



Report: Bill Gates Quietly Donated \$50 Million to Harris

After decades of steering clear of direct political donations, Bill Gates, one of the wealthiest individuals in the world, is quietly backing Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential bid. According to a [New York Times](#) report, Gates recently made a \$50 million contribution to [Future Forward USA Action](#), a nonprofit group backing Harris. This move, which Gates has kept private, marks a significant shift in his long-standing official political neutrality and could have major implications for the race.



AP Images
Bill Gates

"This Election Is Different:" Gates' Shift

Gates' decision to make this donation represents a stark departure from his previous reluctance to engage in high-profile political funding. In the past, he has avoided political endorsements and large donations, stating in 2019:

I choose not to participate in large political donations. There are times it might feel tempting to do so, and there are other people who choose to do so, but I just don't want to grab that gigantic megaphone.

This year, however, the stakes appear to be higher. While Gates has not made any public statement endorsing Harris, his \$50 million donation to Future Forward reflects his growing anxiety about the political and societal future the way he envisions it.

According to the *Times*:

"I support candidates who demonstrate a clear commitment to improving health care, reducing poverty and fighting climate change in the U.S. and around the world," [Gates] told The New York Times. "I have a long history of working with leaders across the political spectrum, but this election is different, with unprecedented significance for Americans and the most vulnerable people around the world."

The move appears to underscore his belief that the 2024 election holds far-reaching consequences.

Concerns About Trump

Though Gates has historically worked with politicians from both major parties, his private conversations reveal deep concerns about the impact of a potential Trump comeback. Gates sees risks in areas such as climate change and global health:

In private calls this year to friends and others, Mr. Gates has expressed concern about what



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on October 23, 2024

a second Donald Trump presidency would look like....

Mr. Gates's philanthropic organization, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is significantly concerned about potential cuts to family planning and global health programs if Mr. Trump is elected, according to two people close to the foundation.

During his presidency, Trump implemented several measures to limit funding for abortion and so-called reproductive health services. Notably, he introduced the "[gag rule](#)" that restricted Title X recipients from providing or referring for abortions, leading organizations like Planned Parenthood to withdraw from the program. He reinstated and expanded the [Mexico City Policy](#), cutting U.S. funding for foreign NGOs involved in abortion services, and attempted to defund Planned Parenthood domestically. His administration also [rolled back ObamaCare \(ACA\)](#) contraceptive-coverage mandates and [cut funding](#) to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Gates and Trump

During the Trump presidency, Bill Gates and Donald Trump met on several occasions to discuss global health, including pandemic preparedness and vaccine development.

While they agreed on the importance of these matters, Gates played a crucial role in steering Trump away from a potential vaccine-safety commission. Trump, influenced by vaccine-safety advocate [Robert F. Kennedy Jr.](#), considered forming the commission, but Gates intervened, calling it "[a dead end](#)" and warning against it. This advice apparently led Trump to drop the idea.

Gates later [claimed](#) that he declined Trump's offer to appoint him as a scientific advisor.

Despite some areas of agreement, Gates publicly criticized Trump's position on climate change, particularly [withdrawal](#) from the Paris Agreement. He also [blasted](#) Trump's approach to public health policies during the Covid pandemic, as well as his [cutting funding](#) to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Family Push

Another factor in Gates' decision to become more politically involved may be his children. According to sources, two of his children, Rory and Phoebe, have increasingly encouraged their parents to take a more active role in political giving, and both young adults have already made donations to Democratic causes.

Melinda French Gates, Gates' former wife and co-founder of the Gates Foundation, has also joined the political-donations effort. She has made contributions to the same nonprofit arm of Future Forward that Gates reportedly contributed to.

Michael Bloomberg

The *Times* report mentions Gates "has talked about his pro-Harris donation with his peers, including Mike Bloomberg." The two are longtime friends.

Bloomberg, a former mayor of New York City and billionaire philanthropist, has been a prominent donor to Democratic causes for many years. In the 2024 election cycle, Bloomberg has already made significant financial contributions to support Democrats. Notably, he donated [\\$10 million](#) to the House Majority PAC, the largest super PAC supporting House Democrats. This donation accounted for over half of the PAC's total fundraising in July 2024.



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In addition to supporting House races, Bloomberg has also directed funds toward other Democratic priorities, including \$19 million to Future Forward. He also contributed \$7 million to a super PAC associated with Everytown for Gun Safety, an organization Bloomberg helped found, per *Politico*. His significant financial involvement in the 2024 election underscores his continued commitment to Democratic victories, following his substantial spending during the 2020 presidential election cycle, when he ran for president himself.

Quiet Donation With Major Impact

Gates' contribution to Future Forward has largely flown under the radar, partly because it was made to a 501(c)(4) organization, which is not required to disclose its donors. This structure has allowed Gates to make a significant impact while maintaining a degree of anonymity. As a result, his name will not appear in public filings, and his donation may not be widely known except to those close to the campaign.

Future Forward has played a crucial role in the Harris campaign's advertising strategy, running multiple anti-Trump ads this fall. While the nonprofit arm is restricted in how much it can spend on such efforts, its affiliated super PAC faces no such limitations. According to the *Times*, the super PAC has received over \$170 million from the nonprofit, allowing it to operate without the same financial constraints.

Normalizing "Dark Money"?

The outlet suggests that by donating to a "dark money" group, Gates and other wealthy donors can avoid potential backlash. The argument is that it is particularly important given the environment of heightened political tensions. Donald Trump has previously [threatened](#) criminal retribution against high-profile Democratic supporters and other influential figures. As a result, some donors might prefer more discreet ways to contribute, protecting themselves from potential retaliation.

The suggestion seems like an effort to normalize political contributions made to nonprofit organizations that are not required to disclose their donors. While this type of funding is legal, it has raised concerns for several reasons, such as the potential for corruption and erosion of the democratic process. Both parties repeatedly express worry that "dark money" leads to "shadow campaigns" that operate outside the oversight of official campaign finance laws.

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