

# [***Biden Education Department Shared Memo Pushing To Mobilize Dem-Leaning Voters From Liberal Activists***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C21-22D1-JBFB-H012-00000-00&context=1516831)

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[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Cardona-Reuters-scaled-e1650907745562.jpg)

Biden administration officials circulated and discussed a memo authored by a coalition of liberal groups aimed at getting more college students to participate in elections as part of the department's voter registration efforts, newly-surfaced emails show.

Groups that donated millions to elect Democrats and are funded by major liberal donors submitted a list of recommendations to the Department of Education (ED) in 2021 outlining ways the department could get college students, a historically liberal demographic, to vote more, [*according*](https://oversight.heritage.org/18_Department_of_Education.pdf?_gl=1*1xhyg8v*_ga*MTQ1MjE1OTIwMi4xNzA0OTI1NTEy*_ga_W14BT6YQ87*MTcxNTg3NjQ0Mi4yMC4wLjE3MTU4NzY0NTIuNTAuMC4w) to emails obtained by the Heritage Foundation's Oversight Project.

The memo recommended that the ED include a voter registration option on its college financial aid application, that it use resources to make students aware of vote-by-mail opportunities and that it allow universities to use federal work-study to pay students for non-partisan election work.

The coalition of groups sent their memo in response to President Joe Biden's 2021 [*executive order*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/03/07/executive-order-on-promoting-access-to-voting/) directing federal agencies to promote voter registration, education and participation, offering recommendations on how to implement it. [***(RELATED: Influential Liberal Donor Organizes Massive Coalition To Throw Cash Behind Voter Mobilization)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/05/06/influential-liberal-donor-organizes-massive-coalition-throw-cash-voter-mobilization/)

ED Deputy Assistant Secretary of Higher Education Nick Lee shared the memo with [*Annmarie Weisman*](https://www.linkedin.com/in/annmarieweisman/), another deputy assistant secretary, and [*Gregory Martin*](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/training/federal-student-aid-fsa-training-conference/program/presenters/gregory-martin-0), another ED official, emails show. Lee explained to Weisman and Martin that he had been discussing ways to implement Biden's executive order with an [*ED policy director*](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ian-foss-8908a742) and that he was willing to speak further on the topic.

Lee also shared the memo with members of the ED's Office of the General Counsel, again explaining that the department was in the process of finalizing responses to Biden's voting executive order, emails show.

The Biden administration may have been receptive to at least one of the recommendations the coalition of left-of-center groups offered. In April 2022, the ED [*clarified*](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2022-04-21/requirements-distribution-voter-registration-forms) that universities could pay students with federal work-study funds to engage in election-related work. While students can be compensated for voter registration work, they cannot be paid using federal funds “for work involving partisan or nonpartisan political activity, including party-affiliated voter registration activities, as this is expressly prohibited.”

In February, the ED [*expanded*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/27/kamala-harris-says-college-students-will-now-get-paid-with-taxpayer-funds-to-register-voters-ahead-of-2024/) on the specific work federal funds could pay for, [*stating*](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2024-02-26/use-federal-work-study-funds-voter-registration) that “supporting broad-based get-out-the-vote activities, voter registration, providing voter assistance at a polling place or through a voter hotline or serving as a poll worker” were all acceptable.

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-12-23T204455Z_1983943757_RC28TK96H9UD_RTRMADP_3_USA-BIDEN-scaled-e1609011211738.jpg)

U.S. President-elect Joe Biden enters the room followed by Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and their nominee for secretary of education, Miguel Cardona in Wilmington, Delaware, U.S., December 23, 2020. (REUTERS/Leah Millis)

While Biden's executive order stresses agencies should tap “nonpartisan third-party organizations” to aid with voter registration efforts, the effects of registering more college students to vote could be a boon for the Democratic Party.

