

**SPECIAL REPORT:**

# CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATORS & BIG TECH:

**How the revolving door, investment holdings, and campaign cash undermine funding for antitrust enforcement**

Senate and House Appropriations leaders and their staff see campaign contributions, stock gains, and lobbying jobs from giant tech corporations like Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple—while cutting funding for the Justice Department’s Antitrust Division

**APRIL 2024**

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# INTRODUCTION

**America counts on federal regulators to enforce the laws that protect us from abuse by Big Tech, Big Finance, and other giant corporate interests.**

Companies like Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple use their market power to raise prices for consumers, lock us into their products and services, and push smaller competitors out of the market.

**Under President Biden, the Department of Justice’s Antitrust Division has greatly stepped up its investigation and enforcement work.** The Antitrust Division is one of the key weapons in the country’s regulatory arsenal, responsible for dozens of lawsuits and civil actions every year that keep giant corporations from violating antitrust and consumer protection laws and regulations.

**But doing this takes money. And this year, members of the Senate and House are making it harder for the Antitrust Division (ATR) to access the funding it needs to do its job.** The Senate Appropriations Committee cut a deal with big corporate interests in the House, and slashed the Antitrust Division’s dedicated funding stream, which has been in place for more than 30 years. This cuts the Division’s capacity, effectively shielding monopolists against investigation and enforcement and leaving the public open to corporate abuse.<sup>1</sup> The ATR actually saves money for Americans by holding corporations accountable for wrongdoing—as they did in 2022, when the DOJ alleged three poultry processors conspired to suppress worker pay, resulting in \$84.8 million in restitution to the poultry workers.<sup>2</sup>

**Leaders of the powerful Appropriations Committees shouldn’t be meddling in antitrust funding decisions—because they and their staff members personally benefit from their relationships with the same companies the Antitrust Division is working to regulate.**

On the Appropriations Committees, staff move in and out through the revolving door, moving directly into Congressional jobs from jobs at the very same companies that antitrust investigators are targeting, where they can use their Hill access to advocate for their former employers; and then moving back out into industry positions, from which they lobby the very same Senators and Representatives they used to work for.

Congressional leaders like Sens. Jeanne Shaheen (R-NH), Patty Murray (D-WA), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Brian Schatz (D-HI), and Reps. Kay Granger (R-TX) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), have personal conflicts, too. They **hold stock in the companies that benefit when they cut the Antitrust Division’s budget** and make money when those companies profit. They **receive campaign cash and trips** from Big Tech, huge defense contractors, financial giants, and more. Some are even making decisions that help their family and friends, potentially in violation of ethics policies and the law.

1. For more about the antitrust enforcement budget tug-of-war in Congress, see the [Appendix](#).
2. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-files-lawsuit-and-proposed-consent-decrees-end-long-running-conspiracy>

# 1. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST EVERYWHERE

Appropriations leaders wield enormous power. But with power comes responsibility—or, at least, it should.

The Senate and House Appropriations Committees are the most powerful committees in Congress, because they have significant leverage over how federal funds are spent.

Their leaders and senior members exert an enormous amount of personal weight in the budget process, and, through the budget, influence all the workings of government. People like **Sens. Patty Murray** (D-WA) and **Susan Collins** (R-ME), Chair and Vice-Chair of Senate Appropriations, hold sway over what comes out of their committee, as do **Reps. Kay Granger** (R-TX) and **Rosa DeLauro** (D-CT), Chair and Ranking Member of House Appropriations, over their own. Other leaders like **Sen. Jeanne Shaheen** (R-NH), Chair of Senate Appropriations's Commerce subcommittee, **Sen. Brian Schatz** (D-HI), a subcommittee member, and **Hal Rogers** (R-KY), Chair of the counterpart House subcommittee—both of which oversee Justice Department funding—have their own power.

And, of course, others have influence over the budget, too: **Sen. Chuck Schumer** (D-NY) determines what legislation moves through the Senate. Within the executive branch, the **Office of Management and Budget** staff help control the mechanics of the budget process.

Given that their power is so broad, it's critically important that these legislative leaders and government employees keep themselves entirely free of even a hint of bias, corruption, or self-dealing. Unfortunately, even as they are intervening to cut funding for antitrust enforcement against Big Tech and other corporate giants, they and their staff are making money, collecting campaign contributions, and building their corporate networks from those very same companies—putting their professionalism and even their ethics in doubt.

## 2. STAFF MOVE IN AND OUT OF CONGRESSIONAL JOBS, REPRESENTING BIG TECH AND INDUSTRY GIANTS ALL THE WHILE

Big Tech plants their own lobbyists in staff positions on Appropriations and other powerful committees, and in budget-related government positions. While they're there, the companies host trips for them—paid for by the public—where they attempt to influence the direction of policy. And when those staff leave their government jobs, the same Big Tech companies and industry giants the government is trying to regulate snap them back up as lobbyists again.

### > Giant corporations plant friendly lobbyists inside Senate and House committees, where they can influence the course of policy legislation and spending bills.

**BRIAN DANER** was a lobbyist for the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** in 2018. By 2023, he was a Counsel/Professional Staff Member for Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) on the House Appropriations Commerce subcommittee, which oversees the Department of Justice budget.<sup>3</sup>

**JO ECKERT** lobbied for AT&T in 2013. By 2023, she was a professional staff member on the Senate Appropriations Committee.<sup>4</sup>

**VIRAJ MIRANI** lobbied for **Google** from 2006 through 2010. By 2023, he was a GOP clerk on the Senate Appropriations Committee.<sup>5</sup>

**KARA MARCHIONE** lobbied for **Microsoft**, then worked at Appropriations, then left and moved to the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**.<sup>6</sup>

3. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/197174/Brian\\_R\\_Daner.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/197174/Brian_R_Daner.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/236527/name/Brian\\_R\\_Daner/by/lobbyist.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/236527/name/Brian_R_Daner/by/lobbyist.html); accessed 3/22/24
4. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/2707/Josephine\\_Eckert.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/2707/Josephine_Eckert.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/144119/name/Josephine\\_Eckert/by/lobbyist.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/144119/name/Josephine_Eckert/by/lobbyist.html); accessed 3/22/24
5. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/92049/Viraj\\_M\\_Mirani.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/92049/Viraj_M_Mirani.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/112215/name/Viraj\\_M\\_Mirani/by/lobbyist.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/112215/name/Viraj_M_Mirani/by/lobbyist.html); accessed 3/22/24
6. [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/205956/name/Kara\\_Ann\\_Marchione/by/lobbyist.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/205956/name/Kara_Ann_Marchione/by/lobbyist.html); <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kara-marchione-6165025b>; accessed 3/25/24

