



**TESTIMONY FOR HEARING ON  
“GROWTH OF THE TAX-EXEMPT  
SECTOR AND THE IMPACT ON THE  
AMERICAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE”**

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*Presented to*

Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight  
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Committee: Good afternoon. My name is Stewart Whitson, and I am the Legal Director at the Foundation for Government Accountability (FGA).

FGA is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that seeks to enhance the lives of all Americans by improving welfare, workforce, health care, and election integrity policy at the state and federal levels.

During the 2020 election, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative donated more than \$400 million to fund election activities.<sup>1</sup>

Most of those funds, coined “Zuckerbucks,” were provided to the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), a left-leaning non-profit run by a former Obama Foundation fellow.<sup>2</sup> Marketed as money for purchasing personal protective equipment in response to COVID-19, the funds were instead used primarily to drive procedural changes and get-out-the-vote efforts that benefited the Left.

Groundbreaking research and analysis by my colleagues at FGA revealed large disparities in Zuckerbucks funding allocation. Counties won by President Biden in 2020 received significantly more in Zuckerbucks funding than counties won by former President Trump.<sup>3-4</sup> The infusion of cash into certain jurisdictions—those that leaned heavily Democrat—drove up voter turnout in blue districts and allowed partisanship to weasel its way into the one part of elections that is supposed to be non-partisan.<sup>5-6-7</sup> In other words, it appears that CTCL, a 501c3 organization, used Zuckerbucks to hijack and transform the government itself into a partisan get-out-the-vote tool.

Recognizing the danger posed by CTCL’s efforts, 27 states have passed Zuckerbucks bans, some bipartisan, prohibiting local governments from applying for, accepting, or spending any private funding for election administration. Unfortunately, CTCL seems to be actively working to sidestep these new state laws by rebranding itself as “the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence.”<sup>8</sup> According to an announcement made by CTCL, the new program will distribute at least \$80 million in funding across the country while providing “coaching” and other support to a select group of local election officials who pass a “verification and review process.”<sup>9-10</sup> CTCL appears to have abused its 501c3 tax-exempt status in 2020, and may be actively working to do so again in 2024.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, CTCL isn’t the only 501c3 group whose actions should draw serious concern from this committee. There is another group, Demos, that appears to be an even graver concern.

Back in March 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14019. We call this scheme “Bidenbucks” because it is Zuckerbucks on steroids. Instead of Mark Zuckerberg, it’s President Biden, and instead of \$400 million dollars, it is the unlimited power, resources, and reach of the federal government and its offices located in states across the country.

The order commands the head of every federal agency to develop a plan to do two things: Promote voter registration *and* promote voter participation.<sup>12</sup> The order also commands all federal agencies to solicit and support “approved” third-party organizations to allow them to use federal resources to register and mobilize the voters these groups target, and to do so on federal property located in every state.<sup>13</sup> Which groups will receive this special “approval?” We don’t know, because the Biden administration refuses to

disclose the list or even the criteria for approval, not only to FGA, but to the dozens of members of Congress who have demanded answers as well.

And, again, Demos, a 501c3 tax-exempt organization, is at the heart of this order—its creation *and* its implementation.<sup>14</sup> At the end of the day, this appears to be no more than a *targeted* get-out-the-vote scheme designed by the Left to benefit the Left, all paid for by federal taxpayers.

Fortunately, Bidenbucks has not gone unnoticed by Congress. In fact, one of the members of this committee, Congresswoman Claudia Tenney, has introduced legislation to defund the Bidenbucks Executive Order.<sup>15</sup> In addition, dozens of members from both the House and Senate have demanded transparency from the Biden administration, calling out Demos for its outsized role in what appears to be an unlawful, partisan effort to keep the current president’s political party in power.<sup>16-17-18-19</sup>

With that, I thank the Chairman for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

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<sup>1</sup> “Press Release: CTCL Receives Additional \$100M Contribution to Support Critical Work of Election Officials,” Center for Tech and Civic Life (2020), <https://www.techandcivicle.org/100m/>.

<sup>2</sup> Tiana Epps-Johnson, Center for Tech and Civic Life, <https://www.techandcivicle.org/team/tiana-epps-johnson/>.

