

# Fringe Views Will Take Center Stage As Ways & Means Hearing Hosts Dark Money-Funded Election Deniers For Political Stunt

*On December 13, 2023, the House Ways & Means Committee’s Oversight Subcommittee will host the latest political stunt on Capitol Hill when they feature Scott Walter of the Capital Research Center and Stewart Whitson of the Foundation for Government Accountability at a hearing sure to be filled with conspiracy theories. Both Walter and Whitson are notorious election deniers who helm dark-money funded groups that push a fringe, right wing agenda in Washington; and they’re funded by some of the Conservative Movement’s largest dark money players like Leonard Leo. Read on to learn more about these two controversial figures and the network that props them up.*

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# An Extreme Partisan With Ties To The Right Wing “Dark Money ATM,” Capital Research Center President Scott Walter’s Fringe Views Don’t Deserve A Congressional Platform

**SUMMARY:** Capital Research Center (CRC) President Scott Walter has a record of racially insensitive comments, working for an anti-LGBTQ group, and spreading election lies:

- Walter has claimed Black Lives Matter Leaders are calling for ending the nuclear family and that people “[enthralled by radical ideology](#)” like Black Lives Matter “[often harm lives and enslave those whose suffering they use for their political ends.](#)”
- Scott Walter responded to a question about critical race theory by noting 1619 project author Nikole Hannah-Jones' MacArthur fellowship and claiming “[everything they understand comes from a lust for money and power.](#)”
- Walter spent nearly four years as a [senior fellow at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty](#), a “hardline” religious group opposed to LGBTQ rights.
- Walter amplified the [Big Lie about the 2020 election](#) by peddling conspiracies about [Mark Zuckerberg stealing the election](#).
- Walter is a member of the [Council for National Policy](#), a secretive conservative organization which [sought to overturn the 2020 election](#).

Walter has used his powerful position at CRC to uplift dangerous beliefs and conspiracies as his organization has continued to expand, almost tripling its total revenue since Walter became president. Some of that money has even come from Donors Trust, the “dark money ATM” of the extreme right.

## **Capital Research Center (CRC) President Scott Walter Has A Personal Record Of Racially Insensitive Remarks And Homophobia.**

### **Capital Research Center (CRC) President Scott Walter Has Claimed Black Lives Matter Leaders Are Calling For Ending The Nuclear Family And That People “Enthralled By Radical Ideology” Like Black Lives Matter “Often Harm Lives And Enslave Those Whose Suffering They Use For Their Political Ends.”**

**Capital Research Center (CRC) President Scott Walter: Black Lives Matter Leaders Are Calling For Ending The Nuclear Family Because Marx Called For That In The Communist Manifesto.** “Are you surprised Black Lives Matter leaders call for ending the nuclear family? Why? In 1848 Marx demanded Abolition of the family! in *The Communist Manifesto*.” [Scott Walter, Capital Research Center, [11/18/20](#)]

**CRC President Walter: People “Enthralled By Radical Ideology” Like Black Lives Matter “Often Harm Lives And Enslave Those Whose Suffering They Use For Their Political Ends.”** “I affirm that black lives matter, because as a Christian I believe all lives are infinitely precious. But I also distinguish between the sentiment that black lives matter and the leaders of the movement so named. As I will show, persons enthralled by radical ideology often harm lives and enslave those whose suffering they use for their political ends.” [Scott Walter, Capital Research Center, [11/18/20](#)]

### **Scott Walter Responded To A Question About Critical Race Theory By Noting 1619 Project Author Nikole Hannah-Jones' MacArthur Fellowship And Claiming "Everything They Understand Comes From A Lust For Money And Power."**

**Asked How Critical Race Theory Fits "Into Leftist Control Of Educational Institutions," CRC President Scott Walter Noted The 1619 Project's Author Nikole Hannah-Jones' MacArthur Fellowship And Said "Everything They Understand Comes From A Lust For Money And Power Above All."** "How does critical race theory fit into leftist control of educational institutions? Who did the 1619 project? Nikole Hannah-Jones. What was she before that? She was a MacArthur Genius fellow, she got a \$600,000 grant as a genius fellow from afar, which you can be sure didn't hurt having on her resume when the New York Times just decided whether to hire her. That's another central thing to this, everything they understand comes from a lust for money and power above all, but money's really helpful to get the power and it's obviously a happy circle there." [Hillsdale Collegian, [2/10/22](#)]

**CRC President Walter Implied That Research Into The History Of Slavery In America Was An Extension Of A 20th Century Operation By Leftists To Take Over Cultural Institutions.** “The smarter leftists in the 20th century came to realize that cultural institutions are the way to take power. It's not going to work through economics because socialist economics doesn't work at all. So the left must take them over, whether it's the churches, the universities, and the rest. They had an enormous amount of money. Because of the big foundations in America: Ford, Carnegie, Rockefeller, MacArthur Foundations provided the money. The radicals hired their own and rose higher and higher until they had control of institutions. [...] Who did the 1619 project? Nikole Hannah-Jones. What was she before that? She was a MacArthur Genius fellow, she got a \$600,000 grant as a genius fellow from afar, which you can be sure didn't hurt having on her resume when the New York Times just decided whether to hire her. That's another central thing to this, everything they understand comes from a lust for money and power above all, but money's really helpful to get the power and it's obviously a happy circle there.” [Hillsdale Collegian, [2/10/22](#)]

### **Scott Walter Was A Senior Fellow At The Becket Fund For Religious Liberty From 2008-2012, A “Hardline” Religious Group Opposed To LGBTQ Rights.**

**Scott Walter Was A Senior Fellow At The Becket Fund For Religious Liberty From September 2008 To May 2012.** [LinkedIn, accessed [4/28/22](#)]