> **While working in Congress, staffers are jetted around and wined and dined at Big Tech-sponsored events to discuss their work—policy issues that concern Big Tech.**

**MICROSOFT:** In 2022, **Sen. Susan Collins** sent Michael Mets, a legislative assistant in her office, on a junket to Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Washington. Her office described the trip as follows: “Microsoft is organizing this trip to highlight innovation, showcasing emerging technologies, and discuss policy issues important to the technology sector”—including regulatory issues that could be affected by budget decisions made by the Senate Appropriations Committee. While there, Mets spent two nights in the Hyatt Regency; dined at “gastrotavern” Black Bottle, where a plate of short ribs goes for \$39; and met with Frank Cavaliere, Microsoft’s General Manager of Congressional Affairs, and with Chan Park, Senior Director, Government Affairs.<sup>7</sup>

**BIG TECH FRONT GROUPS:** In 2023, **Sen. Patty Murray’s** legislative aide Maryana Sawaged took a three-day trip to Silicon Valley courtesy of the Information Technology & Innovation Foundation, a think tank founded by lobbyists for hardware and software companies like Cisco, Dell, eBay, Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Oracle SAP, and Sun. “Big IT vendors are tearing a page out of the right-wing playbook by establishing their own think tank,” said reports upon its launch. Sawaged stayed at the Wild Palms Hotel in Sunnyvale, with an “open-air, retro island style vibe,” “exquisite mosaics,” and handcrafted furnishings,” and joined dozens of Congressional legislative and policy staffers on an escorted corporate tour, where she was “educated” on topics such as “Google’s perspective on what an effective AI regulatory framework would look like.”<sup>8</sup>

**TRIP AFTER TRIP FOR SCHATZ STAFFERS:** Senior staff for Sen. Brian Schatz have traveled to Aspen, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and New York with Big Tech sponsorship, on trips that involved policy discussions with executives from Amazon, Apple, Google, and Facebook:

- Sen. Schatz’s Senior Counsel for Technology and Communications Policy A.J. Burton attended a congressional trip to Aspen sponsored by the Big Tech-funded *Technology Policy Institute*, where he met with executives from Google, Amazon, Apple, and the CTIA.<sup>9</sup>
- His Chief of Staff Eric Einhorn attended a congressional trip to NYC sponsored by the Interactive Advertising Bureau—an organization supported by Amazon, Meta, and Google—in 2018.<sup>10</sup>
- Schatz staffers also attended the Consumer Technology Association’s annual blockbuster CES conference in Las Vegas in 2023, 2020, 2019, and 2018;<sup>11</sup> took paid trips to Los Angeles sponsored by the CTIA in 2018 and 2019;<sup>12</sup> and participated in paid trips sponsored by the *Global Women’s Innovation Network*, an organization led by policy leaders from the CTIA, Google, and Meta, in 2019 and 2016.<sup>13</sup>

7. [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_54528.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_54528.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
8. <https://gifftrule-disclosure.senate.gov/media/2023/pjDdVegyaUuTA3k6CbLPRR.pdf>; <https://www.informationweek.com/it-infrastructure/big-it-takes-step-to-influence-tech-policy-in-u-s/>; <https://www.google.com/publicpolicy/transparency>; <https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/california/jdv-wild-palms-hotel/sjcw>; accessed 3/20/24
9. [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_55663.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_55663.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
10. [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_54667.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_54667.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
11. [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_51585.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_51585.pdf); [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_49278.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_49278.pdf); [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_47225.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_47225.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
12. [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_51330.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_51330.pdf); [https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip\\_48957.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/pdf/trip_48957.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
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> **And over and over, former Appropriations staff, staff for these Senators themselves, and budget staff walk out the revolving door from their government jobs and into lobbying jobs and leadership positions at Big Tech companies and industry giants.**

*Stacy Rich*, Appropriations Chair **Sen. Patty Murray's** Leadership Staff Director, went on to lobby for **Google** on issues such as cyber security.<sup>14</sup> *Rick Disimone*,<sup>15</sup> her former Chief of Staff, became a **Google** lobbyist, too, as did Staff Assistant *Katherine Dapper*,<sup>16</sup> Legislative Correspondent *Jessica Lawrence-Vaca*, and Communications Director *Todd Webster*.<sup>17</sup> *Zach Mallove*,<sup>18</sup> her Policy Advisor, and Staff Assistant *Michael Bain*<sup>19</sup> both went on to lobby for the Information **Technology Industry Council**. Legislative Director *Ben McMakin*<sup>20</sup> lobbied for **Amazon** and **TechNet**; Staff Assistant *Mariana Acuña Delgado*<sup>21</sup> lobbied for the **Computer & Communications Industry Association** specifically on antitrust legislation that Sen. Murray declined to co-sponsor.

*Robert Diznoff*, Legislative Director for Sen. **Jeanne Shaheen**—Chair of the Commerce Subcommittee of Senate Appropriations—walked out of her office in 2019 and right into a public policy position at **Amazon**. During the time Diznoff lobbied for Amazon, the company spent \$40,500,000 on lobbying.<sup>22</sup>

*Melika Carroll* went from serving as policy advisor to **Sen. Brian Schatz**, a member of Sen. Shaheen's subcommittee, to a Senior Vice President for Global Government Affairs role at the **Internet Association**, where she lobbied for Big Tech companies.<sup>23</sup> *John Branscome* served as subcommittee chief counsel and staff director for Sen. Schatz from 2016 to 2021, then became public policy director at **Meta**, where he lobbied on cybersecurity and content policy.<sup>24</sup> *Christi Barnhart*, once senior counsel for technology and communications policy for Sen. Schatz, is now a Senior VP of Government Affairs for the **Entertainment Software Association**, which represents companies like **Amazon**.<sup>25</sup> *Chris Blackburn*, Sen. Schatz's former senior advisor for climate and energy, became head of U.S. climate policy at Amazon.<sup>26</sup> Kayla Gardner, one of his former law clerks, moved to a government affairs job at the Wireless Infrastructure Association, then to a similar job at Google.<sup>27</sup>

> **A dozen former staffers for other Senators on the Appropriations Commerce subcommittee moved to industry lobbying positions, or from industry into Senate positions:**

