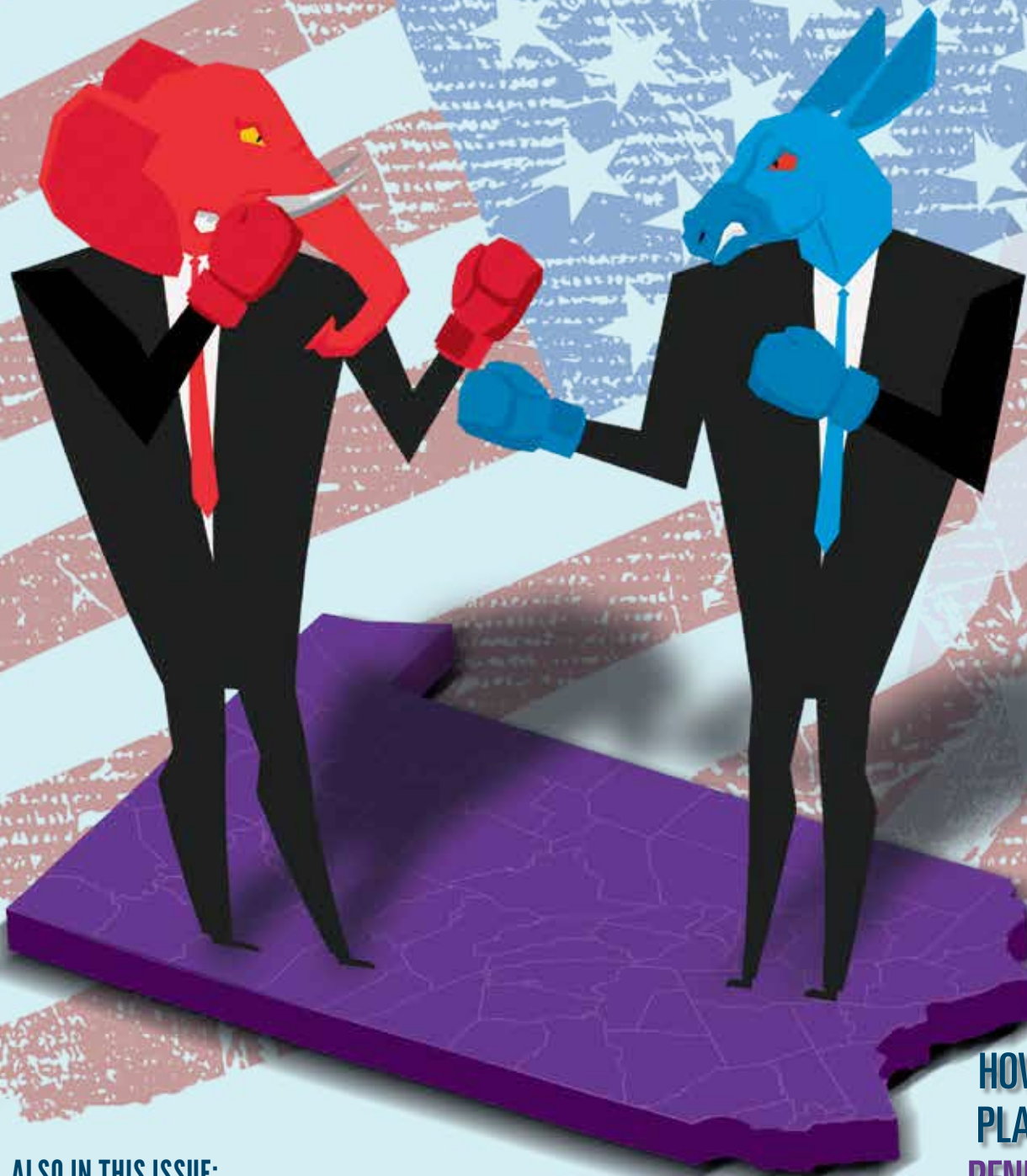




CAPITAL RESEARCH

MARCH/APRIL 2020



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COMMENTARY

Based on Tax Filings, Bill Kristol's Been a Democrat for Years

By Hayden Ludwig

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BASED ON TAX FILINGS, BILL KRISTOL'S BEEN A DEMOCRAT FOR YEARS

By Hayden Ludwig

Bill Kristol—son of the “godfather of neoconservatism” Irving Kristol, and founder and editor-at-large of *The Weekly Standard*, a now-defunct outlet—confirmed the suspicions of many observers recently when he tweeted that he (and maybe all conservatives?) is now a Democrat.

“Not presumably forever; not perhaps for a day after Nov. 3, 2020; not on every issue or in every way until then. But for the time being one has to say: We are all Democrats now,” Kristol wrote.

Apparently, Kristol’s new definition of Democrat also means being a “principled conservative” because on the heels of his curious tweet, Kristol announced an event—in partnership with a group called Stand Up Republic, which has interesting ties to the left—that purports to focus on “reviving principled conservatism in the United States.”

Is whiplash the hallmark of Never Trump? What goes on here? Turns out, it’s pretty simple. Kristol’s a Democrat—under the old definition, which has everything to do with who’s funding the agenda.

It’s no secret Kristol has been moving left since Donald Trump declared his candidacy for president and later won the 2016 presidential campaign. But Kristol’s open admission that he’s jumped parties—and even that, by some standards, he’s actually a liberal—was a welcome, if not wholly unexpected, development.

Perhaps it shouldn’t have been. Kristol, currently editor-at-large of the decidedly anti-Trump media outlet *The Bulwark*, has been funded from the start of his rebellion by big left-of-center donors such as Pierre Omidyar and the Hewlett Foundation.

As of 2018, he’s also been backed by a nonprofit connected to a massive network of left-wing groups funding the anti-Trump “Resistance.” That network of “dark money” is run by a powerful for-profit company called Arabella Advisors, and its influence is far-reaching and virtually unreported by the mainstream media.

Specifically, Kristol’s *Bulwark* website is run by the 501(c)(3) Defending Democracy Together Institute (DDTI), the



Credit: Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. License: <https://bit.ly/2u1DPD8>.

Bill Kristol, son of the “godfather of neoconservatism” Irving Kristol, confirmed the suspicions of many observers recently when he tweeted that he is now a Democrat.

sister organization of his 501(c)(4) Defending Democracy Together (DDT), which runs the Never Trump attack group Republicans for the Rule of Law. The Hopewell Fund, which is one of the four main nonprofits operating in Arabella’s shadowy network, forked out \$75,000 to DDT in 2018.

Sarah Longwell, executive director of DDT and publisher of *The Bulwark*, says Kristol’s groups receive funds “from all sorts of people who care about democracy and the rule of law,” but she declines to name any individual donors or any conservative foundations (which must disclose their grants).

The foundations that send monies through the Hopewell Fund’s hands read like a Who’s Who of left-wing money:

*A version of this commentary was published in the *Federalist* on February 19, 2020.*

Hayden Ludwig is a research analyst at CRC.

The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, which heavily funds Planned Parenthood and groups that push for population control; the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a massive pass-through that sends tech titans' cash to activists at places such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Tides Founda-

tion; and the Democracy Fund, the philanthropy of eBay founder Omidyar, which has given to Common Cause Education Fund and the Campaign Legal Center, both liberal stalwarts. In fact, Democracy Fund shows up again in this story: They gave DDT \$1.6 million in 2018.

Capital Research Center has been investigating the Arabella network for more than a year, reporting for example that between 2013 and 2018 the network's nonprofits spent nearly \$1.9 billion and raised over \$2.4 billion.

As more information comes to light, it becomes clearer that the line between philanthropy and political advocacy at Arabella is so blurry that it's nearly indistinguishable. Most



As of 2018, Bill Kristol has also been backed by a nonprofit connected to a massive network of left-wing groups funding the anti-Trump “Resistance.”

of the projects hosted by the four nonprofits—Hopewell plus the New Venture Fund, Sixteen Thirty Fund, and Windward Fund—advocate for a solidly left-wing agenda on issues such as President Trump's judicial nominees (including Brett Kavanaugh), abortion on demand, net neutrality, and

more. They almost uniformly promote the expansion of government.

Kristol hasn't been much of a Republican or conservative for years. He's attacked the Republican in the Oval Office as viciously and obsessively as any Democrat and taken money from axe-grinding groups that prefer the Democrats' increasingly radical agenda.

In short, Kristol announcing his affinity for the Democratic Party should be the least surprising thing in the world. ■

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A PEEK INTO THE MIND OF GEORGE SOROS

By Shane Devine

Summary: *In his latest book, George Soros explains and defends his philanthropic work and the philosophy driving it. By seeing Soros as a principled human being who has philosophical ideas, we can critique Soros more productively, calmly and rationally taking on his philosophical ideas and combating them with our own.*

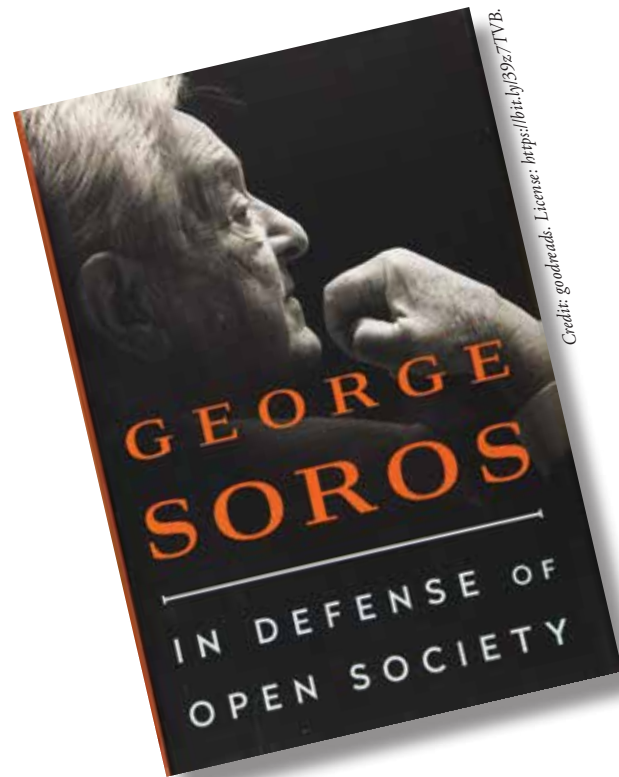
Billionaire philanthropist George Soros's new book *In Defense of Open Society* reads like his last will and testament, an attempt to ensure that his philanthropic work will have a respected legacy. The book is a collection of previously published essays and speeches selected by Soros to explain his worldview, along with some unpublished writings and a preface. Anyone who has not been living under a rock these past few years would know that Soros has been widely criticized by right-of-center people all around the globe, so it makes sense that he would defend his actions, especially when he openly admits that he is a "selfish man" who delights in recognition.

Soros's Philosophy

He defends his philanthropic activity chiefly by articulating his philosophy on life and politics, largely derived from the works of 20th-century philosopher Karl Popper. Soros says, Popper's theory of the "open society" has not only shaped his political philosophy and thus his Open Society Foundations philanthropy empire but also, interestingly, guided him in his career as an investor.

Popper theorized about political regimes according to a three-part schema: There are "organic societies" that operate based on tradition, "closed societies" that operate based on dogma and modern authoritarianism, and "open societies" that operate based on critical thinking, constantly seeking to make things more democratic and pluralistic, ensuring that the rule of law is ever equal and expanding to protect marginalized groups.

Soros is thoroughly convinced about this. He believes that Popper's skeptical epistemology allowed him to become rich



Billionaire philanthropist George Soros's new book In Defense of Open Society reads like his last will and testament, an attempt to ensure that his philanthropic work will have a respected legacy.

by escaping the ideologies of Marxism and what he calls free market economics "market fundamentalism" (i.e., the belief that markets are guided by rational principles and tend toward equilibrium). He says both ideologies are rooted in epistemologies that seek to establish objective truths.

These theories, Soros argues, rest on the idea that economics is a natural science akin to Newtonian physics rather than a social science. Social sciences are doubly affected by error: first by seeking to make observations about the very elusive and complex subjects that are human beings and their societies and, second, from the humans who record these obser-

Shane Devine is a research assistant at CRC.