**The Southern Poverty Law Center Called The Becket Fund A “Hardline” Group Promoting “Religious Freedom Restoration Acts’ To Justify Anti-Gay Discrimination.”** “The hardline groups promoting ‘religious freedom restoration acts’ to justify anti-gay discrimination. [...] under the current leadership of President William Mumma it has become more conservative and is seen as the intellectual leader of right-wing religious liberty campaigns.” [Southern Poverty Law Center, [2/11/16](#)]

**The Becket Fund Fought Against Marriage Equality And Aligned Themselves With Anti-LGBTQ Groups In Their Fight.** “Becket has also been active in adoption cases in Massachusetts and Illinois, where Catholic Charities abandoned its longstanding adoption work rather than place children with same-sex couples. Becket has called the Affordable Care Act one of the top religious freedom issues facing America and has filed several lawsuits against it. Becket also has ties to the National Organization for Marriage (NOM), an anti-LGBT group whose sole purpose has been to stop same-sex marriage.” [Southern Poverty Law Center, [2/11/16](#)]

**Scott Walter Is A Member Of A Group That Tried To Overturn The 2020 Election And Has Peddled Conspiracy Theories The 2020 Vote Being Stolen.**

**Walter Amplified The Big Lie About The 2020 Election By Peddling Conspiracies About Mark Zuckerberg Stealing The Election.**

**In December 2020, The Head Of Capital Research Center Said That The Center For Tech And Civic Life Was A Way For “Billionaires To Pick And Choose Where To Boost [sic] Turnout” In Georgia.** “Should private interest groups like this – backed by a billionaire or two, rather than the state legislators of Georgia, be allowed to pick and choose where to boost election funding and turnout in the Peach State?’ Scott Walter asked a Georgia Senate committee meeting last Thursday. Walter is with the Capital Research Center, a Washington think tank.” [WABE, [12/9/20](#)]

**November 2021: Walter Went On Cleta Mitchell’s Podcast Claiming That The Left, And Mark Zuckerberg In Particular, Used Dark Money To “Hijack” The 2020 Election.** “In part one of a two-part interview, Scott Walter explains how the left uses “charitable” dollars for political purposes. With stunning graphics and data, Scott describes the massive left-wing political funding apparatus built over many years and documents in detail the development of the massive Democratic turnout machine funded by left-wing billionaires with tax-deductible dollar—all leading up to the hijacking of targeted election offices in 2020 by Facebook billionaire Mark Zuckerberg, which will be the focus of Part Two of this series.” [Capital Research Center, [11/8/21](#)]

**April 2022: CRC President Scott Walter Appeared On Steve Bannon’s “War Room” Podcast And Claimed That A “Left-Wing Democrat Operative” “Absolutely Took Over The Process Of The Elections” In Wisconsin In 2020.** “In Wisconsin, as far as we’ve been able to discover, the most egregious stuff went on related to Zuck Bucks, because you had a left-wing Democrat operative from the National Voted Home Institute was the ‘grant mentor’ for the people- the election officials in Wisconsin getting the money, and he just took over, absolutely took over the process of the elections in some of those big Democrat cities.” [“War Room” Podcast, [4/8/22](#)]

**April 2022: Scott Walter Was Featured In A Documentary Called “Rigged: The Zuckerberg-Funded Plot To Defeat Donald Trump,” Which Markets Itself As “The Only Film To Fully Expose The Rigged 2020 Election.”** [Citizens United Productions, accessed [4/26/22](#)]

- **Walter Said On Steve Bannon’s Podcast That “Rigged” Contains “Very Factual, Heavily-Documented Stuff” And That The Film Uses Capital Research Center’s Research.** [“War Room” Podcast, [4/8/22](#)]

**Walter Is A Member Of The Council For National Policy, A Secretive Conservative Organization Which Sought To Overturn The 2020 Election.**

Walter Is Listed In Several “Member Interests” Of The Council For National Policy’s 2020 Directory, Including “Campaign Election Technology,” “Campaign Finance Reform,” And “Philanthropy.” [CNP Directory, page 189, Documentcloud accessed [4/28/22](#)]

**The Council For National Policy (CNP) Is A Intensely Secretive Group Of The Most Powerful Conservatives In The Country.** “Three times a year for 23 years, a little-known club of a few hundred of the most powerful conservatives in the country have met behind closed doors at undisclosed locations for a confidential conference, the Council for National Policy, to strategize about how to turn the country to the right.” [New York Times, [8/28/04](#)]

**The Council For National Policy Urged Members To Contact Legislators In Arizona, Georgia, And Pennsylvania In An Effort To Overturn The 2020 Election.** “Shared in the days after the 2020 presidential election, it urged the members of an influential if secretive right-wing group to contact legislators in three of the swing states that tipped the balance for Joe Biden — Arizona, Georgia and Pennsylvania. The aim was audacious: Keep President Donald J. Trump in power. The group, the Council for National Policy, brings together old-school Republican luminaries, Christian conservatives, Tea Party activists and MAGA operatives, with more than 400 members who include leaders of organizations like the Federalist Society, the National Rifle Association and the Family Research Council.” [New York Times, [2/22/22](#)]

**The Capital Research Center’s Total Revenue Has Significantly Increased Since Scott Walter Became President Of The Organization In 2016 — Jumping Almost \$5 Million From 2015 To 2022.**

**The Capital Research Center’s Total Revenue Has Significantly Increased, From \$2.5 Million In 2015 To \$7.1 Million In 2022, Since Scott Walter Became President Of The Organization In 2016.**

According To Scott Walter’s LinkedIn Profile, He Has Been The President Of Capital Research Center Since February 2016. [LinkedIn, Scott Walter, accessed [12/12/23](#)]