**SEN. JACK REED** (D-RI): Former senior policy advisor *Jesus Aaron Hernandez* became a public policy manager at **Amazon**.<sup>28</sup>

**SEN. CHRIS COONS** (D-DE): Former chief of staff *Todd Webster* later lobbied on behalf of **Google** at Cornerstone Government Affairs.<sup>29</sup>

**SEN. JOE MANCHIN** (D-WV): Former legislative correspondent *Robert Diznoff* became **Amazon's** Head of External Affairs. Sen. Manchin's former PAC advisor *Dan Turrentine* became Vice President of Government Relations at **TechNet**.<sup>30</sup>

14. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/447/Stacy\\_L\\_Rich.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/447/Stacy_L_Rich.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/292608/name/Rich\\_Stacy\\_L\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/292608/name/Rich_Stacy_L_.html); accessed 3/22/24
15. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/5942/Richard\\_L\\_Desimone\\_III.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/5942/Richard_L_Desimone_III.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/97241/name/Desimone\\_Richard\\_L\\_III.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/97241/name/Desimone_Richard_L_III.html); accessed 3/22/24
16. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/203387/Katherine\\_R\\_Dapper.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/203387/Katherine_R_Dapper.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/227341/name/Dapper\\_Katherine\\_R\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/227341/name/Dapper_Katherine_R_.html); accessed 3/22/24
17. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/29621/Peter\\_Bridgman\\_Webster\\_Jr\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/29621/Peter_Bridgman_Webster_Jr_.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/227115/name/Webster\\_Peter\\_Bridgman\\_Jr\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/227115/name/Webster_Peter_Bridgman_Jr_.html); accessed 3/22/24
18. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/156682/Zachary\\_Mallove.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/156682/Zachary_Mallove.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/309137/name/Mallove\\_Zachary.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/309137/name/Mallove_Zachary.html); accessed 3/22/24
19. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/67823/Michael\\_C\\_Bain.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/67823/Michael_C_Bain.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/67823/Michael\\_C\\_Bain.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/67823/Michael_C_Bain.html); accessed 3/22/24
20. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/5949/Ben\\_Lee\\_McMakin.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/5949/Ben_Lee_McMakin.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/89693/name/McMakin\\_Ben\\_Lee.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/89693/name/McMakin_Ben_Lee.html); accessed 3/22/24
21. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/251875/Mariana\\_Acu\\_a\\_Delgado.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/251875/Mariana_Acu_a_Delgado.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/246506/name/Acu\\_a\\_Delgado\\_Mariana.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/246506/name/Acu_a_Delgado_Mariana.html); <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/a17d8d92-c966-4b27-adcc-0ac10f0530ac>; accessed 3/22/24
22. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robert-diznoff/>; <https://lda.senate.gov/filings/public/filing/search/>; accessed 3/22/24
23. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/melika-d-carroll/>; accessed 3/22/24
24. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/151273/John\\_B\\_Branscome.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/151273/John_B_Branscome.html); <https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-branscome-91bb51222>; accessed 3/22/24
25. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/christianna-lewis-barnhart-9338518>; accessed 3/22/24
26. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/christine-blackburn/>; accessed 3/22/24
27. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kaylagardner/>; accessed 3/22/24
28. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/126547/Jesus\\_Aaron\\_Hernandez.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/126547/Jesus_Aaron_Hernandez.html); accessed 3/22/24
29. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/29621/Peter\\_Bridgman\\_Webster\\_Jr\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/29621/Peter_Bridgman_Webster_Jr_.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/227115/name/Webster\\_Peter\\_Bridgman\\_Jr\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/227115/name/Webster_Peter_Bridgman_Jr_.html); accessed 3/22/24
30. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/129203/Robert\\_Diznoff.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/129203/Robert_Diznoff.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/168063/Daniel\\_C\\_Turrentine.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/168063/Daniel_C_Turrentine.html); accessed 3/22/24

**SEN. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN** (D-MD): Former communications director *Nu Wexler* took a communications position at **Facebook**, then moved to **Google**.<sup>31</sup>

**SEN. JEFF MERKLEY** (D-OR): Former finance advisor *Elizabeth Kelley* later lobbied on behalf of **Amazon** at the Duberstein Group.<sup>32</sup>

**SEN. GARY PETERS** (D-MI): Former senior legislative counsel *Sydney Paul* began lobbying on behalf of **Meta** the year after she left his office. Sen. Peters' former deputy chief counsel on a Homeland Security subcommittee, *Marianna Patterson*, later became an **Amazon** senior manager, and lobbied on behalf of Amazon as recently as 2023. *Veer Shah*, who worked for Sen. Peters in outreach, later lobbied on behalf of **Meta** at Mindset Advocacy.<sup>33</sup>

**SEN. MARTIN HEINRICH** (D-NM): *Jessica Martinez*, the executive director of the Joint Economic Committee under the Senator, previously lobbied for **Amazon** at Franklin Square.<sup>34</sup>

*Matt McCardle* served 8 years as a staffer on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. As of 2023, he was Head of Global Regulatory Affairs and Strategy, Prime Air, at **Amazon**.<sup>35</sup>

*Kate Hallahan* served 16 years as a staffer on House and Senate appropriations committees and subcommittees. When she left, she became a registered lobbyist for **Apple** (2021) and **Amazon** (as of 2023).<sup>36</sup>

*Hamilton Bloom* formerly served as GOP Staff Director for the House Appropriations Commerce subcommittee, which governs the Justice budget. As of 2023, he was a registered lobbyist for **Microsoft**.<sup>37</sup>

*Laura Friedel* was an Appropriations subcommittee staff director as recently as February 2023; now she's a registered lobbyist for **Amazon**.<sup>38</sup>

*Wally Burnett* served six years as a staffer for a Senate Appropriations subcommittee. As of 2023, he was a registered lobbyist for **Google**.<sup>39</sup>

*Paul Doerrer* served seven years; as of 2023, he was a registered **Amazon** lobbyist.<sup>40</sup> *Blair Anderson* left the House Appropriations Committee to become a Director of Public Policy at **Amazon** (2023).<sup>41</sup>

