

Mark Zuckerberg
1 Hacker Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

June 11, 2020

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

We are writing to urge you to shut down American Edge, a new political advocacy group that Facebook has [reportedly](#) launched to influence federal policy making.

Facebook is [already well represented in Washington, D.C.](#) and capable of advancing its views. It is the [biggest lobbyist of Silicon Valley companies](#), and [seventh biggest across all industries](#). Last year, Facebook spent [\\$16.7 million to hire 72 lobbyists](#), 93% of whom came through the revolving doors of government jobs. Its key advocacy staff are also revolving door employees, having previously served in top positions in the executive branch, independent agencies and Congress. As one of the world's largest corporations, Facebook effectively has limitless resources to lobby policy decision leaders, as well as influence public opinion.

Yet it is clear why Facebook is now seeking new opportunities to expand its political clout. For all its access and influence, the company faces threats of regulatory and legislative scrutiny because of its ongoing negligence of civil rights policy and threats to our democracy, repeated breaches of user privacy, and consistently new acts of monopolistic behavior.

Facebook now apparently believes it needs a well-funded front group to advocate for its interests – an entity that can make Facebook's arguments, but not in Facebook's name. This alone is antithetical to our democracy. Even more worrisome, American Edge is organized as a 501(c)(4) "social welfare" organization, meaning it can potentially be a conduit of secret money into our elections, an especially troubling prospect given Facebook's wealth.

It's time for Facebook to address the controversies in which it is embroiled by changing its policies, not by trying to undermine our democratic institutions. We call on you to disband American Edge immediately.

Sincerely,

Center for Digital Democracy
Center for Human Technology
DemCast USA
End Citizens United // Let America Vote Action Fund
Harrington Investments, Inc.
MapLight
National Association of Social Workers
Tech Transparency Project
UnChainDemocracy.org