

Microsoft, Facebook pause political donations after riot at U.S. Capitol

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Facebook Inc., Google and Microsoft Corp. said they will pause political contributions after a deadly pro-Trump riot in the U.S. Capitol last week that aimed to disrupt the certification of President-elect Joe Biden.

Airbnb Inc. and Intel Corp., meanwhile, instituted new policies of not donating to U.S. candidates who voted against the election certification.

While companies in an array of industries made similar adjustments to their political giving this week, there's heightened attention on moves in the [tech industry](#) after the removal of Donald Trump's [social media accounts](#) and the app Parler, which is popular among the president's supporters.

Software giant Microsoft said its political action committee decided Friday that it will not make any [political donations](#) "until after it assesses the implications of last week's events." The company's PAC regularly pauses donations in the first quarter of a new Congress, but it will "take additional steps this year to consider these recent events and consult with employees."

Microsoft has come under renewed pressure from some employees on [social media](#) to disband MSPAC after several years of complaints that the group's bipartisan giving involves donations to politicians who vote contrary to Microsoft's stated positions on issues like immigration and LGBT rights. Some legislators that Microsoft backs voted against certifying Biden.

Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said the social networking company is pausing all of its PAC contributions "for at least the current quarter while we review our policies." A spokesman for Alphabet Inc.'s Google said it was doing the same.

In a statement, Intel said the congressional votes against election certification ran counter to the company's values. Airbnb made a similar statement. Of the contributions Airbnb's PAC made in the last election cycle, almost half went to Republicans, according to data from Open Secrets.

Beyond the tech industry, banking giants such as Goldman Sachs Group Inc., Citigroup Inc. and JPMorgan Chase & Co. are also planning to pause [political contributions](#). Marriott International Inc. and Dow Inc. said they would suspend donations to lawmakers who voted against certifying Biden.

Microsoft's MSPAC, made contributions to Sens. Roger Marshall and Cynthia Lummis, as well as representatives such as Kevin McCarthy and Steve Scalise in the most recent election cycle, according to a spreadsheet shared by the Pinboard Twitter account, run by tech entrepreneur and activist Maciej Ceglowski. All four lawmakers voted to oppose Biden's certification as president.

Microsoft's PAC made a total of 820,500 in donations to federal candidates in the 2019-20 election cycle, 57% of that to Republicans and 43% to Democrats, according to Open Secrets, which tracks contributions.

In October, Bloomberg reported that Microsoft makes more U.S. political donations to climate obstructionists in the Senate and Congress than to politicians that support climate causes, despite the company's aggressive goals to reduce carbon emissions.

Microsoft already suspended donations from MSPAC in 2019 in response to employee concerns and said it was implementing changes based on questions about transparency and how it makes decisions around donations but the PAC quietly restarted giving later that year with few apparent alterations.

Axios and CNBC reported Facebook and Microsoft's decisions to halt donations earlier.

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