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Soros is honest about who he is, repeatedly calling himself a selfish man, who sought money and recognition throughout his life to satisfy his large ego. But he argues that this selfishness was ultimately good, since he was able to cultivate it into a moral force through philanthropy.

variations who are themselves biased and invested in receiving particular results *and* who are imperfect organisms prone to making simple errors in reading the data correctly. This uncertain structure of belief that undergirds social science is referred to by Popper and Soros as “reflexivity.”

Soros says he has believed since his student days that economics should not to be conceived as an objective field but as a practice subject to reflexivity. (Popper was his professor and personal mentor at the London School of Economics.) This belief allowed him to make bets on the market in his hedge-fund days that others did not see and to predict the 2008 financial collapse when others denied it.

Because the market is not rational and is instead governed by human-induced feedback loops, Soros claims to have seen a negative feedback loop growing in the distance that

would cause the economy to collapse. (Prices and values are the result of what humans think other humans need, not of human needs.)

Applying his abstract philosophy to concrete contemporary events, Soros’s main contention is that the international trend of “opening up” society hit a roadblock with the 2008 financial crisis. This has sent us on a decade-long detour from our route to complete global democracy, leading to the rise of what Soros sees as authoritarianism in the West, culminating in Trump, Brexit, and the ascents of various populist figures in continental European politics.

Soros is honest about who he is, repeatedly calling himself a selfish man, who sought money and recognition throughout his life to satisfy his large ego. But he argues that this selfishness was ultimately good, since he was able to cultivate it into a moral force through philanthropy.

However, Soros has little respect for billionaires who simply donate money to charities: He believes his organizations’ style of philanthropy is superior to the practice of donating money to the global poor because it actively attempts to flip undemocratic regimes into democracies and helps them preserve their democratic status once they achieve it. (His son Alexander, who is heavily involved in the Open Society foundations, made a similar argument in an interview.)

Strategic Giving

In explaining his life’s work, Soros conveys how he thinks strategically, as in how he uses philanthropic contributions to bring about his geopolitical goals. “We fund dissident activities,” Soros admits explicitly at one point. He does this by giving money to groups in closed societies that are already playing active roles in speaking out against the

established powers: “I aspire to make the world a better place by enabling people to change it.” By financially enabling critics of the authorities and the monoculture within a given country, Soros lets the new culture change the political regime without the dissidents needing to fire a single bullet.

For instance, when trying to “reopen” societies that had just

broken free of Soviet control in the late 20th century, Soros dedicated a third of his foundation’s budget to education because he saw it as a way to reeducate the youth with democratic values. He has designed fellowship grants to

CC —————
In explaining his life’s work, Soros conveys how he thinks strategically, as in how he uses philanthropic contributions to bring about his geopolitical goals.

encourage professors to travel to the West to study. Then, he has offered them even more money to return home, thereby cross-pollinating the closed, authoritarian society with Western democratic ideas.

At the time, another third of his foundation's budget went to activists who were educating vulnerable ethnic populations on the margins of Eastern European countries, such as the Gypsies. He wanted this marginalized group to feel "proud to be Roma" because it would introduce a notion of ethnic pluralism into the closed societies and thereby balance out their structures of hegemonic power, reducing the potential for future authoritarian insurrections.

This line of thinking can also be seen in how Soros used his Central European University (CEU) as a tool for change, such as by funding professors to teach about the intersectionality of religions in the middle ages—that is, trying to back up the claim that Europe has a multiculturalist identity—or by hiring a close friend of Popper to lecture on the perils of nationalism. He has awarded annual Open Society Prizes to academics whose work reflected the mission of CEU, a prize that exists to this day. He brags about the fact that CEU churns out graduates who went on to become political leaders in developing countries, thus exporting "open society" ideologues globally.

Leftist, Anti-Marxist

While Soros is undoubtedly a leftist, he is not a Marxist. He talks about his role in undermining Karl Marx University in Hungary during the Cold War and by extension the communist government of Hungary. In the second chapter, he states that he sought to create an embryo free market within the Soviet Union's planned economy so that he could overturn it. In the sixth chapter, an abridgment of his 2014 essay in the *Journal of Economic Methodology*, he called the theories of Marx and Freud "pseudo-scientific," citing Popper's defining a scientific theory by its falsifiability.

In his 2018 speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, he painted his foundations and wealth as fundamentally necessary weapons in the war against authoritarians. He does not want his philanthropy questioned or his wealth (gained through capitalism) redistributed. He wants to spend it how he wants and feels that effective humanitarianism cannot be accomplished in any other way.

He is not really interested in raising "class consciousness" as Marxists are. He is a lowercase-d democrat, more a fan of democracy than of classical liberalism, but Soros believes his foundations owe their success to his entrepreneurial spirit—the spirit of a capitalist fused with the soul of a humanitarian.

☺☺

Soros believes his foundations owe their success to his entrepreneurial spirit—the spirit of a capitalist fused with the soul of a humanitarian.

But Soros takes Popper's analysis a step further than Popper did and indicts the efficient market hypothesis and rational choice theory (the main ideas behind the classical, neoclassical, Austrian, and Chicago School theories of economics) as pseudoscientific as well. In place of a laissez-faire trust in the rationality of the market, Soros repeatedly recommends increased government regulation of markets to prevent 2008-style financial crises.

He is against the far Left yet a strong advocate for state intervention in economics—not to plan the economy Soviet-style but to prevent collapses to ensure the endurance of liberal capitalism. But he vehemently opposes governments that seek to regulate virtually anything other than the market, whether immigration, marriage, or obscenity—restrictions he views as usually championed by the conservative side of the political spectrum. He likes to call these types of right-of-center governments "mafia states," including Hungary, Russia, and Trump's alleged vision for America. Interestingly, he wants Trump to be even harsher on China and fight their Belt and Road Initiative. But he still loathes Trump and thinks that America has "shortcomings" in achieving true open society status.

Correcting America's "Shortcomings"

These shortcomings must be corrected by none other than Soros himself, and he outlines some things he would like to tackle in the future such as "nonpartisan" redistricting, placing progressive judges in federal courts, and conducting a "properly conducted census." Soros also states that one of his long-time goals with his domestic American philanthropy has been to clean up corruption that has befallen the journalistic, pharmaceutical, and legal fields due to their monetization.

His solution is another matter, but one can begin to understand why the left-of-center philanthropist likes to fund nonprofit media outlets, namely to preserve journalistic integrity, which he sees as being jeopardized by the for-profit mentality to maximize clicks and ratings. But one wonders if America hasn't always been like this, going back to the days of yellow journalism. If that's the case, then funding



Credit: Steve Evans. License: <https://bit.ly/2uML7Ls>.

In recent years, Soros has probably been criticized the most for his involvement in the 2015 European refugee crisis.

nonprofit media is just profit media by other means, namely listening to what your donor wants you to say rather than what the audience will click on.

Soros also explains that he wants to dramatically reduce incarceration rates in the U.S. by influencing local law enforcement and decriminalizing drug possession in the same way that Portugal and other European countries have.

Refugees and War

In recent years, Soros has probably been criticized the most for his involvement in the 2015 European refugee crisis.

Soros attempts to implicitly rebuff any conspiracy theories about his support of refugee resettlement programs by explaining that he ultimately wants the number of refugees in the world to decrease, which can only happen if we prevent the wars that uproot them. Those wars, in his understanding, come from undemocratic regimes. And we can only prevent more wars by ensuring more of the world becomes and stays democratic by perpetuating the international democratic order, which is maintained mainly by aid from the governments and nongovernmental organizations in America and Europe.

Soros, the Philosopher

His book presents a human Soros, allowing us to escape the hysterical, comment-section discourse of merely lampooning him as a boogeyman or movie villain. He also lets us know that he adheres to a clearly defined philosophy, which lets us leave the realm of conjecture and theorizing. His philosophy is essentially the same as Karl Popper's, which on the most abstract level states, "There is only one objective reality, but there are as many different subjective views as there are thinking participants."

Perceiving this one objective reality clearly is impossible for humans, because a "manipulative function" is always at play—the human mind wanting its perception of a thing to accord with a preestablished idea or opinion—along with the fallibility of the senses and mental processes, the "cognitive factor." This led Popper (and Soros) to be highly skeptical of human systems that purport to teach the truth, *especially* about humans themselves, since the humans who create those systems have many biases, prejudices, and conflicts of interests about humans. Popper insists that for a theory, scientific or otherwise, to be legitimate, it must be falsifiable. Since many social science theories are inflexible and assert axioms and articles of belief, these can be cast aside as unscientific. Soros adds critiques of laissez-faire



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Soros attempts to implicitly rebuff any conspiracy theories about his support of refugee resettlement programs by explaining that he ultimately wants the number of refugees in the world to decrease, which can only happen if we prevent the wars that uproot them.

dimension, outside of political rights and economic opportunities: the dimension that concerns things of the spirit.

By “spirit,” I do not necessarily mean something religious, or even something metaphysical. Spirit here simply refers to non-utilitarian ideas that animate us toward some higher goal or purpose. Many in Western countries these days lack of spiritual direction. This, combined with economic troubles caused by 2008 and the refugee crisis, is why many are drawn to far-right or far-left demagogues. Globalization provides many opportunities for the disadvantage, but in the process it tends to destroy everything in its path—things that matter to people such as culture, religion, and nationhood. These things allow people to transcend their mundane, day-to-day surroundings and feel special, dignified, like pieces of a wider whole.

economics that Popper did not make, but both Soros and Popper seek to defend democratic open societies against authoritarian regimes of all stripes.

By seeing Soros as a principled human being who has philosophical ideas, we can critique Soros more productively, namely by calmly and rationally taking on his philosophical ideas and combating them with our own. If our conservative, constitutionalist ideas are superior, they should easily be able to compete with Soros’s progressive, idealist views.

A Conservative Response

To Soros, American conservatives can say: We understand why unconstitutional, arbitrary use of power by authoritarian government is bad. Our country was founded on combating it and preserving individual human freedom, which our Founders understood as a natural right that could be protected only through the rule of law that applies to all equally. Our nation has fought many battles to ensure those rights extend to all since then (without any help from hedge-fund philanthropists). But human beings have another

If the Popperian worldview admits there are many different subjective views of reality, why can’t it allow these views to exist in any sort of collective besides a global one? Permitting only two poles, atomized individualism and totalizing globalism, leaves no room for intermediary, mediating, communal institutions in fear that they may exclude people. But removing these institutions excludes the soul from feeling complete. Legalized drugs, empty egalitarian slogans produced by opaquely named centers, and countercultural initiatives cannot replace them.

Most people are not jet-setting, powerful billionaires like Soros. They need institutions that foster traditional culture, national identity, and religion to give them a sense of purpose. Soros may be able to gain a sense of importance through what he does, but those on the receiving end of his philanthropy do not feel as good about it, especially in the developed world. Through his funding of cultural initiatives that oppose the hegemonic culture and through his globalization and cracking down on people with conservative temperaments, he is destroying all that they hold dear and in many cases, especially among the poor and working classes, the only solace that they have.

Populist Resistance

For all his praise of democracy, his thinking has a very anti-democratic side, in that he only likes the *demos*, the people, when they behave how he likes, and he condemns them as “populistic” when they voice different demands. For instance, he lamented that Angela Merkel was forced, as a politician concerned with reelection, to allow the task of preventing major banks from failing to fall on the shoulders of individual European countries, rather than letting the wealthier nations put up more money after Lehman Brothers collapsed. For this, he blamed not Merkel, with whom he can sympathize, but the electorate for making such unreasonable demands.

In other cases, he has branded the politicians they elect as gangsters and described their governments as mafia states. Obviously, this is an apt description for some countries, but this branding can easily become a slippery slope or serve as a canard, such as by applying it to Trump’s vision for the United States. He should know that’s not in good faith.

Of course, the people will respond with anger and resentment to globalizing initiatives aimed at their sense of security, and they will listen to leaders that denigrate the billionaire behind them. If those leaders turn out to be

authoritarian opportunists, that is a disastrous side effect of the emotions of the electorate with which one can truly sympathize if viewed from this perspective. One should seek to follow the words of Spinoza in his *Political Treatise*: “I have laboured carefully, not to mock, lament, or execrate human actions, but to understand them.”

