

The Hewlett Foundation: The Liberal Mega-Funder You Should Watch Out For

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Many people are familiar with the biggest donors on the Left—George Soros and the Ford and Tides Foundations, to name a few. Add to the list one more mega-funder that you’ve probably never heard of but is quietly infiltrating the conservative movement: the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Increasingly Left Wing

As InfluenceWatch notes, the Hewlett Foundation was formed in 1966 in the San Francisco Bay Area by the co-founder of Hewlett-Packard, the computer manufacturer. The Hewlett family created it as a “charitable, religious, scientific, literary or educational foundation for the purpose of promoting the well-being of mankind,” endowing it with Hewlett-Packard stock.

From the start, the Hewlett Foundation supported genuinely charitable causes alongside an increasingly left-wing agenda, supporting both Stanford University and Planned Parenthood in its first year of giving.

By the late 1970s, the foundation had drastically expanded its funding strategy, creating an environmental program focused on giving to groups with “policy-oriented studies”—such as the Sierra Club, Center for Population Options, and the Urban Environment Foundation, which criticized the handling of toxic waste in the U.S. as “attempted genocide.” The Hewlett Foundation was one of the groups responsible for creating the ClimateWorks Foundation in 2008, a “pass-through” funder of global warming activists.

The Hewlett Foundation’s reach expanded in 2001 with the death of William Hewlett, who bequeathed \$8.5 billion to the foundation. Unsurprisingly, it has since become one of the largest donors on the Left.

Funding Conservative Infiltrators

More recently, the Hewlett Foundation has assumed a quiet role as the premier donor to groups infiltrating the conservative movement.

I've documented the huge rivers of cash flowing from Hewlett to anti-Trump lobbying groups and the eco-Right—global warming advocates posing as “free market conservatives” while pushing decidedly statist policies such as carbon taxes and government subsidies for wind and solar power.

Perhaps the most prominent pseudo-conservative on the list is Bill Kristol, the de facto head of the increasingly leftist NeverTrump movement. Kristol's group, Defending Democracy Together, has received grants from Hewlett, liberal mega-donor Pierre Omidyar (founder of eBay), and the “dark money” network run by Arabella Advisors.

Hewlett is also one of the biggest funders of the Niskanen Center, a libertarian-turned-liberal breakaway from the Cato Institute that pushes shoddy global warming theory and George Soros' anti-free-market “open society” ideology. In 2017, Hewlett money accounted for roughly *one quarter* of Niskanen's total revenues.

In 2018, Hewlett gave \$500,000 in two grants to Niskanen. One grant was tagged for its “climate policy and litigation program.” That money subsidized Niskanen's *pro bono* legal services to two Colorado jurisdictions in their lawsuit against oil companies ExxonMobil and Suncor for supposedly damaging the local environment. The case was trumpeted by the Sierra Club, 350.org, and Earth Guardians and encouraged by EarthRights International, a left-wing litigation nonprofit that offered the jurisdictions free legal representation—hardly “free market” organizations.

Niskanen Center founder Jerry Taylor and David Bookbinder, its chief counsel and a veteran global warming litigator, even authored a piece entitled “Oil Companies Should be Held Accountable for Climate Change.” In it they blamed the oil producers for “contribut[ing] to global warming” and “increas[ing] the number and severity of wildfires, droughts, and flash flooding.”

In 2018, Hewlett granted \$250,000 to the Stand Up Republic Foundation, run by NeverTrump “conservative” and failed 2016 presidential hopeful Evan McMullin with his running mate, Mindy Finn. In 2017, Stand Up Republic and the left-wing Protect Democracy Project co-published *The Republic at Risk*, a report that accuses President Trump of authoritarianism.

I've also reported on Stand Up Republic's efforts to dismantle America's electoral system with its own set of “reforms”—which are suspiciously close to the Democrats' For the People Act (H.R. 1), which would require states use California-style “independent” commissions when redrawing their congressional maps and institute automatic voter registration.

Then there's the R Street Institute, which portrays itself as staunchly conservative yet supports a carbon tax and the wholesale adoption of vote-by-mail schemes—a surefire way to introduce ballot fraud and rig elections in favor of Democrats. There's no doubt that R Street means well, but the millions of dollars it has accepted from the Hewlett Foundation in recent years make it difficult to take these policies seriously.

Don't Mistake the Left for the Right

There's nothing conservative about the Hewlett Foundation, so it's reasonable to ask whether these conservative groups that accept huge donations from Hewlett have been compromised. These organizations can call themselves whatever they wish, but if they take the Left's money to push the Left's agenda, they *aren't* conservative.