

MEMO FOR INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: Accountable Tech
DATE: July 31, 2024
RE: NEW POLLING: Why donor pressure is unlikely to change VP Harris' approach to Big Tech

Vice President Kamala Harris' rise to the top of the Democratic Presidential ticket has rightfully spurred a renewed focus on her record, with many [assuming](#) that a President Harris would be a friend to Big Tech. After all, Harris wouldn't be the first California-based politician to take a hands-off approach to the tech industry once elected to national office. And it's true that some tech executives have [made significant donations](#) to her campaign – with media reports [suggesting](#) this could convince Harris to be more lenient with CEOs from emerging industries like crypto and generative AI.

But a closer look at Harris' record tells another story. Far from cozying up to Big Tech, Harris has regularly advocated for strong tech regulations that put the safety and privacy of consumers over Big Tech profits. And [new polling](#) – conducted by Data for Progress in partnership with Accountable Tech – shows why donor pressure from the tech industry is unlikely to change Harris' approach.

Newly-released polling finds that an overwhelming majority of U.S. voters support Harris in calling for Big Tech accountability.

The poll – which surveyed 1,162 likely U.S. voters from July 26 to 29 – found that voters would overwhelmingly approve of Harris embracing a wide range of tech accountability measures on the campaign trail. This includes support for requiring social media platforms to protect kids' online safety (80%); requiring online platforms to protect their users' personal health information (78%); requiring AI companies to implement safety guidelines and third-party testing on their products (72%); and allowing online platforms to be liable for harmful content shared on their platforms (70%). Additionally, a majority of voters across party lines approve of Harris supporting robust antitrust legislation (63%) and leaving tech executives out of advising on major policy decisions (61%).

That's why – despite the wish-casting of some tech executives – it's highly unlikely that Vice President Harris will soften her long-standing and popular approach to tech accountability. Instead, we should continue to see Harris lean into her record of prioritizing people over Big Tech, protecting Americans' privacy, and advocating for commonsense safeguards around AI – both on the campaign trail and in the White House.

Vice President Harris has a history of supporting efforts to rein in corporate influence and hold Big Tech companies accountable. Voters – across party lines – are behind her support of robust antitrust legislation and leaving tech execs out of making major policy decisions.

While antitrust measures have largely gained momentum since Harris left the Senate, she is on the record in support of antitrust enforcement.

- During her 2020 campaign, Harris underscored the need for stronger antitrust enforcement to protect consumers and the market, [calling](#) Big Tech, “Essentially a utility that has gone unregulated. And as far as I’m concerned, that’s got to stop.”
- The Biden-Harris Administration has taken an [aggressive approach](#) to reigning in Big Tech’s monopoly power, including via appointments like Lina Khan and Jonathan Kanter.

POLLING: 63% of voters (+37) would approve if Vice President Kamala Harris supported robust antitrust legislation for Big Tech companies.

		D	I	R	
[7] Some lawmakers in Congress support passing robust antitrust legislation for Big Tech companies to rein in monopoly power within the industry and promote competition.	Strongly approve	29%	48%	25%	11%
	Somewhat approve	34	37	37	28
	Somewhat disapprove	13	7	11	20
	Strongly disapprove	13	2	12	24
	Don't know	12	6	15	16
		APPROVE (TOTAL)	63%	85%	62%
If Vice President Kamala Harris supported passing robust antitrust legislation for Big Tech companies, would you approve or disapprove of her decision?	DISAPPROVE (TOTAL)	26	9	23	44
	APPROVE (NET)	+37	+76	+39	-5

POLLING: 61% of voters (+33) would support a pledge by President Kamala Harris to not have any Big Tech executives or lobbyists advise her administration on technology policy.

		D	I	R	
[6] Some advocates have called for Vice President Kamala Harris to pledge to not have any Big Tech executives or lobbyists advise her administration on technology policy if she were to win in November.	Strongly approve	29%	46%	25%	13%
	Somewhat approve	32	35	33	26
	Somewhat disapprove	15	9	16	19
	Strongly disapprove	13	3	13	24
	Don't know	12	7	13	17
		APPROVE (TOTAL)	61%	81%	58%
If Vice President Kamala Harris pledged to not have any Big Tech executives or lobbyists advise her administration on technology policy, would you approve or disapprove of her decision?	DISAPPROVE (TOTAL)	28	12	29	43
	APPROVE (NET)	+33	+69	+29	-4

Vice President Harris supports legislation that would require social media companies’ protect the safety and privacy of kids and teens. Voters overwhelmingly approve.