Not all conservative feelings of national, religious, and cultural pride will be used to foment fascism. In fact, leaving them alone and letting people have their non-universal

beliefs can be a bulwark in preventing fascism. Fascism occurs when these traditional signifiers are felt to have been torn away from a people, leaving them totally deracinated and alienated. The feeling of alienation in turn makes a population vulnerable to being conditioned into accepting authoritarian servitude in the hopes of regaining their feelings of

belonging, identity, and wholeness. And alienation cannot be dealt with by simply ignoring it or shaming people who feel alienated.

Man cannot live by Popper alone. ■



For all his praise of democracy, his thinking has a very anti-democratic side, in that he only likes the demos, the people, when they behave how he likes.

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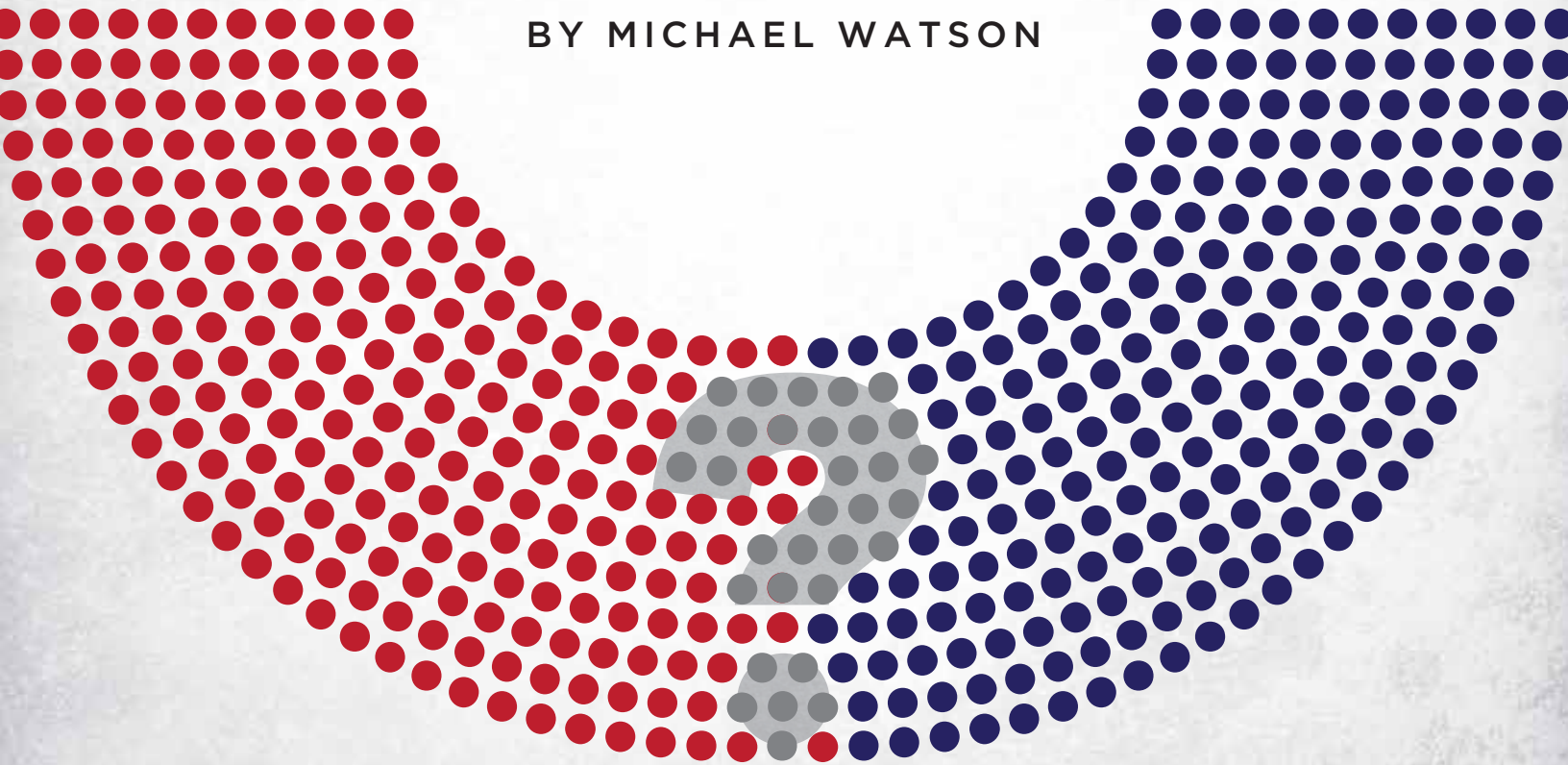
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THE MYTH OF NONPARTISAN DISTRICTS:

AN EXPERIMENT IN REDISTRICTING REFORM

BY MICHAEL WATSON



As House Democrats push for sweeping changes to U.S. elections, CRC shows that it's impossible to create nonpartisan districts.



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DECEPTION & MISDIRECTION



HOW THE LEFT PLANS TO FLIP PENNSYLVANIA IN 2020—PERMANENTLY

By Hayden Ludwig and Kevin Mooney

Summary: With 20 electoral votes and an almost even split between Republicans and Democrats, Pennsylvania is a big prize for President Donald Trump and his eventual Democratic opponent in the 2020 election. But a well-funded, highly coordinated network of leftist groups in Washington, DC, are set on a larger goal: permanently flip Pennsylvania to Democratic blue. They're planning on warping the 2020 Census and the congressional redistricting process in 2021 to build an unbeatable left-wing advantage in the Keystone State for the next decade.

“He who controls redistricting controls Congress.”

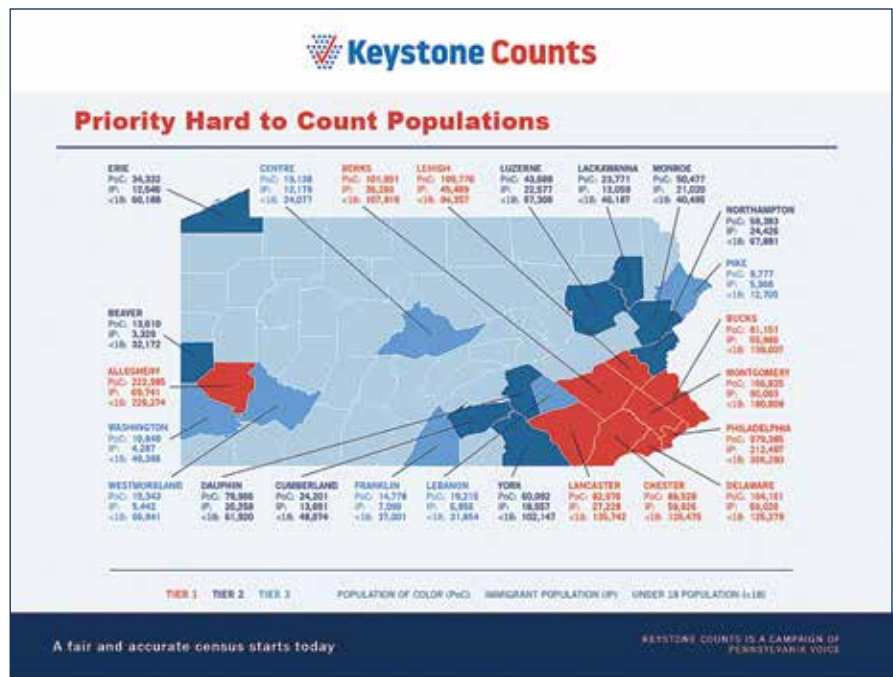
When political strategist Karl Rove wrote those words, he was predicting a coming Republican wave that would seize control of state legislatures across America just in time for the 2010 redistricting process, when America's 435 districts for the House of Representatives are redrawn.

Rove was right, and the GOP's efforts paid off: Republicans defeated 492 Democratic incumbents in the 2010 midterm elections and picked up majorities in 20 legislative chambers.

The Constitution mandates that all congressional districts be reapportioned between the states based on population and redrawn as needed by state legislatures after each census, held every 10 years. This makes redistricting a powerful—and inherently partisan—process for the party in power.

Naturally, liberal critics accused Republicans of “gerrymandering” after 2010, drawing biased maps favoring their party in the states where they held majorities, thereby cementing a conservative advantage in future elections.

But a decade after the 2010 Republican sweep, the Left has wised up to the importance of redistricting. A slew of well-



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funded activist groups focused on winning state legislatures have emerged with a plan to redraw America's congressional maps to favor Democrats. If they garner majorities in the 2020 election, they could ensure Democratic control of Congress until at least 2030.

That fight comes down to a handful of key battleground states, particularly Pennsylvania, where Donald Trump narrowly edged Hillary Clinton 48.2 percent to 47.5 percent

Hayden Ludwig is a research analyst at CRC.

Kevin Mooney is an investigative reporter with The Daily Signal who also writes and reports for several national publications including National Review, the Daily Caller, American Spectator and the Washington Examiner.

in 2016, and Republicans maintain a modest majority in the state legislature. To counter this, left-wing groups in the Keystone State have a three-point plan to ensure their dominance in the coming decade:

1. Increase the count of traditionally Democratic-voting constituencies in Pennsylvania in the 2020 Census.
2. Boost 2020 voter turnout to gain a Democratic majority in the Pennsylvania legislature.
3. Redraw congressional maps to favor Democratic strongholds in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Allentown.

And it's working. In 2018, the Left made big gains in Pennsylvania through a combination of whipping up support among the so-called New American Majority—ethnic and minority groups, LGBT identity groups, recent immigrants, and women—and successful litigation to throw out the state's congressional maps as unconstitutionally favorable toward Republicans.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it's coordinated and funded by elite groups in Washington, DC Chief among them is Eric Holder, the Obama administration's scandal-ridden and disgraced former U.S. attorney general, whose team of lawyers forms the vanguard in the Left's redistricting war.

Holder's Campaign to Redraw the Battle Lines

Holder is the ultimate Washington insider and political elite. His tenure as attorney general saw him held in contempt by a bipartisan Congress, while critics on the Right charged the self-described "activist attorney general" with politicizing the U.S. Justice Department by ignoring Democratic voter intimidation cases and hiring only committed leftists to the civil service.

He held a lucrative job at the mega-lobbying firm Covington & Burling from 2001 until he was sworn in as the U.S. attorney general in February 2009. After leaving office in 2015, he immediately returned as a partner in the firm, which literally kept an empty office waiting for him, according to one report. (Liberal *Rolling Stone* called him a "Wall Street Double Agent" for cashing in on the \$2.5 million partnership



Credit: Aspen Institute. License: <https://bit.ly/2VV9YHI>.

Eric Holder is the ultimate Washington insider and political elite. His tenure as attorney general saw him held in contempt by a bipartisan Congress.

immediately after leaving public service; he's still listed as a partner at Covington & Burling.)

He's also an out-and-out partisan. In July 2017, Holder declared that "Congress is broken" thanks to Republicans' "extreme partisan gerrymandering." "This creates a Congress driven by primary party politics and ideological extremism," he added, "not one accountable to the will of the majority of voters."

His solution: the National Democratic Redistricting Committee (NDRC), a political action committee (PAC) created after the 2016 election and chaired by Holder with the aim of replacing "gerrymandered" maps favoring Republicans with gerrymandered maps favoring Democrats. NDRC calls itself the "strategic hub for a comprehensive redistricting strategy" for Democrats, and it's led by alumni from the Democratic Party's biggest PACs.

The group has set its sights on 12 states where Republicans either have a legislative majority (Texas) or face a close race against Democrats (North Carolina) in 2020. His goal couldn't be more partisan: permanently flip them Democratic blue.

NDRC has the support of former President Barack Obama. Obama's campaign-turned-

activist group, Organizing for Action (formerly Obama for America), which merged with the NDRC in 2019—gifting the NDRC the formidable list of donors, supporters, and

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NDRC calls itself the "strategic hub for a comprehensive redistricting strategy" for Democrats, and it's led by alumni from the Democratic Party's biggest PACs.

volunteers built by the Obama campaigns over more than a decade. Now dubbed “All on the Line” under NDRC’s leadership, the combined groups have targeted 10 states with lawsuits meant to influence their redistricting to favor the Left in what Obama called an “opportunity to bend the great arc of history toward justice.”

