

## Amazon donates to group backing hardline antiabortion Republican

## DoorDash and CVS also contributing funds to Raga group trying to re-elect Todd Rokita, who favors total abortion ban

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Martin Pengelly in Washington

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Amazon, DoorDash and CVS Health are among major US companies publicly committed to supporting reproductive rights that have nonetheless contributed this year to a group supporting the re-election of Todd Rokita, the Republican attorney general of Indiana who supports a <u>total</u> abortion ban.

He was also <u>reprimanded</u> by his state supreme court for <u>criticizing</u> a doctor who provided an abortion for 10-year-old rape victim from Ohio.

The corporate donations, detailed in publicly available filings, were made to the Republican Attorneys General Association, or Raga, a "527 committee" – a tax-exempt political campaign group so-called in reference to the US tax code. It exists to funnel nationally donated funds into key state races.

In 2024, Amazon, Doordash and CVS Health between them have donated \$425,000 to Raga. And Raga has given \$255,000 to Rokita, who has also participated in a <u>suit</u> against the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission over accommodations for workers receiving abortions; signed <u>amicus briefs</u> in a US supreme court <u>challenge</u> to Food and Drug Administration approval of mifepristone, an abortion pill; and <u>sought access</u> to private health records, in order to prosecute women seeking abortions.

Altria, AT&T and Comcast are also among major public companies that publicly support reproductive rights while donating to Raga, which supports campaigns for attorney general across the US. (In 2024, Altria has given \$450,000, AT&T \$125,000 and Comcast \$125,000.)

Donations to Republican and Democratic 527 committees have long been tracked by the <u>Center for Political Accountability</u>, a Washington thinktank, which highlighted the donations to Raga and Rokita.

In August, in an introduction to <u>a CPA report</u>, Bruce Buchanan, a professor of business ethics at the Stern School of Business at New York University, said of 527 committees: "Their power far exceeds their media presence. The American citizenry has little awareness of their influence, and even less of their funding and methods. This is unfortunate.

"... As major corporations open their checkbooks to these 527s – and especially to the Republican Attorney Generals Association (Raga) – these funds are going to elect and re-elect state officials that are actively advancing policies antithetical to stakeholder groups across society."

Many major US companies made public statements about support for employees in light of Dobbs v Jackson, the 2022 US supreme court <u>ruling</u> that removed the federal right to abortion, and the ensuing state bans.

In May 2022, after Dobbs was leaked, Amazon <u>told</u> employees it would pay up to \$4,000 in travel expenses for non-life-threatening treatment including abortions, if an operation was not available within 100 miles of an employee's home. In 2024, with stringent post-Dