

Corporate America looks to penalise Trump, Republicans, for now



In his final days in office, the biggest names in American business are dumping President Donald Trump over accusations that he incited the deadly mob attack last week on the US Capitol.

Twitter has thrown the president off the platform he relied on to promote himself, Shopify shut down e-commerce pages selling his items and payment platform Stripe says it will no longer handle transactions from Trump's campaign.

Others have turned their attention to the United State's acrimonious two-party politics, with Microsoft, Facebook and Google all announcing pauses in donations to both Republican and Democratic candidates.

But there are no guarantees this sudden cooling in Corporate America's relationship with Washington will last, particularly with Joe Biden looking to

undo many of Trump's business-friendly policies when he comes into office next week.

Also read — [House Democrats introduce articles of impeachment against Trump with just 9 days left in presidency](#)

"This is a real moment of truth. Do they change their behaviour? Or do they revert back after a certain period of time?" Bruce F. Freed, president of the Center for Political Accountability, told *AFP*.

The attack on Congress last week shook the core of American democracy and drew international condemnation. It has also ignited a new effort to remove Trump, who is accused of whipping up the mob into storming the chambers where lawmakers were certifying Biden's November 3 win.

Major industry groups and trade unions came out to condemn Trump even as the fracas was underway.

The National Association of Manufacturers, which had previously been supportive of Trump's agenda, called on Vice President Mike Pence to "seriously consider" evoking the constitution's 25th Amendment that would allow him to temporarily become president after Trump is deemed incapacitated.

Social media companies, alarmed at the use of their platforms by Trump and his supporters to promote and organize the attack, acted next, with Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat banning the president and Amazon's web division forcing conservative social network Parler offline.

However, when it comes to political donations, which are often funnelled through political action committees (PAC), companies have been more circumspect.

Also read — [Fractured by Trump, the GOP can't agree on a way back to power](#)

Hotel giant Marriott, health insurer Blue Cross Blue Shield and financial services company American Express said they would stop making donations to Republican lawmakers who tried to halt certification of Biden's election victory.

That failing effort by Trump's allies was ongoing when protesters, many of whom believed the election was rigged, stormed the Capitol.

But JPMorgan Chase said it was halting donations to candidates from both parties, as was Facebook, Microsoft and Google -- meaning Democrats who are set to narrowly control both houses of Congress won't necessarily see an advantage from the pause.

"Suspending political contributions to lawmakers who voted against Joe Biden's certification last week is justified," said Daniel G. Newman, president of MapLight, which tracks the influence of money on US politics.

However, he said more needs to be done to cut down on corporations' influence, pointing to a bill aimed at doing that introduced by Democrats controlling the House of Representatives just days before the attack on the Capitol.

Several companies made it plain they were taking only a time out from the world of political finance.

Google said its contributions were frozen, "while we review and reassess its policies following last week's deeply troubling events," and Microsoft noted that it "regularly pauses its donations in the first quarter of a new Congress."

Facebook said in a statement its pause would only apply for the first quarter

"at least," but only for PAC contributions -- not overall political spending.

It seems inevitable major corporations will re-enter the lobbies of Congress again, particularly with Biden promising reforms like higher taxes on corporations and a \$15 federal minimum wage that could hurt bottom lines.

Also looming are the 2022 legislative elections that could put the House and Senate back into the hands of Republicans, whose policies are often viewed as friendlier to companies.