

GOP Gives Big Business Feud for Thought

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By Tony Perkins - Family Research Council

This Valentine's Day, there's no love lost between conservatives and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The word "strained" doesn't begin to describe the two sides' relationship after drifting even farther apart last year. Since the election, things have taken an increasingly bitter turn under the group's woke leadership, who seem to be enamored with Leftist organizations [like Black Lives Matter](#) that helped torch cities in 2020 and led to the shutdown of businesses the Chamber is supposed to represent. And by the looks of it, those fences aren't going to be mended anytime soon.

It feels like a lifetime ago since America's oldest and largest trade association said that making Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) majority leader was its ["No. 1 priority."](#) The days of the Chamber and GOP teaming up to fight higher taxes and economic disasters like ObamaCare seem long over now that the Left has managed to co-opt the organization for its radical causes. By 2019, after a few years of "bipartisan outreach," the organization was telling the Washington Post that it was tired of aligning with Republicans and wanted to ["rebuild"](#) as a more inclusive brand. It's time, then-chairman Tom Wilson said, to "fundamentally act differently."

And they did -- stunning everyone by coming out in support of the freedom-crushing Equality Act. The second shoe dropped in 2020, when the Chamber endorsed *three times* the number of Democrats in federal races than it did two years earlier. When, a handful of months later, the group [denounced Republicans](#) with legitimate election concerns, the split was official. Suddenly, angry conservatives were hitting back. "The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has become a self-licking ice cream cone," Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) fumed. Representatives Scott Perry (R-Pa.) and Chip Roy (R-Texas) wrote a [scathing op-ed in the Hill](#), slamming the Chamber's "crony capitalism" and "craven self-serving, woke advocacy."

Prominent Republicans like House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) started to publicly distance themselves from the Chamber. Disgusted by the betrayal of a business community they have historically championed, several conservatives said they no longer wanted the group's endorsement. "They have sold out," McCarthy argued, and warned -- [as recently as last month](#) -- that they have no place in the Republican Party. On every explosive issue -- from girls' sports, transgenderism, and "diversity quotas" to China and Black Lives Matter -- the Chamber has thrown its lot in with the extremists of Big Business, Big Tech, and Silicon Valley.

Now, as truckers line the Canadian and U.S. borders in protest of the vaccine mandates, the organization has decided to line up against the working man fighting for freedom from smothering government overreach. These "disruptions," [the group complained](#), are "adding to the significant supply chain strains on manufacturers and other businesses in the United States." It's time, the Chamber insists, for the Biden administration and Canadian government to act. Of course, this is the same organization that started a national project to ["preserve" the Black Lives Matter graffiti](#) from the 2020 riots. These were the demonstrations that burned through cities, destroyed local businesses, and defaced public property. They think the result of those violent displays is "art," but

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call the peaceful protests to preserve freedom destructive.

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"It's beyond hypocrisy," Liberty University School of Business Dean Dave Brat agreed. And frankly, he pointed out, we're all to blame for the radical corporate culture they're embracing because "we're all buying the products of the companies" supporting these radical causes. "We need to start voting with our pocketbooks... or else 10 percent of the Left is going to dominate our culture," Brat urged. "We need to reclaim [it]. We need to start being clear in our values and our dollars lining behind those values on everything you do. You will have an impact if everyone starts thinking and acting and voting with your feet and your wallets. Christianity should have a huge effect on this country."

Meanwhile, the irony of the Chamber's grand compromise is that all of this liberal pandering hasn't really won them anything. Bending a knee to the social radicalism of the Left hasn't made the Democratic Party any friendlier to the free-market principles the Chamber always supported. If anything, NRO's Nate Hochman [writes](#), it's made the public more resentful and its original agenda more difficult. "The Chamber's 'strategic' [shift away from the GOP](#) looks unlikely to bear fruit for its members," he writes.

In fact, no one is quite sure what the organization is getting for selling their soul. Everyday Americans are increasingly disgusted by a corporate culture that's trying to dictate morality in the U.S., then in the same breath, excuse business with communist China. Suddenly, the same CEOs lecturing us on white supremacy don't care about racial justice. They don't mind that slave laborers from nearby concentration camps are stitching together their [Nikes](#). When Rep. Michael Waltz (R-Fla.) introduced a bill to expose the U.S. sponsors of the Beijing Olympics, guess who lined up against it? [The Chamber of Commerce](#).

But then, as Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) points out, that's just par for the Chamber's course. "They really are attempting to have it both ways. [They will] endorse these far-Left social policies, they will try to blackmail [red] states... but then they'll turn around and come to Republicans asking for tax breaks, tax credits, and trade deals." They want to have their cake and eat it too. They're desperate for the admiration of the Left and the favorable economic policies of conservatives. And while they run to the Left, embracing this "diversity" that robs Americans of their speech, privacy, and beliefs, where will they look to bail them out when their profits start tanking? To conservatives.

I say let them tank. Until America's business community embraces -- or at least stops attacking -- the moral and social structure that leads to growth, the Left can have them. And then, when their revenues implode because of the Left's regulations and their profits evaporate over the Democrats' tax-and-spend politics, maybe Big Business will come to their senses and realize how good they and their stockholders once had it.