Year	Total Revenue
2015	<a href="#">\$2,561,903</a>
2016	<a href="#">\$2,990,989</a>
2017	<a href="#">\$2,544,852</a>
2018	<a href="#">\$2,942,556</a>
2019	<a href="#">\$4,627,330</a>
2020	<a href="#">\$4,880,833</a>
2021	<a href="#">\$6,083,008</a>
2022	<a href="#">\$7,181,137</a>

## **Walter Has Claimed The Left Outspends The Right With “Dark Money” To Support Public Policy Fights.**

**Scott Walter Claimed That Liberals Invest Overwhelmingly More Dark Money Into Policy Fights Than Conservative Ones.** “A new report from the Capital Research Center, where I work, busts this myth and showcases the disparity between “dark money” giving on the left and the right following the Supreme Court’s consequential Citizens United v. FEC decision in 2010. Spoiler alert: According to the report’s data, liberals beat conservatives in philanthropic giving that supports public policy fights by almost 4 to 1, despite the constant, histrionic rhetoric about dark money corruption on the right.” [Capital Research Center, [1/19/21](#)]

## **Capital Research Center Even Gets Money From Donors Trust—The Dark Money ATM Of The Right—Which Also Finances Hate Groups, White Nationalist Organizations, And 2020 Election Deniers.**

**Donors Trust—Dubbed The Dark Money ATM Of The Right—Is A Donor-Advised Fund Which Does Not Disclose The Identities Of Its Contributors.** “Donors Trust, also known as the “dark money ATM of the right,” ... Donor-advised funds such as Donors Trust, Fidelity Charitable and Vanguard Charitable effectively act as “pass-throughs” to shield the true source of funds, Anna Massoglia, editorial and investigations manager at OpenSecrets, told Salon. Major donors are relying on DAFs to give to groups advocating around divisive issues or with other controversial activities since the donor-advised fund can “act as a buffer” between the recipient and the donor.” [Salon, [12/10/23](#)]

**In 2022, Donors Trust Funneled \$257,600 To Six Organizations Designated As Hate Groups By The Southern Poverty Law Center, Including The VDARE Foundation And The Family Research Council.** “Donors Trust, also known as the “dark money ATM of the right,” funneled \$257,600 to six organizations that have been designated as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center, an Accountable.US review of Donors Trust’s 2022 tax filing revealed. The David Horowitz Freedom Center, an SPLC-designated anti-Muslim hate group, received the highest amount of donations totaling \$142,000, followed by The VDARE Foundation, a white nationalist hate group, which received \$34,500...No Left Turn in Education and the Center for Immigration Studies both received \$20,000 each while the Family Research Council pulled in \$11,100.” [Salon, [12/10/23](#)]

**Contributions From Donors Trust Have Gone To Groups That Promote The “Big Lie” Conspiracy Surrounding The 2020 Presidential Election Result.** “Some recent contributions to the Donors Trust have gone toward groups that pushed claims of election fraud before and after President Joe Biden defeated Trump in last year’s election. In 2019, the Donors Trust, sent donations to groups such as Turning Point USA, which is led by vocal Trump supporter Charlie Kirk; and the VDARE Foundation, which the Southern Poverty Law Center labeled a hate group.” [CNBC, [9/15/21](#)]

**Since 2019, Donors Trust Has Contributed More Than \$2.25 Million To Capital Research Center.**

Year	Amount	Purpose
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$338,200	For general operations
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$30,000	For the area of highest need
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$400,000	For the CrowdSourcers project
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$1,721	To investigate and report on public advocacy organizations
<a href="#">2020</a>	\$362,450	For general operations

<a href="#">2021</a>	\$455,750	For general operations
<a href="#">2022</a>	\$150,000	\$75,000 for labor-related research and \$75,000 for general operations
<a href="#">2022</a>	\$517,250	For general operations
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$2,255,371</b>	

[Donors Trust, Form 990, 2019-2022]

- Capital Research Center Managed Ginni Thomas’s Group Crowdsourcers For Culture And Liberty Through An Arrangement Called “Fiscal Sponsorship.”** “The previously unreported donations to the fledgling group Crowdsourcers for Culture and Liberty were channeled through a right-wing think tank in Washington that agreed to serve as a funding conduit from 2019 until the start of last year, according to documents and interviews. The arrangement, known as a “fiscal sponsorship,” effectively shielded from public view details about Crowdsourcers’ activities and spending, information it would have had to disclose publicly if it operated as a separate nonprofit organization, experts said...In 2019, anonymous donors gave the think tank Capital Research Center, or CRC, \$596,000 that was designated for Crowdsourcers, according to tax filings and audits the think tank submitted to state regulators.” [The Washington Post, [3/28/23](#)]

# Right Wing Conspiracy Theorist Stewart Whitson Of The Leonard Leo-Backed Foundation For Government Accountability Is Too Fringe For Congress To Take Seriously

**SUMMARY:** Stewart Whitson works as the [legal director](#) for the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA), a right-wing organization that fights “[to advance conservative causes](#)” and has been a “[key](#)” player in recent efforts to “[erode democracy](#)” by raising the threshold to pass citizen-led ballot initiatives in order to derail measures like those aimed to protect abortion rights. FGA is backed by conservative kingpin Leonard Leo, having [received \\$2 million](#) from Leo’s 85 Fund. The group’s largest known funder is a foundation controlled by Illinois Billionaire Dick Uihlein—a prominent funder of election denial efforts—which has given FGA [\\$17.6 million since 2014](#).

