

## Lefty groups behind ‘grassroots’ anti-Trump protests in US propped up by billionaires and dark-money network

By [Ryan King](#) and [Josh Christenson](#) Published May 5, 2025, 2:22 p.m. ET

Dozens of lefty groups behind the country’s supposedly “grassroots” [May Day protests](#) have been [largely bankrolled by two billionaires](#) and a dark-money network of progressive nonprofits.

More than \$500 million from Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss’ organizations, hedge-fund tycoon George Soros’ Open Society Foundations and the dark-money Arabella network flowed to the progressive groups between fiscal years 2016 and 2023, according to an analysis shared with The Post.

The funding wasn’t intended for the May Day protests per se, but it has been propping up many of the self-styled “grassroots” progressive activist groups over time.



Many of the organizations behind this year’s US May Day protests have engaged in similar demonstrations since President Trump took office. James Keivom

“The hypocrisy of the May Day protests is glaring,” said Caitlin Sutherland, executive director of Americans for Public Trust, to The Post.

“These organizations project the illusion of being driven by everyday Americans, but in reality, they’re being bankrolled by some of the biggest dark-money megadonors in politics.”

Starting Thursday, on May Day, organizers put together more than 1,000 protests across the country to demonstrate against President Trump, activity that spilled into the weekend.

Although the day is not generally a significant phenomenon in the US, in some countries, it is a holiday to mark International Workers' Day and spring festivities. Oftentimes, labor movements overseas use it to protest for certain causes.

The "50501" movement — or "50 protests, 50 states, 1" effort, an anti-Trump organization that formed in January — is widely credited for trying to move that international energy into the US by orchestrating the widespread stateside protests last week.

US organizers framed the demonstrations as a fight against "Trump and his billionaire profiteers" — despite records showing that prominent plutocrats were funding many of the participating activist groups.

Many of the protests were also directed at tech baron Elon Musk, who is poised to dramatically reduce his cost-cutting role in the Trump administration by the month's end.



*Billionaire George Soros' Open Society Foundations had shelled out cash to many of the groups that participated in the protests. Bloomberg via Getty Images*

"Trump and his billionaire profiteers are trying to create a race to the bottom – on wages, on benefits, on dignity itself," the "50501" movement [said on its website](#) ahead of the demonstrations.

"We are demanding a country that puts our families over their fortunes – public schools over private profits, healthcare over hedge funds, prosperity over free market politics."

About three dozen of the participating groups have raked in about \$293.6 million from Wyss' groups, \$47 million from the Arabella network and \$194.2 million from Soros' Open Society Foundations, according to an assessment reviewed and checked by The Post.

Some of the most prominent left-wing activist groups in the anti-Trump demonstrations last week were the Sunrise Movement, Indivisible and Planned Parenthood.

Tax filings and other records show that the Sunrise Movement took in \$2,070,000 from funders in the so-called Arabella network, and Indivisible got \$107,000 from the Arabella network, \$6.5 million from Wyss groups and \$7.6 million from Soros' Open Society Foundations, while Planned Parenthood Federation of America accrued \$1.6 million from the Arabella network, almost \$6 million from Wyss' groups and \$19.7 million from Soros' group.

"The Open Society Foundations did not fund or coordinate the May Day protests," a rep for the Open Society Foundations told The Post.



*Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss' groups have also given millions of dollars to the lefty groups that held the protests.*

"We support a wide range of organizations committed to justice and democratic participation, but how they choose to engage in political moments is up to them."

An Arabella representative said, "Arabella Advisors has no connection to the May Day protests.

"We are a nonpartisan professional services firm that provides operational and administrative support to philanthropists and nonprofit organizations."

The Arabella network data includes IRS Form 990 information for the Sixteen Thirty Fund, North Fund, New Venture Fund and Hopewell Fund — nonprofit groups that the Washington, DC-based Arabella Advisors services with operational and administrative support.

Wyss' groups include activities from the eponymous Wyss Foundation — his charitable group — and the Berger Action Fund, his advocacy arm. The Wyss Foundation has not donated to any of the organizations in question.

Because of his Swiss citizenship, Wyss, 89, is precluded from donating to US political candidates. But he has emerged as a top backer of lefty causes in America nonetheless, by pumping cash into dark-money groups.

Dark money in these cases refers to political spending that is not subject to financial disclosure requirements, which helps shield donor identities.

Wyss made his fortune from the medical-device-maker company Synthes, which he sold more than a decade ago to Johnson & Johnson.



*Protesters railed against billionaires like President Trump and Elon Musk. Getty Images*

One of the largest groups to partake in protests that benefited from Wyss was Families Over Billionaires, the trade name for the massive liberal dark-money Sixteen Thirty Fund, which received more than \$278 million from his organizations, records show.

The May Day demonstrations across the US were the latest in anti-Trump protests that have taken place since his 2024 election victory, which have been orchestrated by groups that have, in part, received billionaire cash.