When Holder launched the NDRC in a speech at the Center for American Progress, he outlined three goals:

1. Get Democrats elected at the state level in order to redraw congressional maps.
2. “Reform” the redistricting process with California-like citizens’ commissions.
3. Litigate Republican-drawn congressional maps into oblivion.

If that sounds like the three-step plan to permanently flip Pennsylvania, that’s because it is. The NDRC’s organizational forms filed with the IRS state its partisan goal in black and white: “To build a comprehensive plan to favorably position Democrats for the redistricting process through 2022.”

The operation involves three groups: the NDRC, a partisan PAC that supports Democrats running for Congress; the National Redistricting Action Fund, a 501(c)(4) that lobbies for state ballot measures supporting redistricting “reforms”; and the National Redistricting Foundation, a 501(c)(3) that litigates against Republican-drawn maps.

Holder’s NDRC PAC is pouring money directly into Pennsylvania races. In the 2017–2018 election cycle, the NDRC sent \$250,000 to Gov. Tom Wolf’s (D) successful reelection campaign and another \$100,000 sent to the Pennsylvania Democratic Party’s Senate PAC. In the 2019–2020 cycle, it’s already given at least \$25,000 to the Democrats’ Pennsylvania Senate PAC.

The National Redistricting Action Fund, Holder’s 501(c)(4) lobbying arm, All on the Line campaign, focusing on turning out Democratic-leaning constituencies in the 2020 Census. In 2018 it also funded Democratic-aligned groups pouring cash into Pennsylvania races, gifting \$2 million to PACRONYM—which ran nearly \$1 million in independent expenditure campaigns against Republicans that year—and \$100,000 to the PA Fund for Change, which spent \$2.5 million helping Democrats running for the state legislature.

But the National Redistricting Foundation has already had perhaps the most potent impact on the 2020 election. The 501(c)(3) group describes its mission as “initiating litigation that will have a nationwide impact in creating more just and representative electoral districts,” which in effect means

helping Democrats. To date, it has filed or supported several lawsuits. In Wisconsin, it demanded that then-Gov. Scott Walker (R) hold special elections in two state legislative districts. In Georgia, it accused Republicans of drawing racist congressional maps. And in North Carolina, it accused the state of drawing unfair congressional maps. Each of these is a heavily contested state for Democrats at the state or congressional level.

The National Redistricting Foundation has also litigated to huge effect against Pennsylvania’s congressional map, which was drawn by the state’s Republican majority in 2011. In 2017, the National Redistricting Foundation and the liberal League of Women Voters filed a lawsuit alleging that the map unconstitutionally favored Republicans. The state courts, including the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, threw the map out and redrew it in early 2018.

Liberals cheered; conservatives jeered. The *New York Times* wrote, “Democrats couldn’t have asked for much more from the new map. It’s arguably even better for them than the maps they proposed themselves.” One Republican consultant called it a “straight power grab by a partisan Supreme Court.”

A victorious Holder stated that the decision shows “how important it is that we elect more Democrats who will fight for fairness.” And he’s right—the new Pennsylvania maps, “fair” or not, arguably favor the Keystone State’s Democratic strongholds over Republican-held rural areas and will undoubtedly reshape the makeup of its 18 congressional representatives after the 2020 election.

Observers saw the fallout on Pennsylvania’s congressional delegation in the 2018 midterms, just months after the redistricting decision. In 2016, Republicans held a 12-6 majority of the state’s congressmen elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Just two years later they finished with a 9-9 tie under the new maps.

Gerrymandering Pennsylvania

Keystone Counts is the leading campaign in Pennsylvania to boost the number of Democratic-leaning constituencies in the 2020 Census and the redistricting process. It’s run by Pennsylvania Voice, an affiliate of State Voices, one of the most influential national groups coordinating the Left’s strategy in the state.

State Voices is one of the many groups created after the Democrats’ defeat in the 2004 election, with the goal of crafting permanent left-wing infrastructure in battleground states. Consequently, it’s one of the Democracy Alliance’s “recommended organizations,” meaning the collective

considers State Voices a key group for all its 2020 efforts, and its funding proves it. Since its creation, State Voices has received \$43 million in grants from the George Soros-run Open Society, Ford, and Tides Foundations, among other liberal heavyweights.

State Voices isn't shy about its objectives: "The two pillars of our civic representation work are the 2020 Census and fair redistricting in 2021." The officially "nonpartisan" group plays up traditionally Democratic-leaning constituencies in "Get Out the Count" (GOTC) activities ahead of the census, mirroring partisan "Get Out the Vote" (GOTV) efforts in elections. (Like voter registration, the IRS considers aiding the U.S. Census Bureau in counting people in the census a "charitable" activity for tax-exempt nonprofits.)

In practice, that involves making grants to state-level affiliates such as Pennsylvania Voice. Between 2016 and 2017 State Voices paid out almost \$6 million in grants to voter/census turnout groups targeting critical states—such as Minnesota Voice, Blueprint North Carolina, and Pennsylvania Voice—and constituencies, particularly Latinos (through *Mi Familia Vota*). Those groups in turn trickle part of their funding down to their own network of in-state activists and then use the rest to push likely Democratic voters to support redistricting and the census.

The Philadelphia-based Pennsylvania Voice is run by Erin Casey, a professional activist with a background in astroturf (fake grassroots) campaigns. In the 2018 midterms, her group coordinated 19 other Pennsylvania Voice affiliates to run voter registration drives in 11 counties and reportedly registered 43,000 new "voters of color" and made half-a-million contacts with voters (via text message, robocall, or direct mail).


With the 2020 census looming, the group has pivoted to increasing census counts in 24 counties using dozens of small and mid-level activist groups across Pennsylvania. CRC obtained a PowerPoint presentation by the group intended for donors that reveals an obvious preference for "hard to count populations" in densely populated, historically Democratic-voting counties.

Seven of the nine top-tier counties targeted by Pennsylvania Voice voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016. All of them voted for Democratic Gov. Wolf in the 2018 governor's race.

In 2021, Pennsylvania Voice plans to shift focus to "fair" redistricting (read: favoring Democrats) as part of its long-term goal of shifting Pennsylvania to the left. That includes building constituent support for "voting rights reform efforts," almost certainly referring to such California-style policies as automatic voter registration and looser voter identification laws. (Pennsylvania requires only first-time voters to provide identification.)

Aiding Pennsylvania Voice is Fair Districts PA, a joint project of the League of Women Voters and Common Cause, which advocates for California-style independent redistricting commissions nationwide and in Pennsylvania. The League of Women Voters is nominally centrist, but in fact strongly supports government-run health care, handgun bans, and other liberal policies. Common Cause is one of the leading "fair redistricting" groups on the Left and also targets Republicans for embarrassing ethics violations, including its most famous censure target: Robert Bork in 1985.

And there's nothing "independent" about such redistricting commissions. As CRC's Michael Watson has documented, similar redistricting commissions in California, Washington, Idaho, and Arizona have resulted in election outcomes that disproportionately favor one party over another—granting California Democrats, for instance, as much as 10 "extra" seats relative to their party's statewide proportion!


In 2021, Pennsylvania Voice plans to shift focus to "fair" redistricting (read: favoring Democrats) as part of its long-term goal of shifting Pennsylvania to the left.

Flippable and Swing Left

Two more key PACs are aiding the Left's effort to permanently control Pennsylvania and key battleground states: Flippable and Swing Left. The two work in tandem. In 2018, New York-based Flippable targeted state legislatures, while the much larger Swing Left aimed at wresting control of the U.S. House of Representatives from the Republicans.

Both are growing rapidly. Flippable spent just under \$375,000 in the 2018 cycle. In the 2020 cycle, it has already spent \$415,000. Swing Left spent over \$12 million in 2018 and for the current cycle has already spent \$5.4 million (as of March 2020).

Flippable takes credit for "flipping" the Virginia legislature in 2018, enabling Democrats to enact "pro-democracy policies in 2020 and draw fair maps in 2021"—essentially giving



Credit: For Our Future Michigan. License: <https://bit.ly/3cENYX6>.

The current head of America Votes, Greg Speed, is a former staffer at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, a group whose sole purpose is to elect Democrats to the House of Representatives.

them a ten-year majority in the Old Dominion, until after the 2030 Census. It boasts that since 2016 it has “helped elect 95 Democrats in game-changing states,” resulting in seven state legislative chambers flipping from Republican to Democratic control.

In 2020, it has identified ten other targets—each a battleground—including Florida, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. “Until 2018, Pennsylvania’s congressional district map was one of the worst instances of partisan gerrymandering in the nation,” writes Flippable on its website. The new, “temporary” court-drawn maps have boosted Democrats, but they’re set to be redrawn in 2021—so Flippable is targeting the Pennsylvania legislature to ensure a Democratic majority in time for 2021.

Swing Left is more broadly aimed to expanding Democratic control of Congress and beating Trump in 2020. Like Flippable, it’s targeting 12 “super states” in the coming election and is brazen about its goal: drawing “fairer district maps” that ensure “more Democrats are elected in the U.S. House over the next 10 years.”

In Pennsylvania, that comes down to two goals: “1) win the state’s 20 Electoral College votes and 2) break Republican control of the state legislature by flipping one or both chambers.”

In the state Senate, we are currently targeting five districts—four GOP-held seats and one Democratic hold. With only half of the chamber up for election in 2020, **our Senate targets are scattered across the state, including Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Erie, and the Philadelphia suburbs.**

In the state House, we are currently targeting 16 districts—13 GOP-held seats and three Democratic holds. Eleven seats are in Southeast Pennsylvania, close to the Philadelphia metro area and surrounding regions. The remaining five targets are located near Harrisburg, Wilkes-Barre, and the Pittsburgh suburbs [emphasis added].

Swing Left has received five- and six-figure donations from leading Democratic donors and liberal luminaries. Actor Kevin Bacon gave Swing Left \$50,000 in 2019, as did LGBT mega-donor Edward W. Snowden (not to be confused with National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden). Two fashion designers have donated to it: Tom Ford gave the PAC \$100,000, and Michael Kors gave \$65,000.

Getting Out the Vote—for Democrats

Supporting the census operation is the Left’s vast network of voter turnout groups. These organizations—which almost universally operate as tax-exempt nonprofits, mostly 501(c)(3) public charities—hide behind their IRS-required “non-partisan” status, yet their efforts to turn out progressive voters put them squarely in league with the Democratic Party.

Chief among them is America Votes, which calls itself the “coordination hub of the Progressive community.” America Votes emerged from the Democrats’ defeat in the 2004 presidential election as the brainchild of a group of influential operatives. These operatives—Clinton official Harold Ickes, SEIU President Andy Stern, Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope, EMILY’s List founder Ellen Malcolm, and Partnership for America’s Families President Steve Rosenthal—quickly gained the support of major labor unions, litigation nonprofits, abortion groups, environmentalist groups, and professional activists to put together a huge \$95 million war chest for churning out likely Democratic voters in key battleground states, including Pennsylvania.

Nonprofits like America Votes may register people to vote so long as they don’t direct them *who* to vote for. However, it can—and does—funnel millions of dollars to partisan PACs aligned with the Democrats. In 2017 (the most recent year on record), America Votes granted \$160,000 to the Pennsylvania-based PAC Environment America Action Fund and \$50,000 to the Harrisburg-based activist group One Pennsylvania.

America Votes Action Fund, the group’s super PAC, also engages in direct attacks on Republican politicians. In 2018, it spent \$20,000 attacking Republican Reps. Brian



In close races such as PA-18, America Votes' concentrated, motivated get-out-the-vote operation can change election results.

Fitzpatrick and George Kelly and \$30,000 supporting Democratic Reps. Henry Scott Wallace, Scott George, and Ronald Dinicola.

If there's any doubt that “nonpartisan” America Votes was always intended to aid Democrats with a wink and a nod, consider its founding leadership. The current head of America Votes, Greg Speed, is a former staffer at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, a group whose sole purpose is to elect Democrats to the House of Representatives. Its founding president was Anne Bartley, a former aide to First Lady Hillary Clinton and a wealthy Democratic donor involved in founding numerous prominent leftist organizations, including the Democracy Alliance.