Whitson has used his role at FGA to uplift election conspiracies and misinformation:

- Whitson has warned that legal settlements over state-level violations of the National Voter Rights Act may have led to “[nearly three million voter registration mailings](#).”
- In 2022, Whitson wrote that in Wisconsin, “[Zuckerbucks](#)” were used to drive procedural changes that benefited the left.
- Whitson claimed in a 2022 op-ed that Biden ordering agencies to expand voting opportunities and promoting registration and participation was “[inherently political](#)” and may be an “[abuse of power](#).”
- In a July 2022 piece, Whitson claimed that Biden’s executive order overseeing “get out the vote” efforts would be catastrophic and that “[Zuckerbucks paved the way for Bidenbucks](#).”
- In an amicus brief, the Foundation for Government Accountability [asked](#) an appeals court to reverse a lower court ruling striking down three of Florida’s “election reforms” that included “acts of intentional racial discrimination.” In reacting to the lower court’s decision, Whitson denied its determination that voting rights and the VRA are under siege.
- Whitson claimed an executive order from President Biden is a “[federal DEI takeover](#)” to “[quietly destroy the agencies from the inside](#).” Despite this concern, [FGA joined Project 2025](#), which is aimed at “identifying several thousand potential recruits who could populate the federal bureaucracy” and would “[begin dismantling the administrative state from day 1](#).”

**Stewart Whitson Is Legal Director For The Dark Money-Backed Foundation For Government Accountability (FGA), Which Fights “To Advance Conservative Causes” And Has Been A “Key” Player In Recent Efforts To “Erode Democracy” By Raising The Threshold To Pass Citizen-Led Ballot Initiatives To Derail Measures Like Those Protecting Abortion Rights.**

**Stewart Whitson Is The Legal Director At The Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA) And Has Been With The Organization Since March 2021.**

Stewart Whitson Is The Legal Director At The Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA).  
[Foundation for Government Accountability, accessed [12/12/23](#)]

Whitson Has Been FGA's Legal Director Since March 2022 But Started Working At The Organization As A Fellow In March 2021. [LinkedIn, accessed [12/12/23](#)]

## **The Foundation For Government Accountability Is A “Powerhouse” Advocacy Group That Fights “To Advance Conservative Causes Such As Restricting Access To Anti-Poverty Programs And Blocking Medicaid Expansion.”**

**The Foundation For Government Accountability Was Founded In 2011 And Has Grown “Into A Powerhouse For Policy Wins In The Areas Of Welfare, Unemployment, Workforce, Election Integrity, And Health Care.”** “The Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA) was founded in 2011 by President and CEO Tarren Bragdon. [...] FGA quickly grew into a powerhouse for policy wins in the areas of welfare, unemployment, workforce, election integrity, and health care.” [FGA, accessed [12/12/23](#)]

**Washington Post: “The FGA For Years Has Worked Systematically To Shape Policy At The State Level, Fighting To Advance Conservative Causes Such As Restricting Access To Anti-Poverty Programs And Blocking Medicaid Expansion.** “The FGA for years has worked systematically to shape policy at the state level, fighting to advance conservative causes such as restricting access to anti-poverty programs and blocking Medicaid expansion.” [The Washington Post, [4/23/23](#)]

## **FGA Is A “Key” Player In Recent Efforts To “Erode Democracy” By Raising “The Threshold For Passing Citizen Ballot Initiatives,” In Order To Derail Citizen-Led Ballot Measures Like Protecting Abortion Rights.**

**Documented: “The Foundation For Government Accountability [...] Has Played A Key Role In Recent Efforts To Raise The Threshold For Passing Citizen Ballot Initiatives From A Simple Majority To A Supermajority, And To Make It Harder To Place Measures On The Ballot In The First Place.”** “A Florida group primarily funded by an Illinois billionaire is driving the recent attacks on direct democracy in states such as Ohio, Missouri, South Dakota and Arkansas. The Foundation for Government Accountability, a Florida-based group affiliated with the alliance of conservative thinktanks called the State Policy Network, has played a key role in recent efforts to raise the threshold for passing citizen ballot initiatives from a simple majority to a supermajority, and to make it harder to place measures on the ballot in the first place.” [Documented, [6/23/23](#)]

- **HEADLINE: “Billionaire-Funded Group Driving Effort To Erode Democracy In Key US States.”** [Documented, [6/23/23](#)]

**FGA’s “Efforts Are Designed To Derail Citizen-Led Ballot Initiatives To Protect Abortion Rights, Raise The Minimum Wage Or Expand Medicaid.”** “These efforts are designed to derail citizen-led ballot initiatives to protect abortion rights, raise the minimum wage or expand Medicaid. In effect, FGA and its allies seek to give 41% of the voting population an effective veto over the wishes of the other 59%. In at least four states, FGA and its lobbying arm, the Opportunity Solutions Project, have lobbied or testified in favor of changing ballot initiative rules to enshrine minority rule, and in some cases have financed ballot committees advocating for those changes. FGA has also issued reports, legal memos, op-eds and polling that advocate for gutting direct democracy.” [Documented, [6/23/23](#)]

## **A Foundation Controlled By Illinois Billionaire Dick Uihlein—A Prominent Funder Of Election Denial Efforts—Is “The Largest Known Source Of FGA’s Funding, Giving \$17.6m Since 2014.”**

**A Foundation Controlled By Illinois Billionaire Dick Uihlein Is “The Largest Known Source Of FGA’s Funding, Giving \$17.6m Since 2014,” Who “Has Also Been One Of The Key Funders Of Election Denial” Efforts.** “As the measure moved through Ohio’s Republican-controlled legislature, the Illinois billionaire Dick Uihlein gave \$1.1m to the newly created “Save Our Constitution PAC” [...] A foundation controlled by Uihlein is

also the largest known source of FGA's funding, giving \$17.6m since 2014. Uihlein has also been one of the key funders of election denial. Among other things, Uihlein has poured tens of millions into his "Restoration of America" network that promotes ludicrous election conspiracy theories and which created a controversial database that published voters' personal information online in the name of uncovering election fraud." [Documented, [6/23/23](#)]