A September 2020 poll [*found*](https://knightfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/collegepulse_knight_votingstudy.pdf) that 70% of college students said they would vote for Biden in that year's election, compared to just 18% who said they would vote for then-President Donald Trump. Strong turnout among college students in 2022 helped Democrats pull off a better-than-expected midterm election performance, NPR [*reported*](https://www.npr.org/2022/11/15/1136563709/young-voters-helped-democrats-win-the-senate-and-other-midterm-elections). Heading into 2024, Biden's reelection campaign is [*seeking*](https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/politics/2024/03/11/biden-harris-launches-campaign-to-mobilize-student-voters) to mobilize college students.

The president holds a 23-point lead over Trump among college students heading into the 2024 election, [*according*](https://iop.harvard.edu/youth-poll/47th-edition-spring-2024) to a Harvard Institute of ***Politics*** poll conducted in March.

The groups that sought to push the ED to mobilize more college voters themselves have ties to the Democratic Party.

The [*American Federation of Teachers*](https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00028860) (AFT) and the [*National Education Association*](https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00489815) (NEA), for instance, are both signatories of the memo and have spent millions of dollars to help elect Democrats through their political action committees, Federal Election Commission records show. [*Both*](https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/nea-recommends-president-joe-biden-democratic-nominee-re-election#:~:text=On%20April%2026%2C%20NEA%20President,Democratic%20nominees%20for%20re%2Delection.) [*groups*](https://www.aft.org/press-release/american-federation-teachers-endorses-joe-biden-and-kamala-harris-democratic-primary#:~:text=WASHINGTON%E2%80%94The%20American%20Federation%20of,in%20the%202024%20Democratic%20primary.) endorsed Biden in the 2024 Democratic Primary and have [*historically supported*](https://www.influencewatch.org/hub/teachers-unions/) the Democratic Party.

New America Foundation, which signed on to the memo through its education program, has received extensive support from the Soros family's philanthropic network, pulling in millions since 2016, [*according*](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter_keyword=New+America&page=3) to a grant database. George Soros has [*donated*](https://www.influencewatch.org/person/george-soros/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw3ZayBhDRARIsAPWzx8rwV7akVQjyhz_2Ks9kU9LgNza7rIGrUxxHIlbuktoSyBNwSmSQ-DMaAp4qEALw_wcB#political-activities) massive sums to the Democrats and is one of the largest figures in the left-of-center philanthropic world.

The Voter Participation Center, another group that signed on to the memo, has received over $1 million from nonprofits managed by Arabella Advisors, [*tax*](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/202333149349300038/full) [*filings*](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/201913169349302346/full) [*show*](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201903169349302480/full). [*Arabella Advisors*](https://www.influencewatch.org/for-profit/arabella-advisors/) is a consultancy firm that manages a network of nonprofits that spend millions every year on efforts to help liberal groups and Democrats.

The Voter Participation Center on its [*website*](https://www.voterparticipation.org/cover-memo-new-american-majority-geographic-and-demographic-opportunities%ef%bf%bc%ef%bf%bc%ef%bf%bc%ef%bf%bc%ef%bf%bc%ef%bf%bc%ef%bf%bc%ef%bf%bc/) claims to work diligently to mobilize members of the “New American Majority,” which includes people of color and unmarried women, to register to vote and cast ballots.

Republicans have taken issue with the Biden administration's approach to using federal resources to juice voter participation.

“We have concerns about the lack of constitutional and statutory authority for federal agencies to engage in any activity outside the agency's authorized mission, including federal voting access and registration activities,” a letter from the House Oversight Committee sent to Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young on May 13 [*reads*](https://oversight.house.gov/release/comer-oversight-republicans-probe-constitutionality-of-president-bidens-voting-executive-order/).

The ED, New America, the Voter Participation Center, the NEA and the AFT did not immediately respond to the Daily Caller News Foundation's requests for comment.

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**Graphic**

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona takes part in a briefing at the White House in Washington, U.S., March 17, 2021. REUTERS/Leah Millis

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