

VITTORIA ELLIOTT

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Elon Musk's America PAC Has Created an Election Denial Cesspool on X

The group has nearly 50,000 members, many enthusiastically sharing debunked claims about voting fraud. "It's just an election denier jamboree," says one expert.



SpaceX, X and Tesla CEO Elon Musk attends the UK Artificial Intelligence (AI) Safety Summit at Bletchley Park, in central England. PHOTOGRAPH: TOBY MELVILLE/GETTY IMAGES



SAVE

For months, billionaire and X owner Elon Musk has used his platform to share election conspiracy theories that could undermine faith in the outcome of the 2024 election. Last week, the political action committee (PAC) Musk backs took it a step further, launching a group on X called the Election Integrity Community. The group has nearly 50,000 members and says that it is meant to be a place where users can “share potential incidents of voter fraud or irregularities you see while voting in the 2024 election.”

In practice, it is a cesspool of election conspiracy theories, alleging everything from unauthorized immigrants voting to misspelled candidate names on ballots. “It’s just an election denier jamboree,” says Paul Barrett, deputy director of the Center for Business and Human Rights at New York University, who authored a recent report on how social media facilitates political violence.

Since endorsing former president and Republican nominee Donald Trump following the first assassination attempt against him in July, Musk has become one of Trump’s most important financial backers, pouring more than \$100 million into the America PAC since July. The PAC has also been a pillar of the Trump campaign’s ground game in swing states. WIRED reporting found that Blitz Canvassing, a contractor for the PAC, was threatening canvassers in Michigan, and transporting them in U-Hauls.

Earlier in October, Musk appeared at a Trump rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, where he repeated false claims that Democrats would allow undocumented immigrants to vote illegally, and encouraged Trump’s supporters to vote.

In January 2021, the company then known as Twitter banned Trump’s account for incitement to violence during the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol. But since taking over and rebranding it as X, Musk has fired many of the people on the teams that worked to keep mis- and disinformation off the platform. Last year, X fired much of what remained of its elections integrity team. After the news broke, Musk posted on X, saying, “Oh you mean the ‘Election Integrity’ Team that was undermining election integrity? Yeah, they’re gone.”

Barrett says that the America PAC’s Election Integrity Community group augments the work of other election-denying groups, like former Trump adviser Cleta Mitchell’s Election Integrity Network. “This is a parallel anti-election, anti-democracy campaign designed to sow confusion and lay the groundwork for

baseless objections to elections after Election Day. This is going on all across the country, and it's extremely dangerous,” says Barrett. “And we're going to see the results of it almost immediately when the polls close on November 5th.”

2024 US Election

After months of campaigning, scandal, propaganda, and downright weirdness, it all comes down to this.

Inside the group, multiple accounts shared a viral video of a person ripping up ballots, allegedly from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, which US intelligence agencies have said is fake. Another account shared a video from conspiracy theorist Alex Jones alleging that unauthorized immigrants were being bussed to

polling locations to vote. One video shared multiple times, and also purportedly from Buck County, shows a voter confronting a woman with a “voter protection” tag on a lanyard who tells the woman filming that she is there for “early vote monitoring” and asks not to be recorded. Text in the accompanying post says that there were “long lines and early cut offs” and alleges election interference. That post has been viewed more than 1 million times.

Some accounts merely retweet local news stories, or right-wing influencers like Lara Loomer and Jack Posobiec, rather than sharing their own personal experiences. One account merely reshared a post from Sidney Powell, the disgraced lawyer who attempted to help Trump overturn the 2020 election, in which she says that voting machines in Wisconsin connect to the internet, and therefore could be tampered with. In actuality, voting machines are difficult to hack. Many of the accounts reference issues in swing states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

But Barrett says that the real value of this group, and others like it, is not necessarily to collect or verify actual issues at polling places or with voting machines—things that can, and do, happen in a normal election. Instead, it is a way to bolster claims that the election is being stolen, amassing thousands of “examples” that will serve to support an argument that Trump lost by fraud if he is defeated at that ballot box.

“This is another cynical and destructive step that Musk and many, many others on the political right are taking to undermine faith in elections, because of their anxiety that if elections are just held in a conventional, straightforward way, their side loses,” he says.

You can follow all of WIRED's 2024 presidential election coverage here.

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ANGELA WATERCUTTER

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"I felt like Big Brother was always watching me," says a contracted door knocker, one of several who allege to WIRED that they faced poor working conditions while getting out the vote for Donald Trump.

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VITTORIA ELLIOTT

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MAKENA KELLY

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Vast networks of true believers, convinced beyond all reason that the last election was stolen, have spent years preparing to undermine this one. At last, their time has arrived.

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An Election Denial Group Has Spent Months Compiling ‘Suspicious Voter’ Lists in North Carolina

Emails obtained by WIRED show that technology from a company called EagleAI Network is helping election deniers target their neighbors.

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A Russian Disinfo Campaign Is Using Comment Sections to Seed Pro-Trump Conspiracy Theories

A disinformation campaign is using the unmoderated spaces of right-wing news website comment sections to push its narratives.

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Russia Is Going All Out on Election Day Interference

Along with other foreign influence operations—including from Iran—Kremlin-backed campaigns to stoke division and fear have gone into overdrive.

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US Intel Says Insider Threats Are 'Likely' During the Election

A government memo viewed by WIRED states that insider threats “could derail or jeopardize a fair and transparent election process.”

TESS OWEN

Election Denial Conspiracy Theories Are Exploding on X. This Time They’re Coming From the Left

Conspiracy theories about missing votes—which are not, in fact, missing—and something being “not right” are being spread widely on X in the wake of Donald Trump’s election victory.

DAVID GILBERT

