

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Satya Nadella
CEO, Microsoft
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052

Re: Keeping Your Word on Valuing the Right to Vote

Dear Mr. Nadella:

I am following up on the letter we sent on April 21, 2021, urging Microsoft to sever ties with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. We have not yet received a response. As you know, the Chamber is currently leading an intense lobbying campaign to oppose one of the most significant efforts to protect the right to vote in history, H.R. 1, the For The People Act. We would like to know how Microsoft reconciles its affiliation with the Chamber while also signing onto a [recent ad](#) in the *New York Times* opposing “any discriminatory legislation or measures that restrict or prevent any eligible voter from having an equal and fair opportunity to cast a ballot.”

Given Microsoft’s very public stance on the right to vote, we believe consumers and your shareholders would appreciate clarity around this issue. For instance, last March, Microsoft President Brad Smith authored a [blog post](#) criticizing Georgia’s “Election Integrity Act” for harboring “important provisions that unfairly restrict the rights of people to vote legally, securely, and safely.” Smith specifically cited the law’s “restrictions on voting drop Boxes” as particularly troublesome, noting that Fulton County – “where most of Microsoft’s employees live” – would see an “80 percent reduction in drop boxes.” Your company’s message could not have been clearer: “[T]he right to vote is the most cherished aspect of democracy.”

But that message simply does not align with Microsoft’s decision to maintain its Chamber membership despite the group’s ugly history of supporting voter suppression efforts. My organization, Accountable.US, is a non-partisan government watchdog based in Washington D.C. Please see our attached report showing that as far back as 2010, the Chamber was the architect and purse strings behind a conservative-led redistricting project known as REDMAP, which [targeted](#) over 100 state legislative races in 16 states. The effort was [condemned](#) by a civil rights leader for having “cracked, stacked, packed and bleached Black voters” to reduce their political representation. And now by opposing H.R. 1, the Chamber is building on this anti-democratic legacy.

The Chamber has also [poured](#) millions of dollars into the Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC), which, just this year, launched a so-called “voter integrity” commission that has been widely panned as a coordinated voter suppression effort. It has called for a variety of measures that would disproportionately harm voters of color.

While the Chamber likes to excuse its attacks on the fundamental right to vote under the guise of “free speech,” there is no denying this effort is racially charged and designed to disenfranchise people of color, motivated by a cynical and misguided belief that it will benefit the business community. Their efforts should not be rewarded financially and reputationally by companies like yours who claim to hold different values.

It is critical that corporations be consistent in their values on this issue at a time when there is large-scale assault on voter access taking place in state legislatures across the country, including Georgia, Arizona,

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Florida, and Texas – efforts that could go unchecked if the Chamber’s “fierce” opposition to [H.R. 1](#) and its voting rights reforms are successful.

It is clear that Microsoft’s public support of the Chamber is in direct conflict with your stated values. If Microsoft agrees that preserving our democracy is not a value that can be compromised, your company must cut ties with the Chamber.

Only by severing its relationship with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce can Microsoft truly show it will not compromise its corporate values and the promises it has made to its employees, shareholders and consumers. We very much look forward to hearing from you.



Sincerely,

Kyle Herrig

President, Accountable.US