

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 17, 2025

Sam Altman  
Chief Executive Officer  
OpenAI Headquarters  
3180 18th Street, Suite 100  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Dear Mr. Altman,

In the two months since the election, Big Tech companies including OpenAI have made million-dollar gifts to President-elect Donald Trump's inaugural fund in what appears to be an effort to influence and sway the actions and policies of the incoming administration. Specifically, on December 13th, 2024 reporting confirmed your intention to personally donate \$1 million to the inaugural fund.<sup>1</sup>

Big Tech companies have come under increased scrutiny from federal regulators for antitrust violations, violations of privacy, and harms to workers, consumers, and competition.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, lawmakers in both parties have voiced support for regulating tech platforms, in recognition that there is currently no comprehensive set of rules for the tech sector.<sup>3</sup> We are concerned that your company and other Big Tech donors are using your massive contributions to the inaugural fund to cozy up to the incoming Trump administration in an effort to avoid scrutiny, limit regulation, and buy favor.

You have a clear and direct interest in obtaining favors from the incoming administration: your company and many other Big Tech donors are already the subject of ongoing federal investigations and regulatory actions. For example:

- Amazon, which donated \$1 million to Trump's inaugural fund, is the subject of multiple ongoing regulatory actions, including multiple Federal Trade Commission (FTC) suits related to anticonsumer and anticompetitive practices, a Department of Justice (DOJ)

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<sup>1</sup> Associated Press, "OpenAI's Altman will donate \$1 million to Trump's inaugural fund," Sarah Parvini, December 13, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/sam-altman-donald-trump-openai-3b7a87037f3718eb3edc73e94be8a61a>.

<sup>2</sup> Reuters, "FTC can reopen Meta privacy case despite \$5 billion fine, court rules," Mike Scarcella, March 13, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/transactional/ftc-can-reopen-meta-privacy-case-despite-5-bln-fine-court-rules-2024-03-13/>; U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, "Justice Department Sues Google for Monopolizing Digital Advertising Technologies," press release, January 24, 2023, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-sues-google-monopolizing-digital-advertising-technologies>.

<sup>3</sup> Digital Consumer Protection Commission Act of 2023, S. 2597, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/2597>; Open App Markets Act, S. 2710, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2710>; AMERICA Act, S. 1073, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1073>.

investigation into fraudulent schemes to obtain credit, and over 300 open National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) cases alleging unfair labor practices.<sup>4</sup>

- Apple CEO Tim Cook donated \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural fund, while Apple is the subject of a DOJ antitrust suit, as well as over 20 open NLRB cases related to unfair labor practices.<sup>5</sup>
- Google, which donated \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural fund, was found by a federal court to have an illegal monopoly over the online search market.<sup>6</sup> Google has promised to appeal the ruling and the Trump administration’s DOJ will decide whether to contest the appeal. Google is also the subject of over 20 open NLRB cases related to unfair labor practices.<sup>7</sup>
- Meta, which donated \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural fund, is the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) into the improper use of financial data and an FTC antitrust suit for monopolistic practices.<sup>8</sup>
- Microsoft has donated \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural fund and is the subject of multiple open investigations by the FTC for anticompetitive practices.<sup>9</sup>
- OpenAI CEO Sam Altman personally donated \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural fund, while OpenAI is the subject of an open FTC investigation for consumer harm, and an SEC investigation for misleading investors.<sup>10</sup>
- Uber donated \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural fund, along with an additional \$1 million from Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi. The company is the subject of an ongoing FTC investigation for predatory practices.<sup>11</sup>

It is critical that federal regulators continue to evenhandedly apply competition, consumer protection, anti-discrimination laws and any other rule or law that applies to your company. But the industry’s efforts suggest that Big Tech companies are trying to curry favor and skirt the rules. This would be good for billionaire tech executives, but it is bad for America: if left unchecked, Big Tech monopolies will threaten consumers’ rights, run roughshod over workers, and squash competition while stifling innovation.

These donations raise questions about corruption and the influence of corporate money on the Trump administration, and Congress and the public deserve answers. Therefore, we ask that you provide responses to the following questions by January 31st, 2025:

1. When and under what circumstances did your company decide to make these contributions to the Trump inaugural fund?

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<sup>4</sup> Public Citizen, “Corporate Enforcement Tracker,” January 10, 2025, <https://www.citizen.org/article/corporate-enforcement-trump-tracker>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Associated Press, “US regulators seek to break up Google, forcing Chrome sale as part of monopoly punishment,” Michael Liedtke, November 21, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/google-search-monopoly-penalty-justice-department-84e07fec51c5c59751d846118cb900a7>.

<sup>7</sup> Public Citizen, “Corporate Enforcement Tracker,” January 10, 2025, <https://www.citizen.org/article/corporate-enforcement-trump-tracker>

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

2. What is your rationale for these contributions?
3. Which individuals within the company chose to make these donations?
4. Was the Board informed of these plans, and if so, did they provide affirmative consent to do so? Did your company inform shareholders of plans to make these donations?
5. Did officials with the company have any communications about these donations with members of the Trump Transition team or other associates of President Trump? If so, please list all such communications, including the time of the conversation, the participants, and the nature of any communication.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator