



**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Accountable. US  
**Date:** July 12, 2023  
**RE:** Leonard Leo's Connections to Major Voter Suppression Legislation

An Accountable.US review has revealed that the American Confidence in Elections (ACE) Act's most vocal advocates, including the bill's sponsor Rep. Bryan Steil (R-WI), have significant ties to judicial activist Leonard Leo, and are helping to shield his growing dark money network from accountability.

On July 13, 2023, the Committee on House Administration will markup the ACE Act, which the bill's sponsor has called "[the most conservative election integrity bill to be seriously considered in the House in over 20 years.](#)"

Leo's financial backing of the ACE Act shows that the bill's real goal is voter suppression and making it harder for Americans to make their voices heard, not "increasing confidence in elections."

**Many ACE Act Supporters Have Leonard Leo Connections. ([Full Report HERE](#))**

- **Rep. Bryan Steil (R-WI)**, [lead sponsor](#) of the ACE Act, has benefited from [\\$5,000](#) in spending by the American Conservative Union, which is [backed](#) by Leo's [85 Fund](#). Steil has also loudly touted an [A+ Rating](#) from the [Leo-funded Susan B. Anthony List](#).
- **Hans von Spakovsky**, an ACE Act [proponent](#), is a [Director](#) at the Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF). PILF has received major [funding](#) from the Leo-tied 85 Fund, has counted "[close](#)" Leo ally Neil Corkery as its [Chief Financial Officer](#), has disclosed Leo network figure [Shawna Powell](#) as its Secretary, and has had other Leo-tied election conspiracists like [John Eastman](#) and [Cleta Powell](#) in its leadership.
- **Harmeet K. Dhillon**—who [represented](#) Trump in disputing the 2020 election and has [testified](#) in support of the ACE Act—is [Chair](#) of the Republican National Lawyers Association, which counts Leo's Concord Fund as one of its two "[gold sponsors](#)," and was [Co-Chair](#) of Lawyers For Trump, which counted Leo among its "[key leaders](#)."
- **Ken Cuccinelli** has [testified](#) in support of the ACE Act as [National Chairman](#) of the Election Transparency Initiative (ETI), which appears to have benefited

from [dramatically increased](#) funding from Leo's [Concord Fund](#) the year it was launched. ETI has also focused on fighting previous efforts to expose dark money donors, claiming they would "[spell disaster for our democracy.](#)"

**Leo's Honest Elections Project is one of the primary groups [pushing](#) the ACE Act.**

- While HEP presents itself as an independent entity, it's actually a registered alias of Leo's 85 Fund. The 85 Fund is more commonly known as the Judicial Education Project. ([Accountable.US](#))
- HEP is a radical anti-voting rights group that was central in mainstreaming the Independent State Legislature Theory at issue in Moore v. Harper, which would give gerrymandered state legislatures ultimate control over federal elections. ([Accountable.US](#))
- In the runup to the 2020 election, HEP filed more than a dozen amicus briefs supporting lawsuits to make voting more difficult, focusing on swing states including Arizona, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania ([Accountable.US](#)).
- HEP's Executive Director Jason Snead has been a [vocal supporter](#) of the bill, but this isn't the first time he's been involved with voter suppression efforts.
  - While he was at the Heritage Foundation, Snead created the Election Fraud Database with Hans von Spakovsky, who was the lead Republican witness at the field hearing in Atlanta.
  - While he was working for the Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF), Snead pushed a report claiming there was widespread voter fraud in Virginia. The report was false, leading to a federal settlement and forcing PILF to apologize to Virginia residents who it falsely accused of voter fraud ([Accountable.US](#)).

**Leo-funded People United for Privacy [came out](#) swinging for the ACE Act in May.**

- Since PUP's founding in 2017, groups run by Leo or his close associates have provided the vast majority of its revenue. In 2021, Leo's BH Fund was sole donor to PUP. During that same time period, PUP [lobbied against](#) donor disclosure and the For the People Act.

**Public Interest Legal Foundation's (which is funded by the Leo network), Cieta Mitchell, who resigned in disgrace from her law firm for her involvement in the Big Lie in 2020, is closely tied to the committee's election work.**

- Mitchell said at a recent Election Assistance Committee meeting that the House Administration Committee has been "wonderful to work with" and was hosting weekly calls with "volunteers and citizen activists." ([POLITICO](#)).