## **In 2020, The Foundation For Government Accountability "Received \$2 Million From The Leonard Leo-Tied 85 Fund."**

**In 2020, The Foundation For Government Accountability "Received \$2 Million From The Leonard Leo-Tied 85 Fund."** " FGA has also received substantial funding from the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation, which the New Yorker's Jane Mayer has described as "an extraordinary force in persuading mainstream Republicans to support radical challenges to election rules," and in 2020 FGA received \$2 million from the Leonard Leo-tied 85 Fund." [Documented, [5/8/23](#)]

**2017: Leo's Wellspring Committee Contributed \$350,000 To FGA Action.** [Desmog, accessed [8/3/23](#)]

- **FGA Action, Operating Under The Alias Opportunity Solutions Project, Is The 501(c)(4) Arm Of The Foundation For Government Accountability.** The Opportunity Solutions Project (OSP), an alias of FGA Action, is the 501(c)(4) branch of the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA), a right-wing, Florida-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit. OSP has been tax exempt since 2015. The Opportunity Solutions Project and the Foundation for Government Accountability share staff members, including Tarren Bragdon, who is the CEO of both organizations, and Jonathan Bechtle, who is the COO of FGA and the Executive Vice President of OSP. According to the organization's website, OSP 'brings together citizens and thought leaders across America to identify proven state-level reforms and promote them to voters, the media, and state policymakers. It often partners with educational policy organizations, sharing its high-quality research and data analysis with state lawmakers to ensure new laws are carefully crafted to expand opportunity and freedom for all.'" [Center for Media and Democracy, accessed [8/1/23](#)]

## **Leonard Leo Operates A "Network Of Interlocking Nonprofits," For Which He "Obtained A Historic \$1.6 Billion" Donation For In 2022 – Considered "To Be The Largest Political Donation Ever."**

**U.S. News & World Report: Leonard Leo Is "Arguably The Most Powerful Figure In The Federal Justice System."** "Arguably the most powerful figure in the federal justice system, Leonard Leo doesn't wear a black robe or preside over a courtroom. A trained attorney, he's neither a litigator nor a politician; anyone outside Washington's legal and political circles would be hard-pressed to recognize his name or spot him in a crowd." [U.S. News & World Report, [10/27/17](#)]

**The Washington Post: "Leo Is The Maestro Of A Network Of Interlocking Nonprofits Working On Media Campaigns And Other Initiatives To Sway Lawmakers By Generating Public Support For Conservative Judges."** "He is widely known as a confidant to Trump and as executive vice president of the Federalist Society, an influential nonprofit organization for conservative and libertarian lawyers that has close ties to Supreme Court justices. But behind the scenes, Leo is the maestro of a network of interlocking nonprofits working on media campaigns and other initiatives to sway lawmakers by generating public support for conservative judges." [The Washington Post, [5/21/19](#)]

**In 2022, Leonard Leo "Obtained A Historic \$1.6 Billion Gift For His Conservative Legal Network" Considered "To Be The Largest Political Donation Ever."** "Leonard Leo, who helped to choose judicial nominees for former President Donald Trump, obtained a historic \$1.6 billion gift for his conservative legal network via an introduction through the Federalist Society, whose tax status forbids political activism. Leo first met Barre Seid, the now 91-year-old manufacturing magnate turned donor, through an introduction arranged

by Eugene Meyer, the longtime director of the Federalist Society. At the time, Leo was the society's executive vice president, and he is currently its co-chair. [...] he result was a \$1.6 billion gift announced last year — which is believed to be the largest political donation ever.” [Politico, [5/2/23](#)]

**Whitson Fear Mongered Over “Catastrophic” Voter Turnout Efforts Due To A Biden Executive Order, Supported So-Called Voter “Reforms” In Florida That Included “Intentional Racial Discrimination,” And Claimed DEI Efforts Would “Quietly Destroy” Federal Agencies From The Inside.**

**Whitson Warned That Legal Settlements Over State-Level Violations Of The National Voter Rights Act May Have Led To “Nearly Three Million Voter Registration Mailings.”**

**Whitson Wrote In The American Spectator On A Settlement Agreement With Kansas Over “Violations Of The National Voter Registration Act.”** “The story starts in November 2019, when Gov. Kelly, a Democrat, met with a coalition of liberal groups, including Demos and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). They informed her they were about to bring a lawsuit against Kansas alleging violations of the National Voter Registration Act. Ultimately, the lawsuit wasn’t filed because the governor unilaterally signed a legally binding settlement agreement to implement the groups’ demands, without informing voters.” [The American Spectator, [6/14/22](#)]

**Whitson Warns That Settlement Agreements May Have Led To “Nearly Three Million Voter Registration Mailings.”** “Should other states care? Absolutely. Demos has bragged that it was also responsible for nearly three million voter registration mailings in Arizona, North Carolina, Michigan, and Virginia — all key states in the 2020 election. Settlement agreements may have been involved. Voters in every state should ask if their governors have reached similar secret deals. And state lawmakers should make sure they can’t.” [The American Spectator, [6/14/22](#)]

**In 2022, Whitson Wrote That In Wisconsin, “Zuckerbucks” Were Used To Drive Procedural Changes That Benefited The Left.**

**HEADLINE: “Wisconsin's Zuckerbucks Report: A Call To Action On Election Integrity.”** [RealClearPolicy, [3/21/22](#)]

- **Whitson Co-Wrote “Wisconsin's Zuckerbucks Report: A Call To Action On Election Integrity?”** [RealClearPolicy, [3/21/22](#)]

