



Conservative group pressuring lawmakers with financial ties to tech giants

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The conservative group American Principles Project is putting pressure on Republicans to be wary of groups that have financial ties with tech giants, according to a letter published Monday.

The group warns congressional Republicans to be cautious about meeting with organizations that are accepting funds from the Silicon Valley giants.

The letter is hinged on the narrative conservatives have been pushing that tech giants are censoring content with an anti-conservative bias, though there is a lack of evidence to back up those claims.

“Each and every year, Big Tech is spending incalculable sums of money to launder its worldview, one that sacrifices American sovereignty and eliminates individual rights, through a network of seemingly disinterested ‘conservative’ advocacy groups. Alas, it is hardly surprising then that as the threats to free speech online have grown, so too have the checks written by Big Tech,” Jon Schweppe, the group's director of policy and government affairs, wrote in the letter.

He specifically calls out Facebook and Google. Both companies back right-leaning think tanks and advocacy groups including the Cato Institute and Americans for Tax Reform.

“Make no mistake, a meeting with an organization that takes notable sums of money from Google is no different than a meeting with a member of Google’s Public Policy team,” Schweppe wrote.

The letter does not go so far as to call for Republicans to stop meeting with the companies or groups that accept their funding entirely, but rather to “carefully consider your interactions with Big Tech-funded groups” especially when discussing issues related to content moderation and antitrust.

The letter was first reported by Axios.

The pressure comes after seven House Republicans, led by the ranking member of the House Judiciary antitrust subcommittee, Rep. Ken Buck (Colo.), in April pledged to reject donations from Facebook, Google, Amazon, Apple and Twitter.

But some Republicans, including five of those who signed on to the pledge, are not eligible for donations from some of the tech giants, including Facebook and Google, because they challenged the certification of election results to confirm President Biden’s win ahead of the deadly insurrection at the Capitol.

Facebook and Google have paused donations to the Republicans who challenged the election results.