

**Testimony before the  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
State Government Committee**

Chaired by Seth M. Grove

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*Should Pennsylvania's Elections Be Privatized?*

Chairman Grove, Representative Davidson, distinguished Members of the Committee: Thank you for allowing me to testify. I'm Scott Walter, president of the Capital Research Center in Washington, D.C., a 36-year-old think tank that is a watchdog on nonprofits.

Given the years of struggle in the Keystone State over liquor stores, which have never been privatized, it is amazing that no question appears to have been raised in 2020, when one Big Tech billionaire, funding one supposedly "nonpartisan" nonprofit, effectively privatized the Commonwealth's elections.<sup>1</sup>

I refer to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, who funded the Center for Tech and Civic Life (or CTCL), which in turn sent millions of dollars straight into local government election offices in Pennsylvania, with strings attached.

Personally, I do not want donors or nonprofits anywhere on the political spectrum manipulating elections through gifts to government offices. One would think the question whether to permit private funding of Pennsylvania's election offices would be simple, something Left and Right could agree on: Should your state's elections be governed by you, the people's representatives, or by one Big Tech billionaire?

As a student of the Left's role in politics, I'm amazed anyone left of center would be unsure how to answer. For years we've heard left-leaning officials, and left-leaning nonprofits, decry political donations by billionaires. In Washington, prominent Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has objected to the very existence of billionaires.<sup>2</sup>

These attacks typically feature criticism of so-called "dark money." I am sure several Members of this Committee are on the record criticizing it, and I can assure the Committee that the Center for Tech and Civic Life is as "dark" as they come.

CTCL refused to disclose the hundreds of millions it received from Mr. Zuckerberg; weeks later, the donor himself revealed his nine-figure donation. CTCL declines to provide its full donor list, and it's organized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit which can legally avoid revealing any donors.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/zuckerbergs-return-on-investment-in-pennsylvania/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://twitter.com/AOC/status/1230331950608592896>.

Much worse, however, because at least CTCL’s “darkness” about donors is legally permitted, it also refuses to reveal *where* its hundreds of millions went in the last election. CTCL has admitted that thousands of local election offices in dozens of states received grants of \$5,000 or more, and it has posted a “preliminary” list of local government offices that received funds.<sup>3</sup>

But of course, the critical question is *how much money* went to *which* election offices. CTCL refuses to make public that information, even though federal law requires CTCL to report on its IRS Form 990, a public document, every grant of \$5,000 or more to any government agency.<sup>4</sup> Conveniently, CTCL can delay filing that document until November 2021. It has refused to answer these kinds of burning public questions, despite being asked by the *New York Times*,<sup>5</sup> the Associated Press,<sup>6</sup> National Public Radio,<sup>7</sup> American Public Media,<sup>8</sup> the *New Yorker*,<sup>9</sup> and others.

Nonetheless, we at Capital Research Center have examined CTCL’s list, as well as news databases and local government reports, to assemble the fullest data set currently available. We think these numbers won’t change much when the full truth comes out, because we’ve found grant amounts for most large jurisdictions.

We’ve publicly disclosed all the data we can find and published reports for the states of Pennsylvania,<sup>10</sup> Georgia,<sup>11</sup> Michigan,<sup>12</sup> Wisconsin,<sup>13</sup> Texas,<sup>14</sup> Arizona,<sup>15</sup> Nevada,<sup>16</sup> North Carolina,<sup>17</sup> and Virginia.<sup>18</sup> For every state we’ve examined, it is clear Zuckerberg’s funding via CTCL has produced a highly partisan pattern.

We first examined the funding in Georgia, and our report was so shocking that the Georgia Senate asked me to testify about it.<sup>19</sup>

Consider a few data points:

- In Georgia, CTCL gave grants to nine of the state’s ten counties with the greatest Democratic shifts in their 2020 presidential vote. Those nine grantees averaged an amazing 13.7 percent Democratic shift.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1E7P3owIO6UlpMY1GaeE8nJVw2x6Ee-i9d37hEEr5ZA/edit#gid=1993755695>.