**In A Report On Wisconsin, Whitson Claims That “Zuckerbucks” Were Used To Drive Procedural Changes That Benefited The Left.** “In 2020, under the guise of providing funds to help election officials overcome the challenges of COVID-19, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative funneled more than \$10 million into Wisconsin, with \$8.5 million strategically targeting just five cities. While this money was originally marketed as funds to be used for purchasing personal protective equipment, these funds — coined “Zuckerbucks” — were primarily used to drive procedural changes and get-out-the-vote efforts that benefited the Left.” [RealClearPolicy, [3/21/22](#)]

**Whitson Claimed In An April 2022 Op-Ed That Biden Ordering Agencies To Expand Voting Opportunities And Promoting Registration Is “Inherently Political” And May Be “An Abuse Of Power.”**

**In An April 2022 Wall Street Journal Op-Ed, Whitson Wrote That Biden Ordering Agencies To Expand Citizens' Opportunity To Vote May Amount To "An Abuse Of Power."** "President Biden is ordering all agencies in the federal bureaucracy to "expand citizens' opportunities to register to vote and to obtain information about, and participate in, the electoral process." That language, from a March 2021 executive order titled "Promoting Access to Voting," may sound benign. It isn't, and it may conceal an abuse of power. The administration is making it difficult for the public to find out." [Wall Street Journal, [4/19/22](#)]

- **Whitson Co-Wrote The Op-Ed "Voter Registration Drive: What's Biden Hiding?"** [Wall Street Journal, [4/19/22](#)]

**Whitson Claims That "Promoting Voter Registration And Participation" Is "Inherently Political."** "Promoting voter registration and participation—i.e., mobilizing voters—is an inherently political act for a partisan president. The resulting efforts can be directed at groups expected to vote for the president's party and may take the form of pressure to support the party or its policies. A president has every right to sway potential voters on the campaign trail. He has no right to influence them using the force of the federal government." [Wall Street Journal, [4/19/22](#)]

### **In July 2022, Whitson Claimed President Biden's "Catastrophic" Executive Order Overseeing "Get Out The Vote" Efforts Would Benefit Progressives And That "Zuckerbucks Paved The Way For Bidenbucks."**

**Whitson Wrote In A July 2022 Washington Examiner Op-Ed That President Biden's "Catastrophic" Executive Order 14019 Would Oversee "Get Out The Vote" Efforts That Whitson Alleged Are "Designed By The Left, To Benefit The Left, In Every Single Precinct In The Country Under The Day-To-Day Management Of Partisan Bureaucrats."** . "The implications of Executive Order 14019 would be catastrophic to our free and fair elections. If it is implemented, Biden's executive branch would be overseeing 'get out the vote' efforts designed by the Left, to benefit the Left, in every single precinct in the country under the day-to-day management of partisan bureaucrats." [Washington Examiner, [7/28/22](#)]

- **Stewart Whitson Wrote The Op-Ed "States Can Stop Federal Election Interference In Local Elections."** [Washington Examiner, [7/28/22](#)]

**Whitson Claims That "Zuckerbucks Paved The Way For Bidenbucks."** "What's worse, the federal election takeover would be funded on the back of federal taxpayers, making the appalling degree of outside influence seen during the 2020 elections a permanent tradition, rather than an isolated incident, and on a scale that makes Zuckerberg look like pocket change. Just like H.R. 1 led to H.R. 4, Zuckerberg paved the way for Bidenbucks." [Washington Examiner, [7/28/22](#)]

### **In July 2022, FGA Asked An Appeals Court To Reverse A Ruling Striking Down Three Of Florida's So-Called "Election Reforms" That A Lower Court Found Included "Acts Of Intentional Racial Discrimination" And Whitson Denied The Lower Court's Determination That Voting Rights Are Under Siege.**

**In A July 2022 Press Release, FGA Announced It Filed An Amicus Brief Asking An Appeals Court To Reverse A Lower Court Ruling That "Not Only Struck Down Three Of Florida's Commonsense Election Reforms, But Imposed Preclearance On The State."** "Today, the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA) filed an amicus curiae legal brief with the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit in support of Florida and its commonsense election integrity law, Senate Bill 90 (SB 90). FGA asks the Court to reverse the lower court's ruling which not only struck down three of Florida's commonsense election reforms, but imposed preclearance on the state, requiring Florida to obtain the permission of the federal government for the next 10 years before it may pass election reforms that are otherwise legal. If the ruling is not reversed, Section 3(c) preclearance will become a new legal strategy employed by the Left across the country to oppose

any meaningful election reforms designed to prevent election fraud and inspire voter confidence.” [Foundation for Government Accountability, [7/12/22](#)]

- **FGA Noted That A Lower Court Found Three Of The Election Reforms To Be “Acts Of Intentional Racial Discrimination.”** “In March, a lower federal court found three reforms in SB 90 to be acts of intentional racial discrimination, placing Florida under the strictures of preclearance. On May 6, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals issued an order halting enforcement of the lower court’s ruling which improperly found those provisions of Florida’s election integrity law to be unconstitutional.” [Foundation for Government Accountability, [7/12/22](#)]

**FGA Legal Director Stewart Whitson Denied A Lower Court’s Determination That Voting Rights And The VRA Are “Under Siege” While Alleging That “Equal Sovereignty Of The States” Is Actually What Is At Risk.** “In its ruling, the lower court claimed that “the right to vote, and the VRA particularly, are under siege.’ ‘The lower court was wrong,’ said Stewart Whitson, Legal Director. ‘Neither the right to vote nor the VRA are under siege, but rather, it is the equal sovereignty of the states and their right to regulate their own elections in accordance with the Constitution that are under siege. FGA stands ready to continue to help states across the country as they defend their constitutional right to pass commonsense election integrity laws.” [Foundation for Government Accountability, [7/12/22](#)]