In fact, America Votes is an original member of the Democracy Alliance, a shadowy collective of leftist mega-funders and influencers who meet annually to coordinate spending on political goals. The Democracy Alliance even praises America Votes as “the common link between many of the largest and most influential issue and membership organizations in the country.”

Pennsylvania is one of the first states in which America Votes began organizing, starting in 2003. America Votes considers Pennsylvania a “core state,” meaning the organization directly controls the get-out-the-vote operations in the state. Operations in less important “affiliate states” are generally outsourced to small, standalone affiliates.

Job postings on the website LinkedIn indicate that America Votes Pennsylvania is hiring data experts whose key responsibilities include “increasing engagement of state-based groups building power in communities of color in the planning process” and developing “campaign plans” for “maximizing shared voter file, targeting, and other data resources.” Another 2018 job listing for a field program manager lists responsibilities such as working with “dozens of Progressive partners across the state [Pennsylvania] as they plan and execute electoral and issue campaigns.”

These are more like job postings for a staffer on a political campaign, not a tax-exempt and nonpartisan nonprofit.

Similarly, in 2015, the field director for America Votes Pennsylvania gave a presentation to attendees of the Pennsylvania Progressive Summit, a political conference, on the “Progressive Roadmap to 2016”—lessons for the Left

to win in the 2016 election. This seems to stretch the IRS definition of “charitable” beyond the breaking point.

Sure enough, America Votes acts in tandem with a coalition of some 50 left-wing groups to spur voter turnout for Democrats. The Pennsylvania branch of For Our Future, a \$90 million PAC co-founded by billionaire and presidential also-ran Tom Steyer, is one such group. (Steyer's eco-activist group, NextGen Climate, has donated tens of millions of dollars to For Our Future since its creation in 2016.)

For Our Future bragged in a 2018 press release that it “helped turn out the vote for [Gov. Tom] Wolf, [Sen. Bob] Casey, [Rep. Chrissy] Hohenstein, [State Sen. Lindsey] Williams and other key races across the state”—and that the redrawn congressional maps helped Democrats win big.

With the newly redrawn congressional maps,
For Our Future PA helped turn out voters for congressional candidates who helped Democrats win back the House of Representatives. . . .
[For Our Future PA] also helped Democrats pick up a minimum of 10 seats in the state House of Representatives and five seats in the state Senate [emphasis added].

For Our Future PA added that the entire America Votes coalition in Pennsylvania “collectively knocked on 2.1 million doors during this election cycle and turned out a record number of midterm election voters across the state.” Don't expect them to aim low in 2020, either; presidential elections typically see even higher voter turnout than midterms.

The Democracy Alliance credits America Votes with “engag[ing] and mobiliz[ing] voters in the successful PA-18 special election” for a congressional seat vacated by Republican Rep. Tim Murphy, after it was revealed that the supposedly anti-abortion Murphy had urged his mistress to have an abortion.

According to the Democracy Alliance, America Votes and its allies used an “innovative text message plan” to reach 100,000 voters. Democrat Conor Lamb narrowly beat Republican Rick Saccone in a firmly conservative district *by just 755 votes*—or 49.9 to 49.5 percent.

There are undoubtedly many reasons why Lamb won an upset victory, but in close races such as PA-18, America



Credit: 32BJSEIU. License: <https://bit.ly/2PZmiTu>.

The group's latest IRS Form 990 filing from 2017 lists its president as Gabe Morgan, who is vice president of the powerful SEIU 32BJ local (covering Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic) and president of the SEIU Pennsylvania State Council, the union's state political arm.

Votes' concentrated, motivated get-out-the-vote operation can change election results. And the Democracy Alliance, the biggest collection of left-wing influencers and billionaires in America, credits them with doing just that.

Who's Behind One Pennsylvania?

Also prominent in the Left's get-out-the-vote drive is One Pennsylvania (One PA), an activist group that's virtually a subsidiary of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), one of the largest institutional donors on the Left.

One PA was formed in 2011 by the SEIU but claims to have gone "fully independent" after it had "outgrown" the union. The facts say otherwise. For example, Erin Kramer, One PA's current executive directors according to the online listing, is a career SEIU organizer. The group's latest IRS Form 990 filing from 2017 lists its president as Gabe Morgan, who is vice president of the powerful SEIU 32BJ local (covering Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic) and president of the SEIU Pennsylvania State Council, the union's state political arm. (SEIU 32BJ is notoriously aggressive in its support for Democrats, and it has a history of corruption.)

The rest of One PA's board is drawn *exclusively* from the SEIU: Tom Herman, president of SEIU Local 668 in Harrisburg; Reesa Kossoff, executive director of the SEIU Pennsylvania State Council; Matt Yarnell, president of SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania, another local; and David Melman, manager for the Pennsylvania arm of Workers United, a division of the SEIU.

Yet not one of One PA's board members is listed anywhere on One PA's website, even among its leadership.

Between 2011 and 2018, the SEIU gave \$10.3 million to One PA—a group whose total revenues in 2016 were just \$1.6 million and half that in 2017. Since 2015, it has also received at least \$50,000 from America Votes, \$90,000 from the agitation group Center for Community Change, and \$17,000 from the Tides Foundation (notably for "lobbying grants").

One PA credits itself with knocking on some 238,000 doors and turning out nearly 7,000 voters to support left-wing candidates in the 2018 midterms. The group endorsed three Democrats for the Pennsylvania state legislature, all of whom were elected, and it endorsed another 11 candidates in the 2019 city council races in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

The Democracy Alliance Emerges from the Shadows

One PA has also earned the attention of the highly secretive Democracy Alliance, which apparently considers the group one of the most important in Pennsylvania. “If we don’t break escalating conservative control in key states like Ohio, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and North Carolina,” the collective has stated, “the redistricting plans that are drawn up after the [2020] Census will cement right-wing power for decades to come.”

Remember, the Democracy Alliance doesn’t make grants itself. Instead, it’s an invite-only strategy HQ for leftist luminaries to coordinate how environmentalists, foundations, labor unions, and allied organizations will spend resources to reshape American elections.

A recently unearthed 2016 internal report by the secretive group details 15 funding streams moving money to battleground states ahead of the 2016, 2018, and 2020 elections to avoid attention. With names such as the “Climate Action Fund” and “Latino Engagement Fund,” these streams run through a pair of nonprofits managed by Arabella Advisors, a for-profit consultancy in Washington, D.C., and perhaps the biggest “dark money” funding network in America.

According to the report, in 2016 alone the Democracy Alliance’s 113 partners invested \$146 million in “Progressive infrastructure map organizations” and promised another \$71 million to 2020 efforts. (Those figures were promised prior to the 2016 election and Trump’s election; we expect *actual* 2020 sums to be even higher in the wake of the Left’s anti-Trump “Resistance.”)

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After Trump’s close victory in Pennsylvania in 2016, it’s little wonder that Democratic-aligned PACs are spending millions of dollars in the state ahead of the 2020 election.

The report also reveals that much of this spending was channeled through the New Venture Fund and Sixteen Thirty Fund—two nonprofits created and run by Arabella Advisors—and paid out by them as grants to allied state-level groups. Thanks to this document, we know which states the Democracy Alliance has targeted and who benefited.



Credit: License: <https://bit.ly/2T4q5SC>

Also prominent in the Left’s get-out-the-vote drive is One Pennsylvania (One PA), an activist group that’s virtually a subsidiary of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), one of the largest institutional donors on the Left.

The Climate Fund, for example, raised roughly \$1.3 million in 2016 and gave One PA at least \$188,000 in 2018 through the Arabella-run Sixteen Thirty Fund for “fighting a proposed refinery and dirty energy port facility in a low-income African-American community, **educating voters on U.S. Senate candidate positions** on climate change, and mobilizing them to vote” (emphasis added).

Similarly, the Democracy Alliance’s Youth Engagement Fund raised \$3.5 million to bolster youth turnout, what the report calls the Left’s “long-term competitive advantage against the political Right.” Almost all of that was intended for youth turnout in elections—ideally “doubling” it in “high impact states.” On the report’s list of recipients are two branches of One PA: One Pittsburgh and the PA Student Power Network.

Finally, the Democracy Alliance’s State Engagement Initiative, is pretty brazen about its electoral goals in 2016, 2018, and 2020, including in Pennsylvania:

The dual goals of the State Engagement Initiative are both to **change state policy through the electoral process** and create pooled funds to leverage new state investments **The states in which we are working in have either total conservative dominance at all levels of governance** or mixed governance, so there is no state here where we can currently exercise progressive policy on the economy, health care or the social safety net [emphasis added].

The Cash Comes Pouring In

After Trump's close and largely unexpected victory in Pennsylvania in 2016, it's little wonder that Democratic-aligned PACs are spending millions of dollars in the state ahead of the 2020 election.

In July 2019, the Democratic super PAC Priorities USA—which spent \$66 million helping to reelect Barack Obama in 2012 and spent another \$117 million supporting Hillary Clinton in 2016, the most of any super PAC that year—announced the creation of Priorities Pennsylvania. Part of a \$100 million four-state plan, the group plans on flooding Pennsylvania with tens of millions of dollars to support Democrats and bash Trump's economy as “mostly helping wealthy people, not the middle-class.”

The Democratic attack group American Bridge 21st Century has already launched multiple television ads featuring self-identified Trump voters saying they've “soured on the president” and won't support his reelection bid. (As it turns out, an Erie news outlet discovered that one of the supposed ex-Trump voters didn't even vote in 2016.) The ads are part

of American Bridge's \$10 million anti-Trump advertisement campaign launched in MARCH/APRIL 2020 covering Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan—three states he narrowly flipped in 2016.

And the Tom Steyer-backed PAC For Our Future, which Politico describes as “the nation's largest super PAC devoted to grassroots Democratic turnout,” is targeting Southeastern Pennsylvania, according to media reports.

There's no doubt that the elites in Washington, D.C., have their eyes set on rebuilding the “Blue Wall” of Democratic strongholds that Trump tore down in his historic 2016 campaign—and they may have the resources to do it.

Whomever Democrats nominate to represent their party in the 2020 presidential election, he'll start the race in Pennsylvania with a powerful, highly coordinated network of activists and mega-funders at his back. ■

Read previous articles from the Deception and Misdirection series online at CapitalResearch.org/category/deception-and-misdirection/.



BIG MONEY IN DARK SHADOWS

Arabella Advisors' Half-billion-dollar
"Dark Money" Network

Hayden R. Ludwig

According to media personalities and politicians, nameless, faceless donors wield outsized influence over the American political process due to the so-called "dark money" they use to fund think tanks and advocacy groups. But that's far from the whole story. "Dark money" exists on both sides of the aisle. In fact, the Left seems to have deeper and darker pockets of cash than anyone suspected.

Learn more about liberal "dark money" in CRC's original report.



CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICA'S INVESTIGATIVE THINK TANK



MY ESCAPE FROM VENEZUELAN SOCIALISM: AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDRÉS GUILARTE

By Sarah Lee

Under normal circumstances, Andrés Guilarte would be a typical college student, studying international relations at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas, hanging out with friends and dreaming of what may come following the heady days of university life.

Would he finish his studies and go on to the career of his dreams?

Would he marry the love of his life and have children?

Would he create a stable life in his home country of Venezuela, a nation that boasts some of the most beautiful real estate and plentiful oil and mineral reserves in the world?

Perhaps those options would have been open to Guilarte 20 years ago, before Hugo Chavez ushered in the leadership of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) in 1999, but now they are little more than a distant dream. Circumstances are far from normal for the 20-something Guilarte because he was born and raised in a nation that has fully embraced socialism—first through Chavez and now under his handpicked successor, erstwhile bus driver Nicolas.

Venezuela's Nightmare

In the Venezuela of today, blackouts are routine, starvation is widespread, and dissidents are jailed, tortured, and go missing. Its economy is so crippled that images of citizens eating from trash trucks is common.

