



Big Tech Bankrolls the Sedition Caucus

Since 2016, Big Tech PACs and Employees Have Given Nearly \$2 Million to Lawmakers Who Voted to Challenge the Presidential Election

By Jane Chung and Mike Tanglis

January 21, 2021

Big Tech companies rushed to distance themselves from this month's attempted coup by "deplatforming" then-President Donald Trump and accounts and services, such as Parler, associated with the insurrection. Also in response to the insurrection, all of the Big Tech companies with corporate PACs (Amazon, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft) have announced a halt in their direct campaign contributions to Members of Congress. While Amazon [committed](#) to freezing spending on the Republican election objectors, the three other corporations have announced blanket bans: Facebook has [paused](#) PAC spending for at least this quarter, while Google and Microsoft [announced](#) indefinite pauses while they review their policies.

Additionally, CEOs of the five Big Tech companies (Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, and Microsoft) made both public and private statements addressing the insurrection. Apple's CEO, Tim Cook, [tweeted](#), "Today marks a sad and shameful chapter in our nation's history. Those responsible for this insurrection should be held to account." Mark Zuckerberg reportedly sent an email to Facebook employees, [writing](#), "The peaceful transition of power is critical to the functioning of democracy, and we need our political leaders to lead by example and put the nation first." Also in an internal staff email, Google CEO Sundar Pichai [wrote](#), "The lawlessness and violence occurring on Capitol Hill today is the antithesis of democracy and we strongly condemn it." Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella failed to provide original commentary, instead [retweeting](#) a statement from the Business Roundtable, an association of American CEOs.

Political action committees and employees of Big Tech companies have contributed nearly \$2 million to the 147 members of Congress who voted to challenge the electoral college results.

Yet for all their new-found eagerness to denounce the seditionists, Big Tech companies have in fact poured millions into their campaign coffers in recent years.

Big Tech Bankrolls the Sedition Caucus



Public Citizen analyzed contribution data from the [Center for Responsive Politics](#) and found that political action committees and employees of Big Tech companies have contributed nearly \$2 million since the 2016 election cycle to the 147 members of Congress who voted this month to challenge the electoral college slates of at least one state. Amazon and Google were the most generous givers, contributing \$565,000 and \$595,000 to the election objectors, respectively.

In addition, our analysis reveals that three of the companies have bankrolled an average of 73, or about 50% of these Members of Congress. Amazon tops the list, having supported 89 of the 147, 61%, of the disenfranchisers.

Three of the companies have bankrolled an average of 73, or about 50%, of these Members of Congress. Meanwhile, Amazon funded 89 of the 147, or 61%, of the disenfranchisers.

Key leaders of the “[sedition caucus](#)” that led the GOP charge to challenge election results are flush with cash from Big Tech. Senator Ted Cruz received funds from three out of the four corporate PACs¹. Representative Andy Biggs, who [reportedly](#) helped organize the rally that occurred moments before insurrectionists stormed the Capitol, has received support from all four Big Tech corporations’ PACs.

Big Tech’s pause in political spending is a nice start, but it’s not nearly enough. It’s time for Big Tech to shut down, once and for all, its political spending – to shut down its PACs permanently, to commit not to fund super PACs or Dark Money groups, and to disclose money it gives to trade associations that also fund these candidates.

¹ Apple is not included in this list because it does not have a PAC.

Big Tech Bankrolls the Sedition Caucus



Table I: Contributions by Big Tech Political Action Committees and employees to Members of Congress who voted to challenge the Electoral College vote, by corporation

(Includes contributions from 2016 to 2020 election cycles)

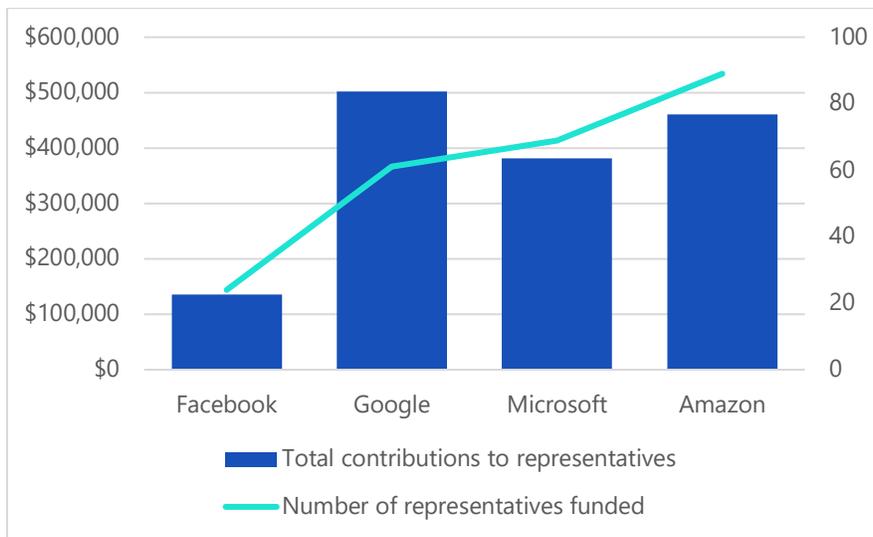
Corporation	From PAC	From employees	Total
Amazon	\$461,000	\$103,536	\$564,536
Apple	N/A*	\$77,292	\$77,292
Facebook	\$136,000	\$67,241	\$203,241
Google	\$502,000	\$92,721	\$594,721
Microsoft	\$381,568	\$123,786	\$505,354
Grand Total	\$1,480,568	\$464,576	\$1,945,144

*Note: Apple does not have a corporate PAC.

Source: Public Citizen's analysis of data from the [Center for Responsive Politics](#)



Graph I: Total contributions and number of representatives funded by Big Tech Political Action Committees and employees to Members of Congress who voted to challenge the Electoral College vote, by corporation
(Includes contributions from 2016 to 2020 election cycles)



Source: Public Citizen’s analysis of data from the [Center for Responsive Politics](#)