**MORE REVOLVING DOOR ACTION IN APPROPRIATIONS:** *Taunja Berquam*<sup>42</sup> left Appropriations and began lobbying for **Amazon**. *Martin Delgado*,<sup>43</sup> *Hunter Moorhead*,<sup>44</sup> and *Gladys Barcena-Primus*<sup>45</sup> left and began lobbying on behalf of **Google**. *Dave Natonski*<sup>46</sup> and *Susan Sweat*<sup>47</sup> left long Congressional staff careers to lobby for **Microsoft** and **Google**. Former Appropriations staffer *Jennifer Stripan* later lobbied for **Microsoft**.<sup>48</sup> *Menda Fife*<sup>49</sup> and *Matt Leffingwell*<sup>50</sup> left and lobbied for **Microsoft**. *Sydney Crawford Redden* left and moved to the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce**.<sup>51</sup>

31. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/52832/Benjamin\\_Nguyen\\_Wexler.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/52832/Benjamin_Nguyen_Wexler.html); accessed 3/22/24
32. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/31611/Elizabeth\\_Dozier\\_Kelley.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/31611/Elizabeth_Dozier_Kelley.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/305429/name/Kelley\\_Elizabeth\\_Dozier.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/305429/name/Kelley_Elizabeth_Dozier.html); accessed 3/22/24
33. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/205616/Sydney\\_J\\_Paul.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/205616/Sydney_J_Paul.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/372369/Veer\\_P\\_Shah.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/372369/Veer_P_Shah.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/197796/Marianna\\_Boyd\\_Patterson.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/197796/Marianna_Boyd_Patterson.html); accessed 3/22/24
34. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/254049/Jessica\\_Martinez.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/254049/Jessica_Martinez.html); accessed 3/22/24
35. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/48/Matthew\\_Craig\\_McCardle.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/48/Matthew_Craig_McCardle.html); accessed 3/22/24
36. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/63/Kate\\_E\\_Hallahan.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/63/Kate_E_Hallahan.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/231038/name/Hallahan\\_Kate\\_E\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/231038/name/Hallahan_Kate_E_.html); accessed 3/22/24
37. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/244066/Hamilton\\_R\\_Bloom.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/244066/Hamilton_R_Bloom.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/305796/name/Bloom\\_Hamilton\\_R\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/305796/name/Bloom_Hamilton_R_.html); accessed 3/22/24
38. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/6757/Laura\\_A\\_Friedel.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/6757/Laura_A_Friedel.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/330935/name/Friedel\\_Laura\\_A\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/330935/name/Friedel_Laura_A_.html); accessed 3/22/24
39. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/59660/Wallace\\_D\\_Burnett\\_Jr\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/59660/Wallace_D_Burnett_Jr_.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/5291/name/Burnett\\_Wallace\\_D\\_Jr\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/5291/name/Burnett_Wallace_D_Jr_.html); accessed 3/22/24
40. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/92/Paul\\_S\\_Doerrer.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/92/Paul_S_Doerrer.html); accessed 3/22/24
41. [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/237172/name/Blair\\_C\\_Anderson](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/237172/name/Blair_C_Anderson); accessed 3/22/24
42. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/22723/Taunja\\_Jo\\_Berquam.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/22723/Taunja_Jo_Berquam.html); accessed 3/22/24
43. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/18685/Martin\\_Paul\\_Delgado.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/18685/Martin_Paul_Delgado.html); accessed 3/22/24
44. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/81/Hunter\\_H\\_Moorhead.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/81/Hunter_H_Moorhead.html); accessed 3/22/24
45. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/32911/Gladys\\_Barcena\\_Primus.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/32911/Gladys_Barcena_Primus.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/201327/name/Barcena\\_Primus\\_Gladys.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/201327/name/Barcena_Primus_Gladys.html); accessed 3/22/24
46. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/17290/David\\_R\\_Natonski.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/17290/David_R_Natonski.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/325231/name/Natonski\\_David\\_R\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/325231/name/Natonski_David_R_.html); accessed 3/22/24
47. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/46544/Susan\\_Pearson\\_Sweat.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/46544/Susan_Pearson_Sweat.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/192065/name/Sweat\\_Susan\\_Pearson.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/192065/name/Sweat_Susan_Pearson.html); accessed 3/22/24

**AT THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET:** *Jeff Zients*, the current White House Chief of Staff and former OMB Chief Performance Officer, spent two years on Facebook's Board of Directors.<sup>52</sup> *Joel Kaplan*, who served as OMB Deputy Director, became **Facebook's** Vice President of Global Public Policy and led the company's Washington, DC office.<sup>53</sup> *Michael Herckis* moved from Google into a position in the OMB's Chief Information Officer office, and then out again to become Global Head of Government Affairs at cloud security firm **Wiz**.<sup>54</sup> *Kathryn Mullins* moved from OMB to **Amazon**, and from there to Vice President, Growth at government consultancy **Skylight**.<sup>55</sup> *Jennifer Gillian* Newstead, formerly General Counsel at OMB, is now **Meta's** Chief Legal Officer.<sup>56</sup>

**MORE OMB REVOLVING DOOR ACTION:** *Chloe Kontos*, formerly an OMB senior policy advisor, is now **Amazon's** Head of External Relations.<sup>57</sup> *Jeffrey Freeland*, former OMB Deputy Associate Director of Legislative Affairs, became Vice President of Government Relations at the **Internet & Television Association**.<sup>58</sup> *Eric Pelletier*, former OMB Associate Director for Legislative Affairs, is Vice President, Head of International Government Affairs for the **Alibaba Group**.<sup>59</sup>

**STILL MORE OMB:** *Adam Grogg*, who formerly held a position at Google, now serves as OMB Deputy General Counsel.<sup>60</sup> *Lindsay Abate* moved from the OMB to a regulatory policy job at **Apple**.<sup>61</sup> *Will Sellheim*,<sup>62</sup> *Karen Melanson*,<sup>63</sup> and *Natasha Sivananjai*<sup>64</sup> (who also served in the FTC's Competition Bureau) all moved to Amazon. *James Massot* moved to **Meta**.<sup>65</sup> *Rubi Kam* moved to Facebook, and then to **Google**.<sup>66</sup> *Jamey Mulligan* became Head of Carbon Neutralization Science and Strategy at **Amazon**.<sup>67</sup> *Lauren Lobrano* became Head of Global Disability Inclusion at **Amazon**.<sup>68</sup> *Victoria Espinel* became CEO of **BSA | The Software Alliance**.<sup>69</sup>

48. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/37639/Jennifer\\_Mary\\_Storipan.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/37639/Jennifer_Mary_Storipan.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/302370/name/Storipan\\_Jennifer\\_Mary.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/302370/name/Storipan_Jennifer_Mary.html); accessed 3/22/24
49. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/44563/Menda\\_S\\_Fife.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/44563/Menda_S_Fife.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/161372/name/Fife\\_Menda\\_S\\_.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/161372/name/Fife_Menda_S_.html); accessed 3/22/24
50. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/22320/Matthew\\_L\\_Leffingwell.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/22320/Matthew_L_Leffingwell.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/221515/name/Matthew\\_L\\_Leffingwell/by/lobbyist.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/221515/name/Matthew_L_Leffingwell/by/lobbyist.html); accessed 3/22/24
51. [https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/268686/Sydney\\_Crawford\\_Redden.html](https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/268686/Sydney_Crawford_Redden.html); [https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/332179/name/Sydney\\_Crawford\\_Redden/by/lobbyist.html](https://www.legistorm.com/lobbying/overview/id/332179/name/Sydney_Crawford_Redden/by/lobbyist.html); accessed 3/22/24
52. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/01/24/tech-ties-haunt-bidens-next-chief-staff/>; <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/who-is-jeff-zients-bidens-likely-chief-of-staff>; accessed 3/22/24
53. <https://www.wired.com/story/facebook-joel-kaplan-washington-political-influence>; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/joel-kaplan-63905618>; accessed 3/22/24
54. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mherckis>; accessed 3/22/24
55. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kathryn-mullins-a6025563>; accessed 3/22/24
56. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-gillian-newstead-a97b229>; accessed 3/22/24
57. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chloe-kontos>; accessed 3/22/24
58. <https://www.ncta.com/media/media-room/ncta-announces-new-additions-legal-and-government-relations-teams>; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jkfreeland>; accessed 3/22/24
59. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurenlobrano/details/experience>; accessed 3/22/24
60. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/agrogg>; accessed 3/22/24
61. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lindsayabate>; accessed 3/22/24
62. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/will-sellheim-41690b2a>; accessed 3/22/24
63. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/karen-melanson>; accessed 3/22/24
64. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/natasha-sivanantajah>; accessed 3/17/24
65. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jamesmassot>; accessed 3/22/24
66. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rubi-kam>; accessed 3/22/24
67. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jamey-mulligan-036b4a18>; accessed 3/22/24
68. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurenlobrano/details/experience>; accessed 3/22/24
69. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/victoriaespinel>; accessed 3/22/24

### 3. MEMBERS MAKE DECISIONS THAT HELP THEM AND THEIR FRIENDS MAKE MONEY

Powerful legislators who own stock in giant companies shouldn't make decisions that benefit themselves—and they shouldn't make decisions that benefit their friends and family, either.

Through their budget decisions, members of the Appropriations committees have the power to influence how giant companies can and can't do business, and how fast they can build their revenue and profits—by determining how aggressive regulators can be.

At the same time, the committees' members and staff hold stock in the companies they regulate, and make more money when they keep big companies free to use their monopoly power to grow faster at the expense of the public good. One way they can do that is to stifle investigation and regulatory action by the Justice Department. Some of these Senators' decisions help make money for their families and friends, too.

**> Appropriations Committee members have held stock in Big Tech companies, while making budget decisions that could determine the companies' futures. Budget staff have also benefited.**

*Senate Appropriations Vice Chair Sen. Susan Collins* and her husband, lobbyist Thomas Daffron, have held **as much as \$550,000** in stock in Google, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, and Nvidia.<sup>70</sup>

Sen. Collins isn't the only Appropriations member with Big Tech stock holdings, and she's not the biggest, either: that title goes to *Sen. Katie Boyd Britt* (R-AL), who owned **as much as \$1.1 million** worth of Apple stock as of her last annual disclosure.<sup>71</sup> Other Appropriations members who have held Big Tech stocks while in the Senate include *Sen. John Boozman* (R-AR), with **up to \$12,998** in Apple stock;<sup>72</sup> *Sen. Shelley Moore Capito* (R-WV), whose spouse owns **up to \$162,998** worth of Apple;<sup>73</sup> and *Sen. Bill Hagerty* (R-TN), who holds **as much as \$200,000** in shares of Apple, Google, and Amazon.<sup>74</sup>

*House Appropriations GOP Staff Director Anne Marie Chotvacs* has held **as much as \$65,000** in stock in Apple and Microsoft.<sup>75</sup>

*OMB Associate Director Loren Schulman* disclosed that her spouse Ross Benjamin Schulman, who works at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, sold 720 shares in Google **worth over \$75,000** in 2023.<sup>76</sup>

Every one of these companies has been under antitrust investigation by the Antitrust Division or the FTC. Google is facing multiple active or pending lawsuits; Apple is the target of a lawsuit filed in March.<sup>77</sup>

70. <https://efdsearch.senate.gov/search/view/annual/e223492b-0b9e-47fc-9d64-ad7aa7fa7cde>; accessed 3/25/24
71. [https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls\\_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-3432\\_1692650910.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-3432_1692650910.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
72. [https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls\\_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-137\\_1692653004.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-137_1692653004.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
73. [https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls\\_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-159\\_1684543950.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-159_1684543950.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
74. [https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls\\_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-3400\\_1692625265.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls_disclosure-member-2023-annual-report-3400_1692625265.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
75. <https://www.legistorm.com/person/bio/18698/Anne-Marie-Goldsmith-Chotvacs.html>; [https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls\\_disclosure-staff-2022-annual-report-18698\\_1694031765.pdf](https://www.legistorm.com/showPdf/ls_disclosure-staff-2022-annual-report-18698_1694031765.pdf); accessed 3/25/24
76. <https://www.meritalk.com/articles/omb-hires-loren-dejonge-schulman-as-associate-director>; <https://www.eff.org/about/staff/ross-schulman-0>; accessed 3/22/24 and Office of Government Ethics Certificate of Divestiture for Ross Benjamin Schulman [spouse of Loren Schulman], issued 3/23/23
77. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/google-face-us-antitrust-trial-over-digital-ads-september-2024-02-05>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/05/technology/antitrust-apple-lawsuit-us.html>; accessed 3/22/24

**> Appropriations members make decisions that can help their friends and family, too.**

Sen. Susan Collins' husband, Jeffrey Daffron, served for a decade as chief operating officer of Jefferson Consulting Group, a government affairs firm that received \$60 million in government contracts while he was there. She supported legislation that repealed a withholding tax on firms like his, and led a push to help them conceal their political contributions.