In short, beautiful and potentially prosperous Venezuela has become nothing short of a socialist hellhole. Before Chavez, it had prospered from the boom in oil production during the 1970s (Venezuela has a lot of oil) and enjoyed friendly alliances with Europe and the United States.

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In the Venezuela of today, its economy is so crippled that images of citizens eating from trash trucks is common.



Credit: Fund for American Studies. License: <https://bit.ly/39yo1H4>.

Andrés Guilarte has devoted much of his time and work to traveling the country as part of The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) to warn American college students—who have begun their own slow and steady embrace of socialism as part of their studies—of exactly what it means to live under a socialist system.

In a piece for the Manhattan Institute, Daniel di Martino, a Venezuelan expatriate studying economics, explained how Chavez's and later Maduro's policies decimated the South American nation:

There are three main policies implemented by Chavez since 1999 that produced the current crisis: Widespread nationalization of private industry, currency and price controls, and the fiscally irresponsible expansion of welfare programs.

One of Chavez's first actions was to start nationalizing the agriculture sector, supposedly reducing poverty and inequality by taking from rich landowners to give to poor workers. From 1999 to 2016, his regime robbed more than 6 million hectares of land from its rightful owners.


Sarah Lee is director of communications and external affairs at CRC.

Nationalization destroyed production in affected industries because no government has the capacity to run thousands of businesses or the profit motive to run them efficiently. Instead, government officials face incentives to please voters by selling products at low prices and hiring more employees than necessary, even when that's the wrong industry decision.

It's astounding then that, according to a 2019 public opinion survey of 10,590 undergraduates conducted by College Pulse (Socialism–Capitalism poll May 2019):

4 in 10 (39%) have a favorable view of socialism, an equal number (39%) have an unfavorable impression of the economic system, and 18% report that they are unsure of their opinion. A recent Gallup poll found that an increasing number of Americans have a positive view of socialism. More than 4 in 10 Americans (43%) believe socialism would be a good thing for the country, while only 25% said this in 1942.

The standard line from those who favor the command economy is that all failed efforts to implement socialism in the past—from the Soviet Union, to China, to Cuba, to Venezuela—were not applicable because those systems weren't *authentic* socialism.


The young Venezuelan Andrés Guilarte has witnessed the death spiral of socialism firsthand.

What's more, despite the unassailable failures of socialism in nations such as Guilarte's Venezuela, those with a favorable view of Marx's philosophy only make the "fake socialism" claim after the failures happen.

In an August 2019 video "Socialism Always Fails, Yet Never Dies," Capital Research Center cites Kristian Niemietz, head of political economy at the Institute of Economic Affairs (London's free-market think tank), who writes in his book *Socialism: The Failed Idea That Never Dies*:

The claim of fake socialism is only ever made after the event. As long as a socialist project is in its prime, almost nobody claims that it is not real socialism. On the contrary, virtually every socialist project in history has gone through a honeymoon period, during which it was enthusiastically praised by prominent Western intellectuals."

Guilarte's Experience

The young Venezuelan Andrés Guilarte has witnessed the death spiral of socialism firsthand. Only a few years ago he was a young college student, spending his time on campus protesting those repressive regimes. Then he found a way to leave and make his way to the United States. His college experience is a far cry from what most young Americans experience. But if they're not very careful, warns Guilarte, they could begin to experience what Guilarte and his friends did in Venezuela. And every day he works to prevent that in America.

In fact, after coming to Washington, D.C., in 2019, to work as an intern for the Cato Institute, he has devoted much of his time and work to traveling the country as part of The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) to warn American college students—who have begun their own slow and steady embrace of socialism as part of their studies—of exactly what it means to live under a socialist system.

And Guilarte knows first-hand. As a member of *Estudiantes por la Libertad* (Students For Liberty Latin America) as well as other anti-Maduro groups, Andrés' studies were regularly interrupted by government officials wielding tear gas against Guilarte and his fellow students on campus. He served as a coordinator of that group from 2015 to 2016 and a senior leader from 2016 to 2017. It was dangerous work, he says.

When he came to the United States, things were calmer. But he knew he was called to continue the work he had started in Venezuela, and TFAS—which holds regular education events throughout the nation and has a long history of battling socialist philosophy itself—gives him the perfect forum to continue his work without the tear gas.

TFAS's overarching goal is to educate college students about American government, politics, and economics. But they also have affiliated institutes throughout the world, including in Greece, Hong Kong, Prague, and Santiago, Chile. So Guilarte, who brings real-world experience of life under a socialist regime that has led through the iron fist of nationalization, is a great fit for TFAS in educating college students away from the strange predilection for socialism many learn on college campuses from their radical professors.

And Guilarte takes his work very seriously because, as he says, by the time you're really worried socialism may be taking hold, it's already too late. So he's attempting to help students here, who believe in an innocuous system that seeks economic equity through redistribution via government mandate, understand exactly what they're advocating.

He recently spoke with CRC about his efforts.

SARAH: I understand you were involved in political activism in Venezuela before you came to the U.S. Can you tell me about those groups, what they did, and if it was dangerous? And what ultimately brought you to the United States?

ANDRÉS: Yes, I was part of Students for Liberty Venezuela, a worldwide network of college students that pursue the values of liberty. I also was part of Vente Venezuela, the only political party that speaks about capitalism. But mainly I was involved in the political student movement from my university, where we organized the protest against the Maduro regime while also working to improve the quality of college campus life for students.

It was incredibly dangerous, I was part of three organizations that the regime always targets, so it was always difficult. The risk of being detained was always there. After graduating in 2018, I applied for an internship at the Cato Institute and thankfully I was selected. So I came to the U.S. in January 2019, and while I was doing the internship, the crisis in Venezuela exploded to a whole new level. So because of my political experiences back in my country and the new ones in the U.S., I decided to apply for asylum.

SARAH: My understanding is that your mother's story pre-Chavez plays a huge role in where you find yourself today, fighting to liberate Venezuela from Maduro's influence. Can you explain more about how your mother's experience inspired you?

ANDRÉS: My mom was born in the mid-1960s She came from a very humble town before moving to Caracas. She was never able to finish high school because she had to find a job to provide for the family. My sister was born in the mid-1980s and me in the mid-1990s. We never knew our fathers, so my mom without formal education and being a single mom, she was fully able to support us with the full support of the rest of our family. So for me, it is a terrific



“I was involved in the political student movement from my university, where we organized the protest against the Maduro regime... It was incredibly dangerous, I was part of three organizations that the regime always targets, so it was always difficult.”
—Andrés Guilarte

example of how someone in that economy without education was able to do all the things my mom did. That always motivated me to improve myself, and when the crisis in Venezuela got worse, I also saw how it crippled my mom's life, which she worked so hard to have. It just adds to the motivation that in order for her to have a better life, the regime has to disappear.

SARAH: What are you doing now that you've come to the U.S. and have begun working with TFAS? And what are you seeing in the U.S. that makes you think this might be necessary work?

ANDRÉS: In July of last year, I and my friend Jorge Galicia started this project with TFAS, called Venezuela Project. We went through preparations to be able to provide an efficient storytelling presentation to college students and civil society in general about the Venezuelan crisis, with emphasis on how we went from a prosperous country toward this situation, explaining also the factors that led to Hugo Chavez's rise to power.



“[W]e believed that Cuba was a really far away reality, when in reality, the same evil that destroyed Cuba, was being built in Venezuela.” —Andrés Guilarte



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If you are not part of the military, it's very common for the stores in your neighborhood to be out of things that most people in civilized countries take for granted as essential things people need.

We believe this is necessary to clarify the current crisis in Venezuela while also raising awareness to not follow the same policies.

SARAH: *You told me that there's a saying in Venezuela that by the time you're worried about socialism, it's too late. Do you think Americans worry about the threat of socialism enough and can you confirm that Chavez and later Maduro nationalized industry in Venezuela slowly until it was too late?*

ANDRÉS: Yes, that saying in Venezuela was a reflection of the general sentiment among the society, because we believed that Cuba was a really far away reality, when in reality, the same evil that destroyed Cuba, was being built in Venezuela. The oil industry was nationalized in 1976 under the first government of Carlos Andrés Pérez. After that, Chavez in 1998 increased the nationalization efforts of the industry, so the main national company, PDVSA, went completely to the hands of the government, and Chavez managed to put hand-picked officials on the board. Maduro has just been a terrible manager of the industry so every year the oil production continuously goes down.

SARAH: *A young Latina reporter I met shared a story with me about visiting her boyfriend's family in Venezuela and how a family member spent hours looking for meat to prepare for a family barbeque. She noted that the family had plenty of money, but it didn't matter because the stores are bare. Is that a reality for most people in Venezuela?*

ANDRÉS: Absolutely. If you live in a neighborhood where there are many military members, then you will see supermarkets that have plenty of meat and bread and food to eat. Because if you use the military to control your government, like Maduro does, then you will make sure that those people are fed and well taken care of. If you are not part of the military, it's very common for the stores in your neighborhood to be out of things that most people in civilized countries take for granted as essential things people need.

SARAH: *It's well known Cuba plays a huge role in what's happening in Venezuela. Do you think Juan Guaidó, were he to finally assume his position should Maduro vacate, will be able to adequately tamp down Cuba's influence?*

ANDRÉS: It is well known among those who do minimum research that Cuba is the big problem in Venezuela. But in American society, the reality is that people believe China and Russia play a bigger role when they currently are secondary actors in the situation. Cuba has been, for many decades, the main foreign power trying to interfere in Venezuelan democracy and Chavez is just the main product of that control. We hope that once Maduro falls, Guaidó will be able to expel Cuban influence from the country. ■

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WORKERS, NOT ORGANIZED LABOR, ARE POTENTIAL ALLIES OF CONSERVATIVES

By Michael Watson



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The 1199SEIU represents workers in the highly state-tied, largely government-funded, and heavily government-regulated hospital sector in New York.

Summary: *A group of conservative and other right-leaning writers has proposed an audacious strategy to counter the influence of left-progressive social policy enacted through corporate boardrooms and business decision-making. They have identified labor unions as the solution to the power of increasingly socially liberal business elites, but their proposal is fatally flawed because today's labor union movement is so implacably hostile to conservatives of all stripes that it cannot and would not support any conservative aim.*

In recent months, a faction of conservative and other right-leaning writers has proposed an audacious strategy to counter the influence of “woke capital”—left-progressive social policy enacted through corporate boardrooms and business decision-making. These thinkers, many from

social-conservative religious backgrounds, have identified *labor unions* as the solution to the power of increasingly socially liberal business elites, especially in the technology sector.

Pinkerton, Lehrer, and Company

Don't take my word for it. James P. Pinkerton, a former domestic policy aide to Republican presidents and Fox News contributor, wrote the following at the Daily Caller's American Renewal:

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

So if we want to peek further into Ike's bag of political tricks, we might look back at a 1956 campaign flyer, published by the Young Republican Labor Committee. The flyer features a cartoon of a happy elephant, sporting a worker's cap and carrying a lunchbox. In addition to bullet points about the strong economy, we also see this shouted bullet: "INCREASED UNION MEMBERSHIP."

. . . Yes, maybe Republicans will once again like Ike-like policies, including that happily unionized elephant.

Eli Lehrer of the R Street Institute has joined with an interesting partner to advocate increased authority for Big Labor:

Finally, labor organizations, employers, states, and local governments should be able to do what former SEIU [Service Employees International Union] president Andy Stern and I have proposed: apply for waivers from federal labor rules. Such waivers, modeled on those already common in education and health care, could allow experimentation with unbundled entities as well as with works councils before they roll out nationally.

The goals of Pinkerton, Lehrer, and their comrades in words are in some ways admirable. The changes in the political landscape that heralded Donald Trump's election as president of these United States are the same changes that have accelerated formation of a Republican coalition that includes a higher proportion of working-class communities and voters.

CC —————
While the union-Democratic alliance may have been forged and sealed with left-liberal economic policy, today's unions have a full-spectrum political agenda that goes far beyond economic policy.