<sup>4</sup> See [Schedule I of IRS Form 990](#).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/25/us/politics/elections-private-grants-zuckerberg.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/technology-elections-denver-mark-zuckerberg-election-2020-92257bbc1fef9ed0e18861e5b5913f6>.

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.npr.org/2020/12/08/943242106/how-private-money-from-facebooks-ceo-saved-the-2020-election?utm\\_source=Iterable&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=campaign\\_1795371\\_n1\\_Philanthropy-Today\\_date\\_20201208&cid=pt&source=ams&sourceId=132961](https://www.npr.org/2020/12/08/943242106/how-private-money-from-facebooks-ceo-saved-the-2020-election?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_1795371_n1_Philanthropy-Today_date_20201208&cid=pt&source=ams&sourceId=132961).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2020/12/07/private-grant-money-chan-zuckerburg-election>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/battling-anxiety-over-making-sure-your-vote-gets-counted>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/zuckerbergs-return-on-investment-in-pennsylvania/>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/center-for-tech-civic-life/>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/ctcls-zuck-bucks-invade-michigan-and-wisconsin/>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/ctcls-zuck-bucks-invade-michigan-and-wisconsin/>.

<sup>14</sup> [https://capitalresearch.org/article/how-mark-zuckerberg-almost-handed-texas-to-the-democrats/?blm\\_aid=0](https://capitalresearch.org/article/how-mark-zuckerberg-almost-handed-texas-to-the-democrats/?blm_aid=0).

<sup>15</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/how-ctcl-helped-biden-in-arizona-and-nevada/>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/how-ctcl-helped-biden-in-arizona-and-nevada/>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/tracing-mark-zuckerbergs-election-investment-in-north-carolina/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/how-mark-zuckerberg-meddled-in-virginias-2020-election/>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/election-irregularities-involving-crcl-scott-walter-testifies-before-georgia-senate-subcommittee/>.

- In the 44 Georgia counties CTCL funded, the Democratic presidential vote rose by more than two-and-a-half times the Republican rise in the same counties, compared to 2016. This partisan effect in the funded counties produced a Democratic advantage of about 323,000 votes in a state whose margin of victory was less than 12,000 votes.

In Pennsylvania, the same pattern recurs:

- While CTCL funded slightly more counties won by President Trump (13) than by Vice President Biden (11), recall that Biden won only 13 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties, so CTCL funded 85 percent of Biden counties, compared to 24 percent of Trump counties.
- A Biden-winning county was over three-and-a-half times more likely to be funded by CTCL than a Trump-winning county.
- Biden won six counties across the state that delivered him 100,000 or more votes. CTCL funded 100 percent of those six.
- Trump won four counties that delivered him 100,000 votes or more. CTCL funded 75 percent of them.
- We have data on the grant amounts received by 13 of the 24 counties CTCL funded. *All five of the highest-funded counties were won by Biden.* By contrast, four of CTCL’s five *least* funded counties were won by Trump.
- Even those numbers understate the funding disparity. A more accurate picture arises when we compare the funding per capita: Trump counties received an average of \$0.59 per capita, while Biden counties averaged \$2.93 per capita—over five times more funding per capita.
- The most richly funded Biden county (Philadelphia) received \$6.32 for every man, woman, and child, compared to a mere \$1.12 for the most richly funded Trump county (Berks).
- In fact, for every voter who cast a ballot in Philadelphia county, the Democratic election officials there received \$13.60.
- When we compare the presidential vote in 2020 to 2016 numbers, we find that in the 24 counties CTCL funded, 266,000 more votes were cast in 2020 for the Republican candidate and 460,000 more for the Democrat candidate. That partisan difference of about 194,000 votes is more than double Biden’s official victory margin for the entire state (80,555 votes).
- Looking at this increased turnout in percentage terms, we find the median increase in Republican votes in all 24 counties CTCL funded was +17 percent in 2020 over 2016. The median increase in Democratic votes was +27 percent.