Note that Jefferson also helps major corporate clients that lobby the federal government, telling them "We help you develop a congressional strategy that ties directly to your growth and revenue objectives, which... allows you to navigate the regulatory and legislative process and propel your company's interests forward."<sup>78</sup>

78. Accessed 3/20/24: <https://jeffersonconsulting.com/business-solutions/government-affairs>; <https://stennis.gov/about-us/board-of-trustees/thomas-daffron-biography>; <https://www.salon.com/2020/09/09/exclusive-susan-collins-plight-gets-worse-with-new-corruption-allegation-possible>

## 4. CAMPAIGN CASH RAISES QUID-PRO-QUO QUESTIONS

Even as they cut the federal antitrust budget and strangle enforcement, Appropriations leaders and other powerful senators rake in campaign contributions from the very companies the Antitrust Division has in their sights.

When they intervene to cut its budget, the members of the Appropriations committees and subcommittees effectively determine how aggressively the Antitrust Division will investigate and regulate monopoly behavior by big companies. And at the same time, these committees' leaders are funding their campaigns through generous contributions from the very same companies.

### > Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has taken almost \$1 million in campaign cash from Seattle-based Big Tech companies, while protecting their interests

Campaign contributions from Big Tech are particularly troubling in the case of *Sen. Patty Murray*, the powerful Appropriations chair who represents the state of Washington—home of the headquarters of both Amazon (with 75,000 employees in the state) and Microsoft (with 61,000).<sup>79</sup>

Over her career, Sen. Murray has received **well over \$1 million in contributions** from Amazon, Apple, Google, Microsoft, and Meta, including \$109,750 in PAC contributions since 2002; **\$282,406** from Amazon employees since 1991; more than **\$28,000** from Apple and Google employees since 2019; and a whopping **\$704,413** from Microsoft employees since 1991.<sup>80</sup>

In exchange, Murray has kept her distance from the government's attempts to hold Big Tech accountable for market abuses. Just some of the antitrust bills she has declined to co-sponsor include the American Innovation And Choice Online Act; the Competition And Antitrust Law Enforcement Reform Act; the Platform Competition And Opportunity Act; and the Open App Markets Act.<sup>81</sup>

### > Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, who chairs the Commerce subcommittee of Senate Appropriations, is tightly connected through campaign contributions to industries like Big Tech, defense, and healthcare—all of which are under investigation by the Antitrust Division

Time and again, *Sen. Jeanne Shaheen* has received significant campaign contributions from industries the Antitrust Division is investigating—and from specific companies with business before the Department of Justice.

78. Accessed 3/20/24: <https://jeffersonconsulting.com/business-solutions/government-affairs>; <https://stennis.gov/about-us/board-of-trustees/thomas-daffron-biography>; <https://www.salon.com/2020/09/09/exclusive-susan-collins-plaint-gets-worse-with-new-corruption-allegation-possible>
79. <https://www.aboutamazon.com/workplace/corporate-offices>; <https://www.axios.com/local/seattle/2023/01/19/microsoft-cuts-seattle-area-workers>; accessed 3/20/24
80. Taken from publicly available disclosure data. For example: [https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data\\_type=processed&committee\\_id=C00360354&committee\\_id=C00375048&committee\\_id=C00428623&committee\\_id=C00502906&recipient\\_name=%09C003652706&recipient\\_name=C00257642](https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00360354&committee_id=C00375048&committee_id=C00428623&committee_id=C00502906&recipient_name=%09C003652706&recipient_name=C00257642); <https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/patty-murray/contributors?cid=N00007876&cycle=CAREER>; [https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/apple-inc/recipients?cands\\_cycle=2024&id=D000021754&toprec\\_ipscycle=2024&t5-search=murray](https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/apple-inc/recipients?cands_cycle=2024&id=D000021754&toprec_ipscycle=2024&t5-search=murray); <https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/patty-murray/contributors?cid=N00007876&cycle=CAREER>
81. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1409>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/2033>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/225/>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3663>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2992/>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3197>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/225/>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2710>; accessed 3/20/24

**BIG TECH: Meta, owner of Facebook and Instagram,** contributed \$10,000 to Sen. Shaheen between 2019 and 2021 while they were making major acquisitions, including \$5,000 right around the time of the \$400 million acquisition of Giphy, and \$2,500 in the summer of 2019, just before the FTC fined the company \$5 billion and the SEC fined them \$100,000 for privacy violations.<sup>82</sup>

**DEFENSE:** Between fall 2017 and spring 2019, while L3 Technologies and Harris Corporation were discussing a merger (which was eventually consummated), Sen. Shaheen took \$17,000 from the two companies. This was the largest-ever defense industry merger, creating a company with \$17 billion in sales and a staff of 50,000. During negotiations, the Antitrust Division sued, and forced the company to divest its military night vision business.<sup>83</sup>

**HEALTHCARE:** Between late 2017 and mid-2020, during merger negotiations between UnitedHealth and Davita, Sen. Shaheen received \$20,000 from the two companies. The \$4.3 billion merger created a near-monopoly in Las Vegas, and after investigation the FTC required the company to divest its local holdings.<sup>84</sup>

**HEALTHCARE:** Between late 2017 and mid-2020, CVS gave Sen. Shaheen \$10,000 as they were negotiating their \$69 billion merger with Aetna, including \$1,000 immediately after announcing their merger plans, \$2,500 after the merger was consummated, and another \$2,500 concurrent with hearings held by a U.S. District Court judge, who was acutely concerned about the merger's implications for healthcare competition.<sup>85</sup>

**TELECOM:** Communications giant T-Mobile gave Sen. Shaheen \$10,000 between spring 2019 and summer 2020, while it was in the process of acquiring Sprint in a \$59 billion deal—including \$1,000 right before the deal concluded. This was part of an unusually aggressive lobbying campaign by Sprint, which included \$195,000 of questionable spending at the former Trump International Hotel in Washington, DC in an implied pay-to-play arrangement.<sup>86</sup>

**> Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), who as Majority Leader steers appropriations bills through the full Senate and has consistently run interference for Big Tech, has received hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from industries targeted by the Antitrust Division.**

**BANKING:** Schumer has received more campaign donations than any other Senator from the commercial banking industry, a sector currently under investigation by the Antitrust Division.<sup>87</sup>

