

Wyoming Secretary of State

Chuck Gray



October 2, 2024

Via Email

Re: *Danger of Private, Potentially Foreign Funding of Election Administration, Center for Tech and Civic Life Presence in Wyoming*

Dear Wyoming County Clerks:

Last August, I sent a letter to your offices warning against any attempts made by third parties to fund the administration of elections in Wyoming, and Wyoming's unique vulnerability as one of the states without a ban on private funding of election administration, or Zuck Bucks.¹ My letter followed the troubling instances of private funding of election administration in 2020 by groups such as the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) and the Center for Election Innovation and Research, widely reported as pouring hundreds of millions of dollars in "Covid Relief" grants into local election offices across the country, a large portion of which went toward massive electioneering efforts that had nothing to do with COVID-19.²

As I stated in my letter last August, these grants are also deeply disturbing given the capacity for them to expose states like Wyoming to funding streams linked to potentially foreign actors. For example, Swiss Billionaire Hansjörg Wyss, who as a foreign national is otherwise prohibited from donating to candidates or committees, has steered hundreds of millions of dollars to the Sixteen Thirty Fund and the New Venture Fund, which gave millions to CCTL.

I was deeply troubled by the presence of CTCL at the Wyoming Association of County Officers meeting in Rock Springs last week. Despite many in the media who have claimed there is no presence by these groups in Wyoming, CTCL's presence in Rock Springs only demonstrates that they are targeting Wyoming. CTCL's presence is especially concerning given the recent launch of its "2024 Rural and Nonmetro Election Infrastructure Grants," which are aimed to provide this very troubling, problematic funding to local election offices in rural areas around the country. According to CTCL's own website, these grants will only be extended to jurisdictions, like Wyoming, who have not passed legislation banning the private funding of election

¹ Andrew Mark Miller, *Wyoming Secretary of State warns of elections' vulnerability to foreign money: 'Deeply disturbing,'* FOX NEWS, August 14, 2023, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/wyoming-secretary-state-warns-elections-vulnerability-foreign-money-deeply-disturbing>.

² Parker Thayer, Hayden Ludwig, *Which States did CTCL Flood with "Zuck Bucks"?*, CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER, January 21, 2022, <https://capitalresearch.org/article/which-states-did-ctcl-flood-with-zuck-bucks/>; Hayden Ludwig, *BREAKING: "Zuck Bucks" Pushing Progressive Policy in Elections Offices*, CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER, January 20, 2023, <https://capitalresearch.org/article/breaking-zuck-bucks-pushing-progressive-policy-in-elections-offices/>.

administration.³ The lack of a statutory ban on Zuck Bucks has made Wyoming particularly vulnerable. As I said to you last week, I have serious concerns with CTCL's presence and with its solicitation of county clerks.

During the 2023 Interim, I requested the Joint Corporations Committee of the Wyoming Legislature draft a bill to join the 28 other states that have banned Zuck Bucks. My administration worked with the committee to draft this bill and it passed in committee during the interim meetings by an overwhelming margin. However, House Bill 42 was then defeated by a troubling tabling motion in the House Corporations Committee during the 2024 Legislative Session.⁴ Given the evolving tactics of groups like CTCL and their history of influencing election administration across the country, as well as Wyoming's lack of a statutory ban on private funding of election administration, Wyoming is particularly vulnerable.

Those in the media have repeatedly shouted my warnings down, citing the common trope that "*this doesn't happen in Wyoming.*" CTCL's presence shows once again, that the media is wrong. I feel it is my duty as Secretary of State to warn all 23 county clerks about this situation, including about CTCL's background and track record. While I will continue to advocate for legislative action banning the private funding of election administration, Wyoming's current vulnerability and CTCL's troubling presence demonstrate the need for continuing vigilance and the need to take action banning these groups attempting to influence our elections. Should any third-party entity or organization solicit county clerks to fund election administration, I ask that you please notify me immediately for further investigation.

Sincerely,



Chuck Gray
Wyoming Secretary of State

³ *2024 Rural and Nonmetro Election Infrastructure Grants*, Center for Tech and Civic Life, <https://www.techandciviclelife.org/our-work/election-officials/grants/2024grants/>.

⁴ HB0042 – Prohibition on private funds for conducting elections, 24LSO-0092, 2024 Legislative Session, <https://wyoleg.gov/Legislation/2024/HB0042>.