**In April 2023, Whitson Claimed A Biden Executive Order Is A “Federal DEI Takeover” To “Quietly Destroy The Agencies From The Inside” Yet FGA Joined Project 2025, An Effort To Identify “Several Thousand Potential Recruits Who Could Populate The Federal Bureaucracy” And “Begin Dismantling The Administrative State From Day 1.”**

**HEADLINE: “Biden’s Latest Executive Order Is A Trojan Horse For A Federal DEI Takeover.”** [Washington Examiner, [4/19/23](#)]

- **Stewart Whitson Co-Wrote The Op-Ed “Biden’s Latest Executive Order Is A Trojan Horse For A Federal DEI Takeover.”** [Washington Examiner, [4/19/23](#)]

**In April 2023, Whitson Claimed That Equity Teams “Are A Trojan Horse Planted In The Heart Of Every Federal Agency To Quietly Destroy The Agencies From The Inside, Transforming Them Into Ideologically Aligned Instruments Of The Left.”** “These new equity teams are a Trojan horse planted in the heart of every federal agency to quietly destroy the agencies from the inside, transforming them into ideologically aligned instruments of the Left. When a new administration arrives, anxious to get “wokeism” out of government business, these folks will remain behind, entrenched in the bureaucracy, thwarting and undermining such efforts.” [Washington Examiner, [4/19/23](#)]

**Foundation For Government Accountability Joined 75 Coalition Partners In The Heritage Foundation’s 2025 Presidential Transition Project.** “In a historic moment for the conservative movement, The Heritage Foundation announced today its 2025 Presidential Transition Project has reached 75 coalition partners. [...] Foundation for Government Accountability” [Heritage Foundation, [10/10/23](#)]

- **Outside Groups Advising Project 2025 Are Currently Identifying Several Thousand Potential Recruits Who Could Populate The Federal Bureaucracy Under A Republican President.** “They have already identified several thousand potential recruits and have set a goal of having up to 20,000 potential administration officials in their database by the end of 2024, according to Kevin Roberts, the president of Heritage.” [The New York Times, [4/20/23](#)]
- **Heritage Foundation President Kevin Rogers Said Project 2025 Recruits Would “Begin Dismantling The Administrative State From Day 1.”** “Kevin Roberts, the president of Heritage [...] ‘In 2016, the conservative movement was not prepared to flood the zone with conservative personnel,’ Dr.

Roberts said. ‘On Jan. 20, 2025, things will be very different. This database will prepare an army of vetted, trained staff to begin dismantling the administrative state from Day 1.’” [The New York Times, [4/20/23](#)]

# Donors Trust—The Dark Money ATM Of The Right Increased Its Spending By Millions Over The Past Five Years Thanks To Leonard Leo’s Leonard Leo’s Dark-Money Nonprofit Network

**SUMMARY:** Donors Trust—the so-called dark money ATM of the right—has seen its coffers swell thanks to conservative kingpin Leonard Leo and his dark-money nonprofit network. Over the past five years, increasing annual contributions to Donors Trust has allowed the donor-advised fund to funnel more money to the nation’s most influential right-wing organizations. Grantees include anti-LGBTQ hate groups (the VDARE Foundation and the Family Research Council); election denier organizations (Turning Point USA); the mysterious political group Crowdsourcers, which is linked to Ginni Thomas.

**A significant portion of Donors Trust's growing haul of contributions has come directly from Leonard Leo and his affiliated nonprofits.** Between 2020 and 2022, two organizations tied to Leo, Marble Freedom Trust, and the 85 Fund, contributed more than \$216 million to the donor-advised fund. **In 2022 alone, a \$92 million donation from the 85 Fund accounted for nearly a third of all contributions to Donors Trust** that year, underscoring the outsized influence that Leonard Leo—who has never held public office—has on American politics and society.

## Donors Trust—The Dark Money ATM Of The Right—Finances Hate Groups, White Nationalist Organizations, And 2020 Election Deniers

**Donors Trust—Dubbed The Dark Money ATM Of The Right—Is A Donor-Advised Fund Which Does Not Disclose The Identities Of Its Contributors.** “Donors Trust, also known as the “dark money ATM of the right,” ... Donor-advised funds such as Donors Trust, Fidelity Charitable and Vanguard Charitable effectively act as “pass-throughs” to shield the true source of funds, Anna Massoglia, editorial and investigations manager at OpenSecrets, told Salon. Major donors are relying on DAFs to give to groups advocating around divisive issues or with other controversial activities since the donor-advised fund can “act as a buffer” between the recipient and the donor.” [Salon, [12/10/23](#)]

**In 2022, Donors Trust Funneled \$257,600 To Six Organizations Designated As Hate Groups By The Southern Poverty Law Center, Including The VDARE Foundation And The Family Research Council.** “Donors Trust, also known as the “dark money ATM of the right,” funneled \$257,600 to six organizations that have been designated as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center, an Accountable.US review of Donors Trust’s 2022 tax filing revealed. The David Horowitz Freedom Center, an SPLC-designated anti-Muslim hate group, received the highest amount of donations totaling \$142,000, followed by The VDARE Foundation, a white nationalist hate group, which received \$34,500...No Left Turn in Education and the Center for Immigration Studies both received \$20,000 each while the Family Research Council pulled in \$11,100.” [Salon, [12/10/23](#)]

**Contributions From Donors Trust Have Gone To Groups That Promote The “Big Lie” Conspiracy Surrounding The 2020 Presidential Election Result.** “Some recent contributions to the Donors Trust have gone toward groups that pushed claims of election fraud before and after President Joe Biden defeated Trump in last year’s election. In 2019, the Donors Trust, sent donations to groups such as Turning Point USA, which is led by vocal Trump supporter Charlie Kirk; and the VDARE Foundation, which the Southern Poverty Law Center labeled a hate group.” [CNBC, [9/15/21](#)]