One consequence was a shift in the voting behavior of union-member families (known as "union households" to exit pollsters). Despite the closeness of the electoral outcome (a swing of 70,000 votes distributed across three states would have made Hillary Clinton president), Trump's margin with the bloc (he lost it by 8 percentage points) was the best for a Republican since Ronald Reagan's 49-state landslide reelection in 1984. (CRC Distinguished Senior Fellow Dr. Steve Allen identified the possibility that Trump could

scramble the historical partisan voting behavior of union households in an April 2016 edition of *Labor Watch*, reporting on Big Labor's own concern at that possible outcome.)

That outcome, combined with aggressive moves toward social liberalism and environmentalism in the corporate world under the auspices of "environmental, social, and governance" policies, has served as a Siren call for some conservatives. They look to the labor movement—even labor unions as they exist today—as a means to protect social conservatives, as an alternative to the state socialism of the radical left, or as a way to "make the market work for American families."

There may be understandable reasons derived from Catholic social teaching or from a desire to restore civil society to lament the hollowing out of alternative power centers to the state or the corporate mega-conglomerate as centers of social interaction. Yet the evidence presented in this piece demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt that today's labor union movement is so implacably hostile to conservatives of all stripes—not just the free-marketers—that it cannot and would not carry out any of those goals or any other conservative aim. I make my case with three classes of evidence that form the three subsequent sections of this piece.

First, I demonstrate how labor unions as institutions have provided support to a number of left-progressive advocacy campaigns and institutions *not related* to their ostensible core competency of relations between capital and labor. In these cases, the labor unions have all but universally weighed in on the side of institutional managerial progressivism—the "woke" social-liberal culture that the conservative friends of labor seek to counter.

Second, I show (with assistance from CRC's research specialist Robert Stilson) that labor unions and their employees, officers, and directors are too deeply interlinked into an infrastructure of left-progressivism to be trusted to protect conservative, *especially social conservative*, interests against corporate infringement.

Finally, I use public knowledge about the institutional progressive movement's own assessments to show that *institutional progressivism itself* expects labor organizations to serve its interests, leading institutional progressivism to work in the interests of organized labor.

Social Liberalism's Friends in Labor

The ostensible purpose of a labor union is to represent workers as a class in negotiations with an employer, securing economic and workplace benefits. This purpose can be seen

today in unions' self-praise for their historical victories, most notably Big Labor's claim that its actions "gave you the weekend."

But while the American Federation of Labor's founding president Samuel Gompers might have focused strictly on collective bargaining with employers rather than securing government favor for the working classes, by the early 20th century labor sought formal government recognition in the form of mandatory monopoly bargaining and government labor protections. With the passage of National Labor Relations Act and Fair Labor Standards Act during the New Deal era, the Congress of Industrial Organizations moved firmly into the political arena, forming an alliance with the Democratic Party that continues to this day.

And while the union-Democratic alliance may have been forged and sealed with left-liberal economic policy, today's unions have a full-spectrum political agenda that goes far beyond economic policy.

Government Worker Unions

This is well documented in the case of government worker unions, some of which have taken explicit positions on the left of American social-policy debates. In 2019, the National Education Association (NEA), America's largest labor union, adopted "Business Item 56" at its annual convention. That resolution held that the NEA "will include an assertion of our defense of a person's right to control their own body, especially for women, youth, and sexually marginalized people" and that the union "vigorously opposes all attacks on the right to choose and stands on the fundamental right to abortion under *Roe v. Wade*."

The NEA's AFL-CIO member counterpart the American Federation of Teachers had already adopted in 2016 a resolution to "Stand with Planned Parenthood," holding that the AFT "stands with Planned Parenthood and the millions who depend on its healthcare services, including contraception, cancer screenings, STD testing and treatment, and legal, safe abortions." According to financial disclosure records, the American Federation of Teachers provided Planned Parenthood Votes, a national political action committee (PAC) under the Planned Parenthood umbrella, with \$300,000 in its 2016–2017 fiscal year.

For its part, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the largest non-teacher government worker union, is an occasional financial supporter of Planned Parenthood, having provided Planned Parenthood's "social welfare" arm Planned Parenthood Action Fund with \$400,000 in 2014.



Credit: Gage Skidmore. License: <https://bit.ly/3SuD4Q8>.

(Neera Tanden and Mary Kay Henry speaking with attendees at the 2019 National Forum on Wages and Working People.) Mary Kay Henry issued a 2015 statement in which she said SEIU would "stand united with our allies at Planned Parenthood. . . . Efforts in Congress to de-fund Planned Parenthood by anti-women, anti-choice extremists must be stopped."

Mixed-Status Unions

A number of mixed-status national unions cloud any "clean break" between the government worker unions (recognized by almost all conservatives as universally institutionally hostile to their goals) and the private-sector unions seen by some conservatives as potential allies in their struggles with "woke capital" and the straw-man "libertarians" said to run the conservative movement. The most prominent is the SEIU, which has major divisions in the government sector (e.g., SEIU Local 1000, representing exclusively California state and municipal employees), the parastatal sector (e.g., 1199SEIU, representing workers in the highly state-tied, largely government-funded, and heavily government-regulated hospital sector in New York), and the private sector (e.g., SEIU 32BJ, representing building services workers and security guards).

Like the teachers' unions, SEIU is a staunch supporter of left-progressive social policy. Unlike the NEA, the union has affirmed a "neutral" stance on abortion, but this neutrality is nominal. The union has funded pro-abortion-rights organizations such as Planned Parenthood and the Center for Reproductive Rights, and SEIU national president Mary Kay Henry issued a 2015 statement in which she said SEIU would "stand united with our allies at Planned Parenthood. . . . Efforts in Congress to de-fund Planned Parenthood by anti-women, anti-choice extremists must be stopped." In 2020, the SEIU joined the NEA, AFT, and AFSCME in co-signing an *amicus curiae* brief to the Supreme Court for a case seeking to over-

turn an abortion regulation in Louisiana (a story that Robert Stilson covered in a piece for CRC in February).

Private-Sector Unions

But what of the principally private-sector unions? Many of them hold social positions no different from their government-sector and parastatal-sector brethren. The Teamsters, often identified by conservatives as a union open to supporting populist Republicans for historical reasons, is actually in close alignment with the SEIU. James P. Hoffa, president of the Teamsters and son of the infamous Jimmy, also heads Change to Win, the labor union alliance and “strategic organizing center” that was created by former SEIU boss Andy Stern as a rival to the longstanding AFL-CIO labor federation. Local- and state-level Teamsters units have endorsed “sanctuary” policies against immigration enforcement and supported California legislation to subsidize film projects leaving conservative states over abortion regulations.

Other social-liberal advocacy groups have received substantial support from private-sector unions: The UAW’s Community Action Project and the Communications Workers of America have funded the liberal judicial policy group Alliance for Justice, the United Steelworkers supported liberal judicial policy group American Constitution Society, and the United Food and Commercial Workers union provided \$75,000 to the left-leaning Hispanic-interest and immigration-liberalization group UnidosUS (formerly the National Council of La Raza) Action Fund.

All About the Networks

Rod Dreher of the *American Conservative* has inquired extensively into the prospects of “small-o” orthodox Christians in a world dominated by a socially progressive “woke” technology industry, most prominently through the book *The Benedict Option*. One reader of Dreher, a government worker and SEIU member with conservative leanings, proposed the union as a vehicle to defend his social conservatism by protecting his workplace rights.

That was naive for several reasons, and another of Dreher’s readers, an anonymous “liberal reader who is in a position to know,” confirmed its naivety for an important and often under-remarked reason: The personal networks of union staff are far-left wing. The reader writes:

The political departments of unions tend to be the “wokest” spaces in left-of-center politics. There

seems to be a pretty massive generational divide, as there is with anything these days, and the 20- and 30-somethings who staff these jobs tend to be further to the left than people who work for Democratic candidates and committees. There’s definitely a lot of cross pollination between the two worlds (after all, unions are effectively an auxiliary of the Democratic Party, perhaps now than ever before), but at D.C. headquarters of any union, you’ll find a subset of true-believers who want to smash capitalism and re-engineer society in a way that the average party hack generally does not.

The interlocking networks of union staff and alumni and the staff and alumni networks of social-liberal and radical-left organizations are extensive, and they demonstrate the second problem with trying to coopt labor unionism in the interests of conservatism: Labor unions and their employees, officers, and directors are too deeply interlinked into an infrastructure of left-progressivism to be trusted to protect conservative, especially social conservative, interests against corporate infringement. Both union staff and officers and the unions themselves are enmeshed in networks that encourage them to act as agents of the broader left-progressive consensus, even if some 40 percent or more of the members of the unions do not support that consensus.

Personal Connections

It would be difficult to establish whether Dreher’s “liberal reader” is correct in identifying labor union political departments as “the ‘wokest’ spaces in left-of-center politics,” but it is possible to identify the interlocking alumni networks of former labor union employees and officers working or sitting on the boards of social-liberal groups. A position with a labor union is frequently one of the early items on a liberal operative’s resume. Even senior positions with labor unions can lead to senior positions in social-liberal activism.



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Two major figures who followed this secondary path are Cecile Richards and Vicki Saporta, who each parlayed a career in union organizing into a rise to the top of a major pro-abortion organization. Richards, the better known of the pair for heading the Planned Parenthood Federation of America from 2006 until 2018, came from a political family: She's the daughter of Ann Richards, the most recent Democratic governor of Texas, and David Richards, whom the Austin Chronicle identified as the city's "most visible and active attorney for the left." Cecile started her career as a union organizer, rising to lead the SEIU's Justice for Janitors mobilization campaign in Los Angeles before shifting her focus to abortion advocacy. In this path she followed Saporta, who had risen through the organizing ranks of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to become the infamously corrupt union's organizing director in 1983. In 1993, Saporta left the union and by 1995 was named the president of the National Abortion Federation, an advocacy group representing abortion providers. Saporta would hold that position until 2018.

Richards and Saporta are not alone in having Big Labor and Big Abortion on their resumes. Nicole Berner, the general counsel to the SEIU, was formerly a Planned Parenthood staff attorney. Debra Ness, president of the "reproductive rights" group National Partnership for Women and Families, is also an alumna of NARAL Pro-Choice America and the SEIU. Justine Sarver, an Obama operative and the former executive director of liberal state-policy shop Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, is an alumna of the ACLU of Northern California, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, and the San Diego Labor Council AFL-CIO.

Emily's List—the pro-abortion, Democratic-aligned candidate recruiting and support network—also has a number of union alumni. Geraldine Prado (a vice president at Emily's List); Mike Sager (Emily's List's chief technology officer), and Muhtoni Wambu Kraal (former Emily's List official and current member of the Democratic National Committee) all passed through the political and



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*Rod Dreher of the American Conservative has inquired extensively into the prospects of "small-o" orthodox Christians in a world dominated by a socially progressive "woke" technology industry, most prominently through the book *The Benedict Option*.*

The most prominent such alumna is Patrick Gaspard, the former executive vice president for politics and legislation of 1199SEIU ("the union that rules New York") and Obama administration official. In 2017, he was appointed to head the Open Society Foundations, George Soros's principal advocacy-philanthropy network. Ken Grossinger, another Democracy Partners consultant who was a political advisor to the AFL-CIO and SEIU, heads the Impact Philanthropy and Donor Advising Division of Democracy Partners, through which he has advised other major liberal grantmakers, such as the Ford Foundation and liberal billionaire Jon Stryker.

Organizational Coalitions

In addition to the alumni networks, labor unions are members of major liberal advocacy coalitions alongside the non-economic liberal groups. The most prominent and influential of these coalitions may be the America Votes network, which bills itself as the "Coordination Hub of the Progressive Community."

Big Labor helped found America Votes. CBS News credited then-SEIU leader Andy Stern and longtime AFL-CIO political operative Steve Rosenthal as among the "longtime Democratic activists" who created the

coalition in 2004. Today, the coalition—which reported \$13 million in total expenses in its fiscal year ending in mid-2017—contains a number of labor unions, economic-left organizations, and social-liberal organizations, including:

- Labor unions such as AFSCME, the American Federation of Teachers, Communications Workers of America, the NEA, and the Teamsters
- Gun control advocacy groups such as Giffords PAC, the Brady Campaign, and Everytown for Gun Safety
- Environmentalist groups including NextGen America, League of Conservation Voters, and the Sierra Club
- Social-liberal groups such as Emily’s List, NARAL, and Planned Parenthood
- Entities associated with the Democratic Party, including the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, Senate Majority PAC, and House Majority PAC

Unions are deeply intertwined with other liberal networks, including the Democracy Alliance and network of liberal donors. As with America Votes, labor has been involved in Democracy Alliance from the network’s foundation, with the AFL-CIO and SEIU credited among the first group of

alliance members. Former National Education Association executive director John Stocks chairs the alliance.

