



THURSDAY, MAY 03, 2012

Why Do Wealthy Gays Contribute To Anti-Gay Politicians? Meet Peter Thiel

A few days ago we looked at a gay activist, [Paul Morabito](#), once tapped as the chairman of the GLAAD Advisory Board, giving large sums of cash to virulent homophobes running for office. Why would a gay man or woman write checks to politicians obsessed, the way Buck McKeon and his wife are, with anti-gay fanaticism? Well, in Morabito's case, he's a lobbyist and went to lunch with McKeon, chairman of the dripping-with-goodies House Armed Services Committee, who "suggested" he max out to Mrs. McKeon's state Assembly campaign-- which Morabito did the following day. Two shady operators-- what I just described is illegal-- scratching each other's backs... gay rights be damned. This week we saw Rep. Mary Bono Mack [pleading with the LGBT community](#) not to "stereotype" Republican congressmembers (because a few of them were rooting for Chaz on *Dancing With the Stars*), even in the light of [vicious House Republican attacks](#) on equality. But Morabito's maxed out contribution to McKeon is chump change compared to the millions of dollars another gay donor has been funneling to anti-gay Republicans. Meet... Peter Thiel.

Never heard of him? In the new issue of *Out* they have a "Power List" which names the 65 most powerful gay people in America, #1 is Apple's [Tim Cook](#). #2 is TV superstar [Ellen DeGeneres](#). There are a smattering of congressmembers-- like Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), David Cicilline (D-RI), Jared Polis (D-CO) and Barney Frank (D-MA)-- but no *Republican* congressmembers. No Lindsey Graham (R-SC), no Miss McConnell (R-KY), no Aaron Schock (R-IL), no Mark Kirk (R-IL), no David Dreier (R-CA), no Patrick McHenry (R-NC), no Trent Franks (R-AZ), no Adrian Smith (R-NE), no... well you get the point; they'll *all* in the closet. We saw this week, in the [case of Richard Grenell](#) the mortal danger Republicans are in when they come out and admit who they are. But, there *are* Republicans-- though not elected ones-- on the list, from Matt Drudge and Shepard [Smith](#) to the #3 guy on the list, 44 year old San Francisco venture capitalist [Peter Thiel](#). Thiel isn't a household name-- not like other Power Listers from Rachel Maddow, Anderson Cooper, Jane Lynch, David Geffen and Suze Orman to Houston Mayor Annise parker and fashion designer Tom Ford. But he's a billionaire. And a major Republican donor.

In the past two years the German-born Thiel has ponied up \$2.6 million for [Endorse Liberty](#), the Ron Paul SuperPAC. But he's also given hundreds of thousands of dollars to more mundane, stridently anti-gay politicians and organizations, from the Wisconsin Republican Party (desperately seeking funds to keep Scott Walker in office), Paul Ryan's Prosperity PAC, the RNC and NRCC, Eric Cantor's Every Republican Is Crucial PAC to a rogue's gallery of anti-gay Republicans like Mike Coffman (R-CO), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Josh Mandel (R-OH), Rand Paul (R-KY), and, of course to Ryan and Cantor personally. And lots, at least \$3,000,000 so far.

A former derivatives trader, one of the lowest forms of humanity, Thiel eventually co-founded PayPal and hit the big time when eBay allowed its own heavy-handed, greed-driven attitude to utterly destroy Billpoint, its own PayPal predecessor. They then bought PayPal, making Thiel very rich-- his share was \$55 million-- and allowing him to invest half a million dollars in the start-up, Facebook, a stake now worth over \$2 billion.

Thiel lucked out with some savvy, gutsy investments but politically... oy veh. An unrepentant elitist of the Ancien Régime mold (with a white-jacketed butler) and devotee of Gordon Gekko, he's a modern day democracy hater.

Thiel's belief system is a mixture of unapologetic selfishness and economic Darwinism. In a personal statement produced last year for the Cato Institute, he announced: "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible." The public, he says, doesn't support unregulated, winner-take-all capitalism, and so he won't support the public any longer. "Since 1920, the vast increase in welfare beneficiaries and the extension of the franchise to women-- two constituencies that are notoriously tough for libertarians--have rendered the notion of 'capitalist democracy' into an oxymoron," he writes. If you want to go around saying that giving women the vote wrecked the country and still be taken seriously, I suppose it helps to hand out \$100 bills.

Thiel's one of the financial backers of GOProud but his record on LGBT issues is a little ambivalent.

In the 1995 book he-coauthored with David Sacks, *The Diversity Myth*, Thiel praised a renegade law student who shouted "Faggot! Faggot! Hope you die of AIDS!" outside an instructor's window:

"[The student's] demonstration directly challenged one of the most fundamental taboos: To suggest a correlation between homosexual acts and AIDS implies that one of the multiculturalists' favorite lifestyles is more prone to contracting the disease and that not all lifestyles are equally desirable."

Of course, Thiel was still closeted at the time-- he didn't come out until nine years ago, at age 35. In the *New Yorker* profile, Thiel says he now wishes he had never written about the episode and writer George Packer adds that, "the subject of homosexuality remains one that he doesn't much like to discuss."