82. Contributions data taken from publicly available disclosures; for example, [https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?data\\_type=processed&committee\\_id=C00457325&contributor\\_name=C00502906&two\\_year\\_transaction\\_period=2024&two\\_year\\_transaction\\_period=2022&two\\_year\\_transaction\\_period=2020&two\\_year\\_transaction\\_period=2018&two\\_year\\_transaction\\_period=2016&min\\_date=01%2F01%2F2015&max\\_date=03%2F06%2F2024](https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00457325&contributor_name=C00502906&two_year_transaction_period=2024&two_year_transaction_period=2022&two_year_transaction_period=2020&two_year_transaction_period=2018&two_year_transaction_period=2016&min_date=01%2F01%2F2015&max_date=03%2F06%2F2024). See also (accessed 3/20/24): <https://www.sec.gov/news/press-release/2019-140>; <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/07/24/facebook-to-pay-5-billion-for-privacy-lapses-ftc-announces.html>; <https://www.theverge.com/2020/5/15/21259965/facebook-giphy-gif-acquisition-buy-instagram-integration-cost>
83. Taken from publicly available disclosure data. See also (accessed 3/20/24): <https://www.wsj.com/articles/military-communications-firms-harris-l3-near-deal-to-combine-1539443888>; <https://www.l3harris.com/newsroom/press-release/2019/06/l3harris-technologies-merger-successfully-completed-board-directors>; <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-requires-harris-and-l3-divest-harris-s-night-vision-business-proceed>
84. Taken from publicly available FEC disclosure data. See also <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2019/06/ftc-imposes-conditions-unitedhealth-groups-proposed-acquisition-davita-medical-group>; accessed 3/20/24
85. Taken from publicly available disclosure data. See also <https://ctmirror.org/2019/06/07/federal-judge-cast-cloud-over-cvs-aetna-merger>; accessed 3/20/24
86. Taken from publicly available disclosure data. See also <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN1QMI2K>; <https://www.theverge.com/2019/3/5/18251722/t-mobile-trump-hotel-washington-sprint-merger-lobbying>; accessed 3/20/24
87. Taken from publicly available disclosure data. See also <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/06/20/doj-bank-mergers-00102635>; <https://www.levernews.com/donor-cash-went-in-antitrust-budget-cut-came-out>; accessed 3/20/24
88. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/17/technology/facebook-democrats-congress.html>; <https://washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2014/12/12/how-chuck-schumer-became-silicon-alleys-closest-ally>; <https://nypost.com/2018/11/17/schumer-got-50k-in-donations-and-a-job-for-his-daughter-from-facebook>; <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/13/17114616/transcript-senator-chuck-schumer-washington-dc-trump-politics-democrat-minority-leader-recode-decode>; accessed 3/20/24
89. Taken from publicly available disclosure data. See also <https://prospect.org/power/2023-01-26-chuck-schumer-tech-antitrust-bills>; <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2018/11/chuck-schumers-tech-friendly-ties/177922/>; accessed 3/20/24

**TECH:** Schumer has been one of Big Tech’s strongest allies in Congress, even as he takes big money from them year after year:

- Analysts have called Schumer a “quiet but reliable Washington ally” to Big Tech, a “tech booster.” He has said tech companies are too new to regulate aggressively, and proposed that they police themselves. He has praised Amazon for creating “cheaper, better competition,” and as Facebook poisons the political sphere and creates harm for children, Schumer has provided them PR cover by calling them a “very positive force.”<sup>88</sup>
- Last year, he killed a set of bills that would have stepped up tech antitrust investigation and help bring U.S. policy closer in line with the more aggressive stance taken by the European Union—despite receiving more than \$780,000 in campaign contributions from the sector, more than almost any member of Congress.<sup>89</sup>

> **Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), who serves on the Senate Appropriations Commerce subcommittee, has worked with Sen. Schumer to kill antitrust legislation while notching Big Tech campaign contributions.**

Sen. Schatz’s subcommittee was the “little group behind closed doors,” in Sen. Amy Klobuchar’s words, that cut off the Antitrust Division’s access to the funds designated to it by Congress. And like Sen. Schumer, he has repeatedly run interference for Big Tech. In the current Congress, he personally intervened to help kill an important antitrust bill by raising wedge issues designed to fracture its support coalition. One Hill staffer said, “Schatz went out of his way to do [Big Tech’s] bidding throughout the process and was incredibly disingenuous about it... He let Big Tech exploit his progressive credentials again and again.”<sup>90</sup>

In exchange, Sen. Schatz has received over \$150,000 from Big Tech since 2013.<sup>91</sup>

> **Other Appropriations leaders have received significant Big Tech campaign contributions, while making budget decisions that could determine the companies’ futures.**<sup>92</sup>

Sen. Susan Collins has collected **more than \$44,000** in campaign contributions from Amazon, Apple, Google, and Microsoft since 2019.

Rep. Kay Granger is right behind, with **over \$42,000** in contributions since 2019. Google was a top-ten contributor to Rep. Granger in the 2021-2022 cycle, and is already a top-twenty contributor in the current cycle.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro has received **over \$8,000 in contributions** from Amazon, Google, and Microsoft since 2019.

Rep. Hal Rogers has received **\$2,000 in contributions** from Amazon and Microsoft since 2019.

89. Taken from publicly available disclosure data. See also <https://prospect.org/power/2023-01-26-chuck-schumer-tech-antitrust-bills>; <https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2018/11/chuck-schumers-tech-friendly-ties/177922>; accessed 3/20/24

90. <https://prospect.org/power/2024-03-07-conflicts-of-interest-doj-antitrust-budget-cut/>; <https://prospect.org/power/2023-01-26-chuck-schumer-tech-antitrust-bills>; accessed 3/20/24

91. See publicly available disclosure data, e.g., <https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00360354>

92. All taken from publicly available disclosure data.

# APPENDIX:

## Background on the current antitrust funding crisis

### WHY INDEPENDENT ANTITRUST FUNDING MATTERS

The Department of Justice's Antitrust Division (ATR) has been structurally underfunded for decades. It has a third fewer employees now than it did 45 years ago, even though the economy has tripled in size. Though the current leadership has done an excellent job of doing more with less, it doesn't excuse Congress's cuts. Along with the FTC, the DOJ has reviewed thousands of merger transactions, are litigating significant civil actions, and have indicted defendants in dozens of criminal cases—more than at any time in decades. They're taking action on more anticompetitive mergers than ever before, in sectors like transportation, commodities, shipping, and manufacturing.<sup>93</sup>

But they still bump up against concrete budget constraints, especially when they have to depend on a budget that is at the mercy of a politically influenced appropriations process.