As Vice President and a presidential candidate, Harris has supported legislation to protect the safety and privacy of kids online.

- As the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Harris recently [applauded](#) the Senate for passing the Kids Online Safety and Privacy Act and called for the House to pass the bill.

- The Biden-Harris administration has long-supported legislation that would require social media platforms to better protect children and teens’ privacy and safety online. President Biden invited Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen as his guest to his 2022 State of the Union speech, [declaring](#) “we must hold social media platforms accountable for the national experiment they’re conducting on our children for profit,” and [called](#) for the passage of KOSA and COPPA in his 2023 State of the Union speech.

POLLING: 80% of voters (+ 66%) approve of a Harris Administration requiring social media companies to protect children’s safety and privacy online.

		D	I	R	
[1] Some lawmakers in Congress support requiring social media companies to protect children's safety and privacy online, including disabling addictive features on their platforms and protecting minors' private information.	Strongly approve	48%	69%	44%	29%
	Somewhat approve	32	27	34	35
	Somewhat disapprove	6	1	9	8
	Strongly disapprove	8	1	5	18
If Vice President Kamala Harris supported requiring social media companies to protect children's safety and privacy online, would you approve or disapprove of her decision?	Don't know	7	3	8	11
	APPROVE (TOTAL)	80%	96%	78%	64%
	DISAPPROVE (TOTAL)	14	2	14	26
	APPROVE (NET)	+66	+94	+64	+38

As Attorney General and Senator, Harris has repeatedly pushed Big Tech companies to protect the privacy of their users. Nearly 80% of voters would support her in requiring social media companies to better protect users’ data privacy and personal health information.

As Attorney General, Senator, and Vice-President, Harris pushed Big Tech companies to protect the privacy of their users.

- In 2012, Harris spearheaded a global [agreement](#) that committed Big Tech companies to improve their privacy protections for users. Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, and Research In Motion all signed the agreement.
- Following this agreement, Harris took steps to [enforce](#) privacy protection laws by creating the Privacy Enforcement and Protection Unit in the California Department of Justice. Her work in California was praised by advocacy organizations, including the [Center for Democracy & Technology](#) and the [Electronic Privacy Information Center](#).
- Then-Senator Harris [grilled Mark Zuckerberg](#) at his 2018 congressional hearing on data privacy and Russian disinformation, repeatedly pushing for information on Facebook’s data collection practices and ties to Cambridge Analytica.
- As Vice-President, Harris [convened](#) constitutional law, privacy, and technology experts to address the Supreme Court’s repeal of *Roe v. Wade* – including concerns that lax data privacy could allow states to subpoena women’s personal reproductive health data.

POLLING: 78% of voters (+ 63%) would approve of Harris requiring online platforms to better protect users’ personal health information, including reproductive health data.

		D	I	R	
[2] Some lawmakers in Congress have raised concerns about online platforms using individuals' health information, including reproductive health data, for harmful purposes and support requiring these platforms to protect their users' personal health information.	Strongly approve	51%	73%	47%	29%
	Somewhat approve	27	20	30	34
	Somewhat disapprove	6	4	6	8
	Strongly disapprove	9	0	9	18
	Don't know	7	2	9	11
If Vice President Kamala Harris supported requiring online platforms to protect their users' personal health information, would you approve or disapprove of her decision?	APPROVE (TOTAL)	78%	93%	77%	63%
	DISAPPROVE (TOTAL)	15	4	15	26
	APPROVE (NET)	+63	+89	+62	+37

As Vice President, Harris has led efforts to develop AI safeguards and mitigate the environmental and societal harms of AI. Strong majorities of voters would support her in pushing AI companies to adhere to safety guidelines, implement third-party testing, and be held accountable for their energy and water usage.

Vice President Harris shaped the administration’s aggressive approach to AI safety.

