other obligations under Georgia state law when using these funds? Who designed voter "education" materials? Advertisements? Was any money spent on training that would help prevent vote fraud, such as how to match signatures?

Above all, I urge you to consider whether you ever again want to permit *privatized* elections, where wealthy donors steer resources so unequally and inequitably. Some states forbid any such funding. You can too.

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[7] CTCL's contract with one city, Philadelphia, for over $10 million is available at https://www.scribd.com/document/474109939/Center-for-Tech-and-Civic-Life-gives-10-million-grant-to-Philadelphia-for-election-aid