



AMERICAN PRINCIPLES PROJECT

June 7th, 2021

To Republican Members of Congress, Senators, and Congressional staff:

I write to you today because the American conservative movement is deeply concerned about the effort of Big Tech and its allies to influence public policy on the Right.

The *Daily Caller* first documented this effort in 2019, pointing out that Google had contributed to “groups like R-Street, the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), TechFreedom, the Cato Institute and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), to name a few.”¹ Similarly, *NBC News* reported that “[a]fter years of big spending, tech’s political machine turns to higher gear.”² Just last month, *Washington Monthly* detailed the rise of a new Koch-funded group, the Alliance for Antitrust, “dedicated to pushing a pro-monopoly line on Republicans” in the area of Big Tech. Most of the groups that make up the Alliance, the article noted, also “receive financial support from Big Tech[.]”³

Over the last two years, Big Tech has not only interfered in our elections and increasingly censored conservatives, but also simultaneously plotted to coopt the Republican Party and avoid scrutiny on the Right by pouring millions of dollars into center-right think tanks. Take a quick look at Google’s most recent list of organizations accepting “the most substantial contributions” from its U.S. Government Affairs and Public Policy team.⁴ Or glance at Facebook’s list of partner organizations.⁵ They are both filled with preeminent progressive groups as well as prominent right-leaning groups and publications.

Big Tech’s spending spree on the Right will no longer be a secret, or even an open secret. Those who take from the Silicon Valley cartel that is actively undermining our constitutional regime will be spotlighted on the national stage just as much as those who give. As such, I caution all of you to carefully consider your interactions with Big Tech-funded groups, especially when discussing issues related to Section 230, antitrust, common carrier regulations, and political appointments to relevant regulatory bodies, including

¹ White, Chris, [Here Are The Conservative Groups Google Is Paying To Brush Back Sen. Hawley](#). *Daily Caller*. 3 Jul. 2019.

² Smith, Allan, [After years of big spending, tech’s political machine turns to high gear](#). *NBC News*. 3 Jul. 2019.

³ Cortellessa, Eric, [The Conservatives Out to Stop the New Bipartisan Antitrust Movement](#). *Washington Monthly*. Jul.-Aug. 2021.

⁴ [Trade Associations and Member Organizations](#). Google.

⁵ [Facebook political engagement](#). Facebook. 2021.

the Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission, Federal Election Commission, and Federal Communications Commission.

Further, prior to accepting any meetings, Congressional staff should do their best to determine whether the participants receive funding from Big Tech. While it is prudent to hear arguments about public policy made in good faith, it is foolish to ignore the presence of private financial interests. Make no mistake, a meeting with an organization that takes notable sums of money from Google is no different than a meeting with a member of Google's Public Policy team. In far too many cases, the agenda of such organizations will be wholly compromised, singularly reflecting the agenda of their Big Tech patrons.

Of course, lobbying is not new. Corporations have long labored to purchase influence through donations to elected officials, think tanks, and media outlets. But what Big Tech is doing is of an entirely different order. While the special interests of the past worked to advance their agendas within the system, Big Tech is convinced that the system itself must be destroyed to advance its agenda. That is starkly evidenced by its dismantlement of our republic's foundation and its destruction of freedom of expression, perhaps our most cherished ideal. Big Tech has only amplified its censoring, banning, and deplatforming of candidates, activists, and organizations—and even everyday citizens.

Unfortunately, we must now conclude that the sheer effectiveness of Big Tech's rending of the Constitution has been at least in part due to its ability to corrupt certain Republicans. Each and every year, Big Tech is spending incalculable sums of money to launder its worldview, one that sacrifices American sovereignty and eliminates individual rights, through a network of seemingly disinterested "conservative" advocacy groups. Alas, it is hardly surprising then that as the threats to free speech online have grown, so too have the checks written by Big Tech.

I appreciate your attention to this urgent matter, and I look forward to working with you in the months ahead. Conservative voters are demanding action to address the domineering power of Big Tech in the halls of power. We must not let these corporations drive the agenda any longer, for they are ceaselessly undercutting the values and aspirations of the American people.

Sincerely,



Jon Schweppe
Director of Policy and Government Affairs
American Principles Project