



Google Spends Millions On Climate Denial

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Remember when Google was just a fledgling organization? Founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page had a motto for their young company: “Don’t be evil.” That mantra was directed mostly at Microsoft, which had monopolized the digital world up to the point and was accused by the United States government of persistent and pernicious antitrust violations.

That was then. This is now. Google has devoured petabytes of data, knows where everyone is all the time, who they talk to, and what they spend their money on. It dominates advertising and is raking in profits at a record pace. And now we find out the company that once wanted to do only good is a major contributor to organizations like the Competitive Enterprise Institute, which has aggressively pursued the rollback of Obama-era environmental protections and helped convince Donald Trump to abandon the Paris Agreement.

And who is behind the CEI? [*DeSmogBlog*](#) has the details. “The Competitive Enterprise Institute was founded in 1984 and describes itself as ‘a non-profit public policy organization dedicated to advancing the principles of limited government, free enterprise, and individual liberty.’” Do those words sound familiar to you? They should. They are the guiding principles of Charles Koch, who has profited handsomely from government regulation while steadfastly campaigning — in secret — to destroy all government regulations.

It is headed by Myron Ebell, notorious for his vituperative attacks on anyone who dares suggest an overheating planet is the result of human activity. Called “one of America’s most prominent climate-change skeptics” by the *Financial Times*, he served as the head of the alleged president’s transition team in charge of selecting people to run the EPA. America can thank Ebell for the loathsome Scott Pruitt and his equally loathsome successor, Andrew Wheeler.

CEI says its goal is to “build coalitions, joining with allies to advance specific issues at the state, national, and international levels.” Peek behind the curtain of that statement and you will find the same characters who front for the [**American Legislative Exchange Council**](#), an organization that works in the shadows to convince legislators to criminalize protests against fossil fuel projects and to impose onerous fees on electric car owners.

ExxonMobil has been one of CEI’s top funders, contributing at least \$2.1 million since 1997. Donors Trust, a creation of Charles Koch’s never ending campaign to subvert the US government, donated over \$4 million to CEI as of 2013. Donors Trust has been described as the “dark money ATM of the conservative movement” for its ability to take in funds from anonymous donors and distribute them to recipient organizations, claims *DeSmog Blog*.

CEI's mission statement on its website is revealing. "CEI's largest program takes on all the hard energy and climate issues. CEI questions global warming alarmism, makes the case for access to affordable energy, and opposes energy-rationing policies, including the Kyoto Protocol, cap-and-trade legislation, and EPA regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. CEI also opposes all government mandates and subsidies for conventional and alternative energy technologies."

This is the group that Google is blessing with its corporate largess?

Congresswoman Calls Out Google

Kathy Castor, a Congresswoman from Florida, has called out Google for supporting CEI and other groups in the Koch Brothers universe, such as the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation. She tells *The Guardian*, "It is hard to overstate the detrimental impact groups like CEI have had on the climate debate in the United States since the early days of the Kyoto Protocol. Because of their public and behind-the-scenes efforts to obfuscate and obstruct, we have lost critical time to cut greenhouse gas pollution and now face a shrinking window of opportunity to avert the worst impacts of climate change."

Google justifies its support for those climate change denying groups by saying it approves of their "strong technology policies" but not their stance on the climate crisis. "We've been extremely clear that Google's sponsorship doesn't mean that we endorse that organization's entire agenda — we may disagree strongly on some issues," a Google spokesperson told *The Guardian*. But Castor is having none of it. In a letter to Google CEO Sundar Pichai, she wrote, "It is impossible to separate your support for one sliver of CEI from the whole. Your financial contributions support the organization's infrastructure, augment its political influence, and, in turn, legitimize all of its activities — not just the ones you like."

Castor closed her letter by quoting from Google's own website, where it says the company was striving to "build sustainability into everything we do." In response, she said, "I urge you to apply this mantra when you make decisions about which think tanks and organizations to support in the future."

What's It All About?

What it comes down to is this. In the space of less than 20 years, Google has gone from game-changing upstart to a mainstream, risk adverse major American corporation interested primarily in preserving its hegemony over the tech world at all costs. And if that means crawling into bed with some of the worst climate deniers, so be it, just so long as government doesn't do anything to interrupt the flow of cash into its corporate coffers. Profits first. Principles? Who needs them? They are just something the company can trot out now and then when it's convenient to do so. "Don't be evil" has been forever banished from Google's thinking.

That attitude may come back to bite Google. Both **Elizabeth Warren** and Bernie Sanders have taken aim at the tech world, promising to reign in the digital giants like Google and Facebook if they are elected. The notion that tech can do no wrong may be changing in America as people begin to understand how deeply these companies have embedded themselves into our daily lives

and how aggressively they surveil our every move so they can sell information about us to advertisers — and Russian hackers.

Google Announces Quantum Supremacy

Google says it has created a new quantum computer that can do in a matter of minutes what today's fastest supercomputers would need 10,000 years to accomplish. It claims the breakthrough gives it “quantum supremacy,” according to a report in the *New York Times*. The details of the scientific breakthrough have been published in the journal *Nature*.

Scientists equate the Google achievement to the Wright brothers' first plane flight in 1903, calling it proof that something is really possible even though it may be years before it can fulfill its potential. “The original Wright flyer was not a useful airplane,” Scott Aaronson, a computer scientist at the University of Texas at Austin who reviewed Google's paper before publication, tells the *Times*. “But it was designed to prove a point. And it proved the point.”

While other tech companies like IBM are pooh-poohing the announcement, saying they also are hard at work on quantum computers, the reality is that China and the US are investing billions in quantum research. As the *Times* warns, such computers will be capable of breaking any cyber security codes currently imaginable, rendering state secrets mere trifles to be brushed aside by future hackers in the blink of an eye.

While some may hail the Google announcement, the implications for society are troubling at best. It doesn't take much imagination to foresee how such computing prowess could further increase the power of Google and its competitors over our lives. That's why concerns about its corporate values — as reflected in its financial support of the Competitive Enterprise Institute and similar organizations — are particularly relevant at this time.