



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on April 19, 2022

“Zuck Bucks 2.0” Launching as Facebook CEO Zuckerberg Continues Election Meddling

After multiple reports of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg using his fortune to skew elections across the country in 2020 — and a series of investigations which led to blocking “Zuck Bucks” from influencing future elections — the nonprofit that funneled most of the \$350 million from Zuckerberg into those elections says it will not repeat the practice in the 2022 midterms. But that does not mean that “Zuck Bucks” are out of play.

As the Associated Press [reported](#):



AP Images
Mark Zuckerberg

The nonprofit that distributed most of the \$350 million in donations from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to election offices in 2020 said Monday that it won't disburse similar donations this year after backlash from conservatives suspicious that the contributions tilted the outcome of the presidential race toward Joe Biden.

While this news may seem — at first blush — to indicate that Zuckerberg is out of the election-tampering business following a rash of investigations in states across the country, the AP piece goes on to explain:

Instead, the Center for Technology and Civic Life is launching a different program. Dubbed the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, the \$80-million, five-year effort is intended to create a network for the nation's thousands of local election officials, who can apply for aid to improve their technology and processes.

“Unfortunately, years of underinvestment means many local election departments often have limited capacity and training. The U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence is bringing together world-class partners so that local election officials no longer have to go it alone,” said Tiana Epps-Johnson, CTCL's executive director, who announced the new program at the TED2022 conference.

Appearing to take a cue from George Soros — who has been found to pour millions of dollars through layers of funneling before it reaches liberal causes and organizations — Zuckerberg is not getting out of the election-tampering business; instead he appears to be simply adding another layer of obfuscation to his efforts.



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During the 2020 elections — which led to Joe Biden’s unlikely victory — Zuckerberg was involved in financial activities that [at least one state investigation deemed a violation of election bribery laws](#). In Wisconsin (as in other states), Zuckerberg poured money solely into Democratic strongholds. The “donations” were so hinky that retired Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Michael Gableman was appointed as special counsel to head an investigation. That investigation [found](#) that “numerous questionable and unlawful actions of various actors in the 2020 election” amounted to election tampering.

As a result of that and similar investigations, a slew of states have moved to ban private funding of elections, according to [a report by the Capital Research Center](#) (CRC). As CRC wrote:

Private financing of government election offices under the guise of COVID-19 relief skewed voter turnout in the 2020 election and may have tipped the presidential election to Joe Biden.

The chief culprit was Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who poured \$350 million into one sleepy nonprofit, the Center for Technology and Civic Life (CTCL). CTCL then distributed grants to hundreds of county and city elections officials in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

Despite its claims that the grants were strictly for COVID-19 relief, not partisan advantage, the data show otherwise. CRC research into grants distributed in key states — Arizona and Nevada, Texas, Michigan and Wisconsin, Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Georgia — has documented their partisan effects. We have also catalogued our major findings at InfluenceWatch.

That report includes an editor’s note on states banning “Zuck Bucks” and similar practices. That editor’s note states:

June 22, 2021: Updated to include new states’ legislation and the current status of all known bills related to banning private funding of elections. July 12: Updates to Louisiana, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. August 16, 2021: Added Ohio and Arkansas. January 28, 2022: Added new vetoes, updated news articles across the board, removed Iowa, which did not restrict “Zuck bucks.” February 23: Updated Wisconsin. March 3: Added Minnesota. March 10: Re-added Iowa’s new bill prohibiting private funding; updated Indiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Virginia successful bans. March 14: Updated Alabama with new bill & passage. March 17: Updated South Dakota. March 24: Kentucky successful ban. April 1: West Virginia ban. April 11: Alabama successful ban, Wisconsin Gov. Evers’ second veto. April 13: Updated new Pennsylvania legislation progress.

And AP — jettisoning any pretense of journalistic integrity — reports:

The 2020 effort by Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, amid the COVID-19 pandemic fueled conservative anger and distrust of the presidential election outcome. At least eight GOP-controlled states passed laws last year banning private donations to election offices in reaction to Zuckerberg’s donations. Suspicion that the contributions — routinely referred to as “Zuckerbucks” by conservatives — helped Biden, a Democrat, has become a staple



among those who believe in former President Donald Trump's election lies.

And while the headline for that AP report claims, "Zuckerberg money won't be in next round of aid for elections," the article actually shows that Zuckerberg-funded CTCL is a *major player* in such funding moving forward. The Associated Press is merely carrying water for the next round of "Zuck Bucks" and is doing so without anything approaching journalistic integrity.

So, even with major media big hitters such as the Associated Press running interference by lumping well-established facts (Zuckerberg poured his "grant" money into Democrat strongholds to bolster Democrats' chances of success) along with "former President Donald Trump's election lies," Zuckerberg still found himself and his efforts under investigation. And the outcome of many of those investigations was that his direct efforts have been banned in at least eight states and counting.

Moving forward, the Big Tech master appears to have learned from his mistakes and seems ready to launch "Zuck Bucks 2.0" to continue tampering with elections while hoping to insulate himself from any consequences for doing so.

Under the question, "Who is funding this work?," the FAQ page for the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence states:

Introduced to the world at TED2022 and with funding catalyzed by The Audacious Project, the Alliance is a five-year, \$80 million program to envision, support, and celebrate excellence in U.S. election administration.

Launched in April 2018, The Audacious Project is a collaborative funding initiative that's catalyzing social impact on a grand scale. Housed at TED, the nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading, and with support from leading social impact advisor The Bridgespan Group, The Audacious Project convenes funders and social entrepreneurs with the goal of supporting bold solutions to the world's most urgent challenges. The funding collective is made up of respected organizations and individuals in philanthropy, including the Skoll Foundation, Virgin Unite, The Valhalla Charitable Foundation, ELMA Philanthropies and more. The Audacious Project works with the Science Philanthropy Alliance to identify and vet high-quality basic science projects. Each year The Audacious Project supports a new cohort. The 2021-2022 recipients are The Center for Tech and Civic Life, ClimateWorks: Drive Electric, Code for America, Glasswing International, The International Refugee Assistance Project, myAgro, Noora Health, The Tenure Facility, and Woodwell Climate Research Center.

And while the alliance has invited "all U.S. election departments" to apply to become a U.S. Center for Election Excellence," there is a selection process. As the FAQ page explains:

All U.S. local election departments are invited to be a Center for Election Excellence. Local election departments should let the Alliance know if they are interested in being a Center by Friday, May 6th. After a verification and review process, some election departments may be asked for additional information and receive an invitation to an informational session.

And:



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All U.S. local election departments are invited to be a Center for Election Excellence. The 2022 cohort will be selected based on their:

- Excitement and willingness to participate in the program
- Commitment to improve upon practices and procedures aimed at enhancing the voter, poll worker, and staff experiences
- Commitment to being part of a learning cohort, sharing materials among cohort members, and providing input

Given the liberal bent of CTCL and others involved in doling out “Zuck Bucks 1.0,” the likelihood of an election department in a Republican stronghold making it through that process is slim at best. While there may be a few “token” GOP-controlled departments, it is a foregone conclusion that the lion’s share of such departments will be blue through and through.

As multiple states ban “Zuck Bucks” interference in the election process, Zuckerberg and his accomplices appear to be simply redrawing the lines and pressing forward with just enough adjustment to navigate the law regarding election tampering. And with millions of dollars to provide technology and training, “Zuck Bucks 2.0” threatens to be even worse than the original.



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