



## Google has funded Groups that Agree with the Anti-diversity Memo

Noah Kulwin

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On Monday, Google fired engineer James Damore for arguing in a memo widely circulated within the company that said women are less successful in Silicon Valley because of biological differences from men.

The memo has ignited a firestorm of controversy and a debate about culture wars, gender equality, and ideological diversity in Silicon Valley. In an email sent to employees, CEO Sundar Pichai said that that Damore's manifesto violated the company's Code of Conduct "by advancing harmful gender stereotypes in our workplace."

And yet for years Google has funded right-wing political groups and think tanks that say basically the same things as Damore's manifesto.

These groups — which Google has publicly listed as the recipients of donations — are part of a broader campaign that the Silicon Valley behemoth has pursued in Washington in order to cultivate political influence with both Democrats and Republicans. Eric Schmidt, the chairman of Google's parent company Alphabet and its unofficial ambassador to D.C., has long been close to leading Democrats, particularly in the Obama administration.

But with the election of Donald Trump and the resurgence of interest in antitrust regulation and enforcement in the U.S. and abroad, Google has been scrambling to make inroads with conservatives in power. Public disclosure forms show that Google spent \$5.93 million on lobbyists last quarter, a 40 percent increase from the previous year and more than any other individual corporation.

And increasingly, those dollars are going to Republicans, whose socially conservative policy agenda is at odds with much of what both Google employees and the companies profess to believe in.

As of June 2017, Google had given money to the American Enterprise Institute, the Cato Institute, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and both the Heritage Foundation and its lobbying arm Heritage Action. Google also operates a policy fellowship program that places fellows inside some of these institutions, such as Cato and AEI.

All these organizations have published work or employ people who advocate for policy based, in part, on the idea that biological differences between the sexes or racial groups significantly

explain the way society works, and can be used to understand — and even justify — existing patterns of discrimination in private life, politics, and the workplace.

“We work with a large number of groups across the ideological spectrum who take positions on issues like encryption, surveillance and internet regulation,” a Google spokesman said, in a statement provided to VICE New. “Of course we don’t agree with every position that every organization or scholar at these groups have ever stated on every issue. And they often don’t agree with us.”

The spokesman would not comment on funding of particular groups, and said Damore’s dismissal was an “internal workplace decision.”

While Google itself does not put out research papers or directly employ experts who make these arguments, it has good reason to make common cause with their backers. For years, Google has bankrolled academic research directly and given funding to academic centers, in addition to Washington think tanks. This also includes more left-leaning institutions such as the Center for American Progress and the New America Foundation.

Google claims much of this funding is in the spirit of support open academic inquiry, but the company has used academic research it has funded in defending its business practices to regulators.

This practice is pretty common across corporate America, but Google is ramping up its political engagement across the board. While the Silicon Valley giant had ties close enough to the Obama administration to warrant public scrutiny, it is scrambling to fortify those same connections on the right. And with more and more Democratic lawmakers beginning to question whether tech conglomerates have acquired their billions through anticompetitive practices, it makes sense that Google’s making sure it has Republican allies.

Google does not disclose the dollar amount of its advocacy and think tank funding, beyond what’s required by law for lobbyist, PAC, and candidate contributions. AEI, CEI, Cato and the Heritage Foundation all told VICE News that they do not discuss individual donations or their donor relationships. Heritage Action did not respond to a request for a comment.

Here are some examples of research or articles from each of the named organizations:

#### **AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE**

“But there remains a distributional difference in male and female characteristics that leads to a larger number of men with high visuospatial skills. The difference has an evolutionary rationale, a physiological basis, and a direct correlation with math scores.” – Charles Murray, AEI’s W.H. Brady Scholar (2005)

“Females who are gifted in math are often just as gifted in verbal expression, and that gives them career prospects that the gifted men don’t have. So my guess is that the girls with the talent for [Harvard University undergraduate introductory course] Math 55 are just too interested in other pursuits to spend most of their week on linear algebra.” – Christina Hoff Sommers, AEI resident scholar and “Factual Feminist” vlogger (2014)

## **COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE**

“Gender disparities in a major are not the product of sexism, but rather the differing preferences of men and women. The fact that engineering departments are filled mostly with men does not mean they discriminate against women anymore than the fact that English departments are filled mostly with women proves that English departments discriminate against men. The arts and humanities have well over 60 percent female students, yet no one seems to view that gender disparity as a sign of sexism against men.” – Hans Bader, CEI senior attorney (2012)

## **THE CATO INSTITUTE**

“The two main sources of the wage gap are 1) occupational choices (high-paying STEM fields, for instance, are more likely to be male and lower-paying jobs in education, female), and 2) hours of work.” – Kay Hymowitz, William E. Simon Fellow at the Manhattan Institute (2011)

## **THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

“Google is free to operate in accordance with its anti-science androgynous belief system. So, too, Americans who believe we are created male and female, and that male and female are created for each other, should be free to run their organizations in accordance with their beliefs.” – Ryan T. Anderson, Heritage senior research fellow (2017)

“[According to the theory of biological essentialism,] biological sex goes a long way in determining how societies conceive of gender, with perceptions of women as more passive and caring and less aggressive and violent than men(1), more sexually modest or less promiscuous than men(2), less physically powerful than men(3), and more interested in and affectionate with children than more daring, rough-and-tumble men(4), among a myriad of other differences.” – Scott Yenor, B. Kenneth Simon Center Visiting Fellow (2017)

## **HERITAGE ACTION**

“This bill affirms that when Congress passed civil rights law, the purpose was to protect against discrimination when it comes to a person’s objective biological sex, not a subjective, self-declared “gender identity ... Heritage Action supports the legislation, encourages Representatives and Senators to support it, and reserves the right to key vote in the future” – Heritage Action (2017)