<sup>3</sup> Hayden Dublois, “How ‘Zuckerbucks’ infiltrated and influenced the 2020 Florida election,” Foundation for Government Accountability (2021), <https://thefga.org/research/zuckerbucks-infiltrated-florida-election/>.

<sup>4</sup> Hayden Dublois and Jonathan Bain, “How ‘Zuckerbucks’ infiltrated and influenced the 2020 Iowa election,” Foundation for Government Accountability (2021), <https://thefga.org/research/zuckerbucks-iowa-election/>.

<sup>5</sup> Hayden Dublois and Tyler Lamensky, “Zuckerberg went down to Georgia: How Zuckerbucks influenced the Georgia elections,” Foundation for Government Accountability (2021), <https://thefga.org/research/zuckerbucks-influenced-georgia-elections/>.

<sup>6</sup> Alli Fick and Tyler Lamensky, “How Zuckerbucks infiltrated the Wisconsin election,” Foundation for Government Accountability (2021), <https://thefga.org/research/zuckerbucks-wisconsin-election/>.

<sup>7</sup> Trevor Carlsen, “Show Me the Zuckerbucks: Outside money infiltrated Missouri’s 2020 election,” Foundation for Government Accountability (2021), <https://thefga.org/research/show-me-the-zuckerbucks-outside-money-infiltrated-missouris-2020-election/>.

<sup>8</sup> Center for Tech and Civic Life, “CTCL launches the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence,” Center for Tech and Civic Life (2022), <https://www.techandcivicle.org/us-alliance-for-election-excellence-launch/>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, “A community of support focusing on the fundamentals of democracy,” U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence (2022), <https://www.electionexcellence.org/>.

<sup>11</sup> Foundation for Government Accountability, “New funding program launched by Center for Tech and Civic Life could sidestep state bans on private funding of local elections – Including bans on Zuckerbucks,” Foundation for Government Accountability (2022), <https://thefga.org/press/new-funding-program-launched-by-center-for-tech-and-civic-life-could-sidestep-state-bans-zuckerbucks/>.

<sup>12</sup> “Presidential Executive Order 14019, Promoting Access to Voting,” Federal Register, National Archives (March 7, 2021), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/03/10/2021-05087/promoting-access-to-voting>.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> Stewart Whitson, “Biden’s Unlawful Plan to Federalize Elections,” *The American Spectator* (October 22, 2021), <https://spectator.org/bidens-unlawful-plan-to-federalize-elections/>.

<sup>15</sup> “Congresswoman Tenney Introduces the Promoting Free and Fair elections Act,” Office of Rep. Claudia Tenney (2023), <https://tenney.house.gov/media/press-releases/congresswoman-tenney-introduces-promoting-free-and-fair-elections-act>.

<sup>16</sup> “Rep. Ted Budd Leads Coalition Calling For An Investigation Of Biden’s Executive Order On Voting,” Office of Rep. Ted Budd (2022), <https://budd.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=1357>.

<sup>17</sup> “Nine House Republican Committee Leaders Raise Concerns On Biden Administration Directing Federal Agencies To Engage In Voting Access & Registration Activities,” Committee on House Administration, Ranking Member Rodney Davis (2022), <https://republicans-cha.house.gov/media/press-releases/nine-house-republican-committee-leaders-raise-concerns-biden-administration>.

<sup>18</sup> “Rep. Norman Leads Letter Demanding the Department of Justice Disclose Its Plans to Carry Out President Biden’s Executive Order to ‘Promote Voter Registration and Voter Participation,’” Office of Rep. Ralph Norman (2022), <https://norman.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=1494>.

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<sup>19</sup> “Hagerty and Colleagues Call Out Biden for Ignoring Demands for Transparency on Taxpayer-Funded Voter-Mobilization Plans,” Office of Sen. Bill Hagerty (2023), <https://www.hagerty.senate.gov/press-releases/2023/11/29/hagerty-and-colleagues-call-out-biden-for-ignoring-demands-for-transparency-on-taxpayer-funded-voter-mobilization-plans/>.