The pattern repeats in state after state: First, CTCL is far more likely to fund election jurisdictions that are rich with Democratic votes. Second, it funds those jurisdictions much more heavily per capita. Third, jurisdictions it funded boosted Democratic turnout far beyond the statewide margin of victory.

Election expert J. Christian Adams sums it up: CTCL’s Zuckerberg cash “converted election offices in key jurisdictions with deep reservoirs of Biden votes into Formula One turnout machines.”<sup>20</sup>

It is hard to square these facts with the federal requirement that 501(c)(3) nonprofits like CTCL must be nonpartisan at all times, that they may not conduct “voter education or registration activities” that “have

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<sup>20</sup> <https://pjmedia.com/jchristianadams/2020/12/02/the-real-kraken-what-really-happened-to-donald-trump-in-the-2020-election-n1185494>.

the effect of favoring a candidate,” as the IRS puts it.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, such nonprofits have for years been ignoring federal law by conducting registration and get out the vote efforts that favor one party.

Liberal journalist Sasha Issenberg, in his 2012 book *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*, wrote of one such nonprofit, the Voter Participation Center,<sup>22</sup> that remains prominent<sup>23</sup> in elections: “Even though the group was officially nonpartisan, for tax purposes, there was no secret that the goal of all its efforts was to generate new votes for Democrats.”<sup>24</sup>

In the case of CTCL, this partisanship wouldn’t surprise anyone who consulted InfluenceWatch.org to learn its leaders’ backgrounds: All its founders first worked at a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, the New Organizing Institute, which was such a powerful turnout machine that the *Washington Post* labeled it “the Democratic Party’s Hogwarts for digital wizardry.”<sup>25</sup> The two groups, CTCL and New Organizing Institute, are so similar that Capital Research Center created a quiz showing quotations from their two websites and asking readers to guess which group’s website said it.<sup>26</sup> The test is quite difficult. It is nearly impossible to tell the old (c)(4) political nonprofit from the new (c)(3) “nonpartisan” nonprofit. They are simply Democratic turnout machines.

Seasoned election observers went into November saying that Pennsylvania was a critical swing state for the presidential election and that Philadelphia would be ground zero for the Democratic candidate’s hopes. CTCL partisans knew this too, and their investments in Pennsylvania prove it.

I urge you to investigate every dealing CTCL had with every Pennsylvania government office. Did the contacts begin from the Center’s side? What preconditions did the Center put on its funds? Did the counties fulfill their budgetary and other obligations under state law when using these funds? Who designed voter “education” materials and advertisements? Who was hired? Who trained them? Was any money spent on training that would help prevent vote fraud?

The problem of illicit nonprofit partisanship is for the U.S. Congress to solve. But the problem of nonprofits hoping to privatize Pennsylvania’s elections is, I respectfully submit, your responsibility.

Thank you.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/the-restriction-of-political-campaign-intervention-by-section-501c3-tax-exempt-organizations>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/voter-participation-center/>.

<sup>23</sup> For example, according to *Time* magazine, in the November 2020 election the Voter Participation Center “sent ballot applications to 15 million people in key states, 4.6 million of whom returned them.” Molly Ball, “The Secret History of the Shadow Campaign That Saved the 2020 Election,” *Time*, February 4, 2021; <https://time.com/5936036/secret-2020-election-campaign/>. For a memo detailing the partisan backgrounds of all the persons and groups who make up what that article’s author calls a “conspiracy” and a “cabal” aimed at defeating President Trump, see <https://capitalresearch.org/article/the-groups-and-persons-mentioned-in-times-shadow-campaign-article/>.

<sup>24</sup> Sasha Issenberg, *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* (New York: Crown, 2012), p. 305.

<sup>25</sup> Brian Fung, “Inside the Democratic Party’s Hogwarts for Digital Wizardry,” *Washington Post*, July 8, 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2014/07/08/inside-the-democratic-partys-hogwarts-for-digital-wizardry/>. For more on CTCL and the New Organizing Institute, see their InfluenceWatch entries: <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/center-for-tech-and-civic-life/> and <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/new-organizing-institute/>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://capitalresearch.org/article/the-new-new-organizing-institute/>.