- As Vice President, Harris led the Biden administration's efforts to ensure responsible development and deployment of new AI technology, including President Biden’s [Executive Order on AI](#) and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy’s [Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights](#).
- In this role, Harris has centered efforts to address immediate harms of AI, with a focus on marginalized and under-represented communities. As representative of the United States last year at a global convening in London on the future of technology, Harris [elevated](#) the immediate harms of AI and its propensity to exacerbate existing biases on race, gender, age, and more.
- Harris led the release of new policies governing how federal agencies use AI, including [requiring](#) government agencies to publish what AI systems they use and verify they do not endanger Americans' rights and safety.
- Harris has declined to weigh in on ongoing FTC [investigations](#) against AI giants OpenAI and Anthropic – unlike tech darling [J.D. Vance](#).

POLLING: 72% of voters (+53%) would support Harris requiring AI companies implement safety guidelines and third-party testing on their products.

		D	I	R	
[3] Some lawmakers in Congress support requiring artificial intelligence (AI) companies to implement safety guidelines and third-party testing on their products before being released to the general public, even if it may slow down the development of the technology.	Strongly approve	44%	66%	41%	23%
	Somewhat approve	28	25	30	30
	Somewhat disapprove	8	4	8	11
	Strongly disapprove	11	1	10	21
	Don't know	10	4	11	14
	APPROVE (TOTAL)	72%	91%	71%	53%
If Vice President Kamala Harris supported requiring AI companies to implement safety guidelines and third-party testing on their products, would you approve or disapprove of her decision?	DISAPPROVE (TOTAL)	19	5	18	32
	APPROVE (NET)	+53	+86	+53	+21

POLLING: 70% of voters (+ 49%) would support Harris in holding AI companies accountable for their energy and water usage.

		D	I	R	
[4] Some lawmakers in Congress support holding AI companies accountable for their usage of energy and clean water to support their data centers, which can lead to an increase in carbon emissions and strain freshwater supplies.	Strongly approve	41%	66%	38%	18%
	Somewhat approve	29	27	29	30
	Somewhat disapprove	9	3	10	16
	Strongly disapprove	12	1	11	24
	Don't know	9	4	12	13
	APPROVE (TOTAL)	70%	93%	67%	48%
If Vice President Kamala Harris supported holding AI companies accountable for their usage of energy and clean water to support their data centers, would you approve or disapprove of her decision?	DISAPPROVE (TOTAL)	21	4	21	40
	APPROVE (NET)	+49	+89	+46	+8

Vice President Harris has a record of holding tech companies accountable for their platforming of online hate. More than two-thirds of likely voters would support her in calling to reform Section 230 and expand companies' liability for online harms.

As Attorney General and Vice President, Harris has cracked down on Big Tech companies' platforming of online hate.

- During her time as Attorney General, Harris [convened](#) tech leaders, victims' advocates, and legislative and law enforcement leaders to combat 'revenge porn', the sharing of intimate photos without the subject's consent. Her strategy ultimately worked, with [Twitter](#), [Google](#) and [Microsoft](#) unveiling policies to remove revenge porn from their platforms.
- While Harris has not explicitly called for repeal of Section 230, she [voted](#) for legislation in the Senate that would amend social media platform's liability shield to ensure they were held accountable for sex trafficking.
- In 2017, Senator Harris [grilled executives](#) from Google, Facebook and Twitter for platforming Russian disinformation during the 2016 Presidential election, noting that their companies' business models (ie: an incentive to increase ad revenue) likely

contributed to the decision, and putting the responsibility on tech companies to prevent future attacks.

POLLING: 70% of voters (+ 49%) would support Harris in calling for reforms to the liability exemption for online platforms so that they are liable for the harmful content shared on their platforms.

		D	I	R	
[5] Some lawmakers in Congress support reforming Section 230, a provision of the Communications Decency Act that grants online platforms near complete immunity for the harmful content shared on their platforms.	Strongly approve	39%	60%	34%	19%
	Somewhat approve	31	31	32	30
	Somewhat disapprove	10	4	11	17
	Strongly disapprove	11	1	12	20
	Don't know	9	4	11	14
These lawmakers would like to reform Section 230 to allow these platforms to be completely or partially liable for the harmful content shared on their platforms.	APPROVE (TOTAL)	70%	91%	66%	49%
	DISAPPROVE (TOTAL)	21	5	23	37
If Vice President Kamala Harris supported allowing online platforms to be liable for the harmful content shared on their platforms, would you approve or disapprove of her decision?	APPROVE (NET)	+49	+86	+43	+12

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