Labor has also established institutions for the express purpose of weakening non-economic right-leaning institutions. A coalition of AFL-CIO member unions and the labor-backed environmentalist group Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership announced the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance in 2007, with the reported intention of “lur[ing] the political allegiance of gun-owning union members away from the NRA and its political agenda.” Amalgamated Bank, the SEIU-owned financial institution established by a predecessor union decades ago, created a grantmaking arm (Amalgamated Charitable Foundation) that operates a campaign targeting immigration-restrictionist and social-conservative groups identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Don’t Take My Word for It

The final sign of the strength of the organized labor-organized progressivism alliance can be found in the statements and actions of organized progressive institutions themselves. The role of Big Labor in the institutional liberal activist space became a matter of great interest when the Supreme Court heard cases challenging compulsory dues (agency fees) for public-sector unions in non-right-to-work states.

In 2016, the Supreme Court heard *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, in which a public schoolteacher challenged compulsory fees under California’s forced-unionism rules. The Court deadlocked after the death of Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, leaving the rules in place.

By 2018, the confirmation of Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch had created an opening for a similar challenge: Mark Janus challenged Illinois’s forced-unionism law and ultimately prevailed over AFSCME Council 31.

As these cases made their way through the court system, liberal groups allied with labor unions provided *amicus curiae* support and advocacy on behalf of compulsory fees. Furthermore, organized progressive institutions speculated on the potential consequences of a decline in union revenue caused by an end to forced fees paid to government-sector unions.

In 2016, Democracy Alliance president Gara LaMarche spoke to members of the liberal mega-funders group on the potential ramifications of a *Janus*-like decision holding that forced dues in the government sector are unlawful. According to a copy of his prepared remarks obtained by the Washington Free Beacon, LaMarche warned:



Credit: Sharon Farmer/photoworks. License: <https://iit.ly/2THn6OQ>

(Barry Rand presents Gara LaMarche with the Hubert H. Humphrey Civil and Human Rights Award in 2010.) In 2016, Democracy Alliance president Gara LaMarche spoke to members of the liberal mega-funders group on the potential ramifications of a *Janus*-like decision holding that forced dues in the government sector are unlawful.

We would be foolhardy to assume that we will always have the labor resources that have been such a significant engine for progressive politics and organizations. Make no mistake about it, labor is a key anchor of funding for progressive campaigns and causes.

LaMarche further elaborated on the scale of labor's support for the organized progressive network:

Last year [presumably 2015], labor support accounted for 13% of the funds going to [Democracy Alliance]-supported groups, and 28% of the 2020 Vision State Funds. Nine of the 30 portfolio groups receive at least 25% of their support from labor.

This is the scale of organized labor's involvement in the words of a key progressive financial organizer. Further evidence of the foundational role Big Labor plays in the broader progressive ecosystem can be observed from the responses in union-favorable states to the *Janus v. AFSCME* ruling.

While declines in union revenues and political-lobbying expenditures have not been as substantial as union critics might have wished in the wake of *Janus*, government-sector unions have lost the overwhelming majority of their former forced-fee payers and ongoing litigation may help free the remaining unwillingly unionized workers from paying fees obtained without knowing and affirmative consent.

To counter these effects, unions and union-friendly public officials have proposed or enacted a spate of “anti-*Janus*” legislation, including bars on government employers informing workers of their *Janus* rights; grants of civil immunity to union organizers who lie, mislead, or threaten employees to pay fees to a union; and direct contributions from state taxpayer funds to support government worker labor unions. The expectation is clear: These proposed government privileges would preserve the labor-funded liberal networks that support progressive politicians, and left-progressive advocacy campaigns would continue to receive the financial support that they have come to expect from organized labor.



This survey should send a clear message to conservatives: Organized labor opposes everything conservatives stand for and cannot be considered a possible ally.

Conclusion

This survey, which is far from comprehensive in its catalog of union and union alumni involvement in noneconomic-leftist politics, should send a clear message to the conservatives hopeful of finding an audience *within organized labor itself*: Organized labor opposes everything conservatives stand for and cannot be considered a possible ally.

The deeper questions arise in how to secure meaningful cultural and political representation for the substantial minority of union-member families who are currently unrepresented by unions' political and advocacy operations. The hardest option, and the one to which the “labor conservatives” would inadvertently commit themselves, is to orchestrate a hostile takeover of the labor movement by devotees of Christian democracy. Evidence from past hostile takeovers of major labor organizations—the ouster of the mobbed-up Teamsters and the liberal Cold Warriors in the AFL-CIO by the hard-left wings of both unions in the 1990s—suggests that this would take a generation and require recruiting substantial cadres of Christian-democratic organizers to move trade unionism back to the political center ground. Given the internal resistance the existing labor organizing profession would mount, such an approach has essentially no chance of succeeding.

The easiest option is to continue to do nothing. Labor unions' inexorable decline has led them to pursue increasingly radical coercive measures to force workers to pay union dues. They have had little success in securing those coercive measures through legislation, and regulatory efforts through the National Labor Relations Board have been reversed under Republican presidents. The problem with this approach is threefold: First, it deepens the polarization that keeps union funds flowing to left-wing political causes and to liberal candidates dangling the prospect of future coercive organizing laws. Second, it neglects the “labor conservatives” kernel of truth, that having alternate sources of social integration from the state and the mega-corporation is desirable. Finally, it fails to address the legitimate grievances of the 40 percent of union families trapped in the cycle of funding organizations fundamentally opposed to their values, practices, and lifestyles.

Therefore, adopting a two-pronged approach would be preferable. The first prong would continue the traditional conservative-Republican approach to defunding the unions' political program by allowing dissenting non-members to refrain either from union fees altogether (under a national right-to-work law) or from financially supporting union issue advocacy (under a “paycheck protection” provision

like that in the proposed Employee Rights Act). The second would seek to build alternative models of worker representation while allowing workers to hold their delegated representatives directly accountable through means such as recertification votes. Before joining the Trump administration, labor researcher James Sherk, then of the Heritage Foundation, wrote on works councils and similar approaches to organization without a national labor union's involvement.

As the base of the conservative movement shifts from high-income professionals and businessmen toward

Americans working in manufacturing, mining, and construction, the question of alternative worker representation will become more acute, especially if the proportion of right-leaning union households increases. But this question cannot be answered by giving more power to the existing labor movement, as should be overwhelmingly clear, because the unions would rather coerce than represent their members. ■

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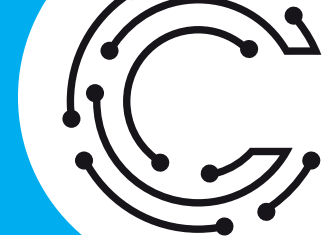
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PUNISHING SUCCESS

Scott Walter

A big-name politician is taking over a leading group for liberal lawyers: Russell Feingold, the former senator who gave his name, along with Sen. John McCain's, to the last major campaign finance reform bill.

As Feingold assumes leadership of the American Constitution Society, he steps into a firestorm that's brewing over the Federalist Society, the leading lawyers' group for conservatives, which faces growing assaults.

Why attack the Federalist Society? Because one of its leaders has played a significant role in weakening the power of liberal judges to impose their will on the rest of us.

Since at least 1953, when Earl Warren became chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, activist judges have often violated their constitutional duty to leave law-making to the people's representatives who are elected to the legislative and executive branches. Instead, judges have legislated from the bench, forcing their policy preferences on the rest of us.

Supporters of this judicial malpractice face a challenge: Most Americans agree with the traditional, limited understanding of judges' role. That's why liberal nominees to the Supreme Court like Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor know that to be confirmed, they must promise Senators they won't legislate from the bench.

Americans' passion for this view of judges is so powerful that it significantly boosted Donald Trump's 2016 campaign for president. Since then, he has successfully placed over 190 judges on the federal courts who have insisted, with more believability than Kagan and Sotomayor, that they will not confuse judging with legislating.

The Left isn't pleased by that, so it's attacking persons who've led the fight to install those judges. A top target is Leonard Leo, who recently stepped down from his longtime post as



Russell Feingold, the former Democratic senator from Wisconsin, is assuming leadership of the American Constitution Society.

Credit: Renee Bouchard, U.S. Senate Photographic Studio. License: <https://bit.ly/2U2FV88>.

vice president of the Federalist Society, which champions neutral judging.

The most insidious assault has been launched via an obscure entity known as the Committee on Codes of Conduct of the U.S. Judicial Conference, which is weighing a "draft opinion" that urges judges not to be members of the right-leaning Federalist Society or the left-leaning American Constitution Society that Feingold will head.

For now, the committee says its ethics antennae aren't ruffled if judges merely attend events at either Society, so long as judges are not actually members. Supposedly, judges' non-membership will avoid the appearance of partisanship. But if the committee were genuinely concerned about partisanship, it would fret about its member John J.

McConnell Jr., because he's a longtime political donor to and ally of Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), one of the Federalist Society's loudest critics and himself a fierce partisan. Judge McConnell has shown his partisan colors by donating, along with his wife, almost \$700,000 to Democratic candidates in his prior life, when he was a trial lawyer.

Legal expert Ed Whelan notes that the committee eschews transparency and prefers to operate in the dark: It doesn't even post its membership. You've almost certainly never heard of it, but you can easily see how the Federalist Society's enemies hope to exploit it: They will cite the committee's "opinion" and claim that any association with the Society renders a nominee unfit to be a judge.

"Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Federalist Society?" will be the McCarthy-like cry.

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This intolerance is especially ironic, because the Federalist Society is famous for the diversity of views it welcomes to its meetings. Perhaps Sen. Whitehouse would like to impeach Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, who signed up to offer his non-conservative opinions at the Society's very first meeting in 1982? (A family emergency kept Breyer from speaking.) Countless other leading liberal thinkers have joined the open debates the Society sponsors, including Nadine Strossen, longtime leader of the ACLU, and Jamin Raskin, former general counsel of the National Rainbow Coalition, who praises the Society for its "open-mindedness and liberalism"!

The most obvious bias in the Judicial Committee's "draft opinion" appears when it claims no partisanship problem arises for judges who belong to the American Bar Association, which it treats as if the group represents all American lawyers, when in fact only around 14 percent of lawyers are members, down from 50 percent in 1979.

Worse, the ABA is notorious for its partisanship. It actively lobbies on numerous hot-button issues like immigration and abortion and also files amicus ("friend of the court") briefs in support of numerous cases that affect public policy, almost always pushing the liberal side. As Ed Whalen reports, it even has a Grassroots Action Center that works to mobilize the public "to send messages directly to your elected officials"—for instance, "Tell Congress the Border Needs Help."

In stark contrast, the Federalist Society in all its decades has never filed so much as one amicus brief nor spent a penny

on lobbying, yet the Judicial Committee wants to suppress its open and balanced activities.

The committee doesn't even care about the collateral damage its draft opinion would do to other left-wing legal groups besides the American Constitution Society. Also in the blast zone will be groups like the National Association of Women Lawyers, the National LGBT Bar Association, and many more.

As Carrie Severino of the conservative-leaning Judicial Crisis Network observes, the logic of the draft opinion would go even further and "wreak havoc on judges' ability to connect not only to the legal profession, but also to the institutions of faith, education, and community." Severino means that the draft opinion, if adopted, could end up endangering a lawyer who's a member of a Jewish denomination that once joined an amicus brief, or who's spoken at a university that lobbied on any issue, or who's participated in a community group that expressed an opinion on a ballot initiative.

Obviously, in a free country lawyers and judges should be free to associate with others and to make their cases in public through whatever organizations they like. I don't want to silence groups like, say, the Hispanic National Bar Association, or dash its members' hopes of being made federal judges. It'd be nice if the Judicial Committee showed the same respect for the Federalist Society by calling off its dishonest attack. ■

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