**Since 2019, Donors Trust Has Contributed More Than \$2.25 Million To Capital Research Center.**

Year	Amount	Purpose
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<a href="#">2019</a>	\$338,200	For general operations
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$30,000	For the area of highest need
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$400,000	For the CrowdSourcers project
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$1,721	To investigate and report on public advocacy organizations
<a href="#">2020</a>	\$362,450	For general operations
<a href="#">2021</a>	\$455,750	For general operations
<a href="#">2022</a>	\$150,000	\$75,000 for labor-related research and \$75,000 for general operations
<a href="#">2022</a>	\$517,250	For general operations
<b>TOTAL</b> :	<b>\$2,255,371</b>	

[Donors Trust, Form 990, 2019-2022]

- Capital Research Center Managed Ginni Thomas’s Group Crowdsourcers For Culture And Liberty Through An Arrangement Called “Fiscal Sponsorship.”** “The previously unreported donations to the fledgling group Crowdsourcers for Culture and Liberty were channeled through a right-wing think tank in Washington that agreed to serve as a funding conduit from 2019 until the start of last year, according to documents and interviews. The arrangement, known as a “fiscal sponsorship,” effectively shielded from public view details about Crowdsourcers’ activities and spending, information it would have had to disclose publicly if it operated as a separate nonprofit organization, experts said...In 2019, anonymous donors gave the think tank Capital Research Center, or CRC, \$596,000 that was designated for Crowdsourcers, according to tax filings and audits the think tank submitted to state regulators.” [The Washington Post, 3/28/23]

### **In The Past Five Years, Donors Trust’s Grantmaking Increased By 70%-- Reaching Close To A Quarter-Billion Dollars Annually...**

**Between 2018 And 2022, Donors Trust’s Growing Annual Haul Of Contributions Enabled The Organization’s Grantmaking To Increase By More Than 70%.**

Year	Total Contributions Received	Total In Grants Distributed
<a href="#">2018</a>	\$198,199,637	\$142,377,200
<a href="#">2019</a>	\$311,778,812	\$162,803,597
<a href="#">2020</a>	\$354,640,056	\$182,536,130
<a href="#">2021</a>	\$1,081,035,499	\$187,697,675
<a href="#">2022</a>	\$303,257,214	\$242,230,612
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,248,911,218</b>	<b>\$917,645,214</b>

[Donors Trust, Form 990, 2018-2022]

**...Thanks In Part To The Hundreds Of Millions Of Dollars Granted To Donors Trust By Leonard Leo's Dark-Money Nonprofit Network**

**Leonard Leo-Linked Nonprofits Have Contributed More Than \$216 Million To Donors Trust Since 2020.**

Leo-Linked Group	Financial Year	Amount Contributed To Donors Trust
The 85 Fund	<a href="#">2020</a>	\$12,482,846
The 85 Fund	<a href="#">2021</a>	\$71,145,000
The 85 Fund	<a href="#">2022</a>	\$92,000,000
Marble Freedom Trust	<a href="#">2020</a>	\$41,100,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$216,727,846</b>

- The 85 Fund Is Part Of Leonard Leo's Nonprofit Network That Is Currently Under Investigation By The Washington, D.C. Attorney General.** "Conservative judicial activist Leonard Leo's consulting firm received \$21 million in 2022 from a group that is a pillar of Leo's aligned nonprofit network, according to a new tax filing. That group, The 85 Fund, is part of an umbrella of nonprofits under investigation by the Washington, D.C. attorney general for potentially violating tax laws. Carrie Severino, a former law clerk to Justice Clarence Thomas, is a director of the group." [POLITICO, [11/28/23](#)]
- Leonard Leo Is The Chairman Of Marble Freedom Trust, Which Received An Unprecedented \$1.6 Billion Contribution In 2021.** "An elderly, ultra-secretive Chicago businessman has given the largest known donation to a political advocacy group in U.S. history — worth \$1.6 billion — and the recipient is one of the prime architects of conservatives' efforts to reshape the American judicial system, including the Supreme Court...Leo is the trustee and chairman of the Marble Freedom Trust." [ProPublica, [8/22/22](#)]

**In 2022 Alone, Contributions From Leonard Leo's Dark Money Network Accounted For Close To A Third Of All Contributions To Donors Trust**

**Donors Trust Collected More Than \$303 Million In Contributions During 2022.**

		Prior Year	Current Year
Revenue	<b>8</b> Contributions and grants (Part VIII, line 1h) .....	1,081,035,499.	303,257,214.
	<b>9</b> Program service revenue (Part VIII, line 2g) .....	0.	0.
	<b>10</b> Investment income (Part VIII, column (A), lines 3, 4, and 7d) .....	13,628,082.	19,787,816.
	<b>11</b> Other revenue (Part VIII, column (A), lines 5, 6d, 8c, 9c, 10c, and 11e) .....	0.	5,008.
	<b>12</b> Total revenue - add lines 8 through 11 (must equal Part VIII, column (A), line 12) .....	1,094,663,581.	323,050,038.

[Donors Trust, [Form 990](#), 2022]

**In 2022, The 85 Fund Contributed \$92 Million To Donors Trust, Accounting For More Than 30% Of All Contributions To The Donor-Advised Fund.**

		Recipient EIN	Amt. of cash	Amt. of non-cash asst.
<b>Name and address</b>	Donors Trust 1800 Diagonal Rd Ste 280 Alexandria, VA 22314	52-2166327	92,000,000	
<b>IRC code section</b>	501 c 3			
<b>Method of valuation</b>				
<b>Desc. of Non-Cash Asst.</b>				
<b>Purpose of grant</b>	General Support			

[85 Fund, [Form 990](#), 2022]

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