That's why back in 1989, to protect the ATR from politics so it could do its job, Congress established a dedicated funding stream for it: henceforth, they decided, its operations would primarily be covered by merger filing fees, an arrangement that both parties have supported. Because merger filings fluctuate year to year, the ATR budget is not fully insulated from Congressional appropriations politics, but over the past decade, an average of 75% of its budget has been covered by merger fees.<sup>94</sup>

### INCREASED FUNDING FOR INCREASED ENFORCEMENT

In 2022, the ATR's protected budget was significantly increased via an increase in merger filing fees, under the Merger Filing Fee Modernization Act, which overwhelmingly passed Congress in 2022. This increase was intended to support more aggressive antitrust action against Big Tech, something that the Biden administration has made a priority, and that has had strong bipartisan support.<sup>95</sup>

### A ROGUE SENATE COMMITTEE, AND BACKROOM NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE HOUSE

Apparently, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen and her Senate Appropriations Committee staff were unhappy to have Congress establish spending policies that were out of her control; already last summer the Committee was signaling its discontent with Congress's move.<sup>96</sup> Appropriations also apparently chose to mollify House Republicans like Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), who are determined to cut the ATR's budget to take the pressure off corporate interests.<sup>97</sup>

In the current appropriations bill package, which they submitted in early March, they have attempted to make an end run around the law, proposing to slash the ATR's budget by 20 percent, and to deny it the merger-fee funding explicitly designated for it by Congress.<sup>98</sup>

93. <https://prospect.org/power/2024-03-07-conflicts-of-interest-doj-antitrust-budget-cut/>; <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-01/biden-s-new-antitrust-cop-threatens-to-slam-brakes-on-mergers>; <https://www.skadden.com/-/media/files/publications/2022/10/khan-and-kanter-show-no-signs-of-slowing-antitrust-enforcement.pdf>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/on-small-business/bidens-antitrust-chiefs-seek-funds-for-ambitious-enforcement/2022/09/20/>; [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/on-small-business/bidens-antitrust-chiefs-seek-funds-for-ambitious-enforcement/2022/09/20/4ac12d8a-393c-11ed-b8af-0a04e5dc3db6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/on-small-business/bidens-antitrust-chiefs-seek-funds-for-ambitious-enforcement/2022/09/20/4ac12d8a-393c-11ed-b8af-0a04e5dc3db6_story.html); accessed 3/20/24
94. <https://www.justice.gov/atr/appropriation-figures-antitrust-division/>; accessed 3/20/24
95. <https://www.thebignewsletter.com/p/monopoly-round-up-congress-to-undermine/>; accessed 3/20/24
96. <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fy24-cjs-report.pdf>; accessed 3/20/24
97. <https://www.levernews.com/donor-cash-went-in-antitrust-budget-cut-came-out/>; accessed 3/20/24

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Specifically, the “minibus” bill package capped the ATR’s merger fee revenue at \$233 million, despite Congress’s clear intent to give it full access to the full amount. The eleventh-hour move was concealed in a bill of hundreds of pages, and not mentioned in the bill summary. As David Dayen put it, “the appropriators just overwrote the law, denying DOJ Antitrust its share of filing fees for the first time in 35 years.” And they did it in secret.

This all comes despite the clearly expressed will of both houses not just that the ATR get its merger fee funding, but that that funding be significantly increased. Essentially, Sen. Shaheen and her committee have ignored 35 years of on-the-ground policy set by Congress in 1989 and confirmed by an 88-8 Senate vote in 2022. “Appropriations staffers seem to think elected officials work for them, instead of the other way around,” said analyst Matt Stoller of the American Economic Liberties Project, who called the move a “wildly inappropriate exercise of power by what are in effect ignorant, turf-hungry technocrats.”<sup>99</sup>

### CONGRESS REACTS ANGRILY, WHILE BIG TECH IS RELIEVED

Analysts immediately noted that the reduced budget would seriously hamper ongoing investigations and limit the ATR’s ability to initiate new ones. A DOJ source has said that funding pressures delayed the landmark Apple lawsuit that was filed on March 21 by up to three years.<sup>100</sup> And legislators who led the bipartisan 2022 effort to secure stronger funding for the ATR have been furious.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) was blunt: “Diverting these fees is just wrong,” she says. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) laid out the dangers: “The army of lobbyists and lawyers representing Wall Street and Big Tech is doing cartwheels about potential funding cuts for antitrust enforcement by the Justice Department. It’s powerfully important that lawmakers immediately address this self-inflicted wound.” In a blunt letter to Senate Antitrust Committee leadership, a bipartisan group of legislators led by Sens. Klobuchar and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) demanded the restoration of the funding Shaheen had cut. The White House has committed to fight for the restoration, too.<sup>101</sup>

On the other side of the issue, Big Tech giants and other large corporations subject to ATR investigation and enforcement clearly understand how lucky this political disagreement is for them, especially if (as expected) it disrupts the Department of Justice’s ability to enforce the law. “Big Tech has allies across committee offices and personal offices of Republicans and Democrats,” said one Warren insider, “and this is an example of the reach and power they have.”<sup>102</sup>

98. <https://prospect.org/politics/2024-03-05-congress-poised-kneecap-antitrust-division>; <https://www.thebignewsletter.com/p/monopoly-round-up-congress-to-undermine>; [https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fv24\\_cjs\\_bill\\_summary.pdf](https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fv24_cjs_bill_summary.pdf); accessed 3/20/24

99. <https://prospect.org/politics/2024-03-05-congress-poised-kneecap-antitrust-division>; accessed 3/20/24

100. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/05/technology/antitrust-apple-lawsuit-us.html>; <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-03-04/us-funding-deal-delivers-blow-to-doj-antitrust-probes-of-apple-ticketmaster>; accessed 3/20/24

101. <https://prospect.org/politics/2024-03-05-congress-poised-kneecap-antitrust-division>; <https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/news-releases?ID=39C1676A-1795-4845-B092-D2FC7DE5653F>; <https://prospect.org/power/2024-03-12-white-house-antitrust-division-budget-restoration>; accessed 3/20/24

102. <https://prospect.org/politics/2024-03-05-congress-poised-kneecap-antitrust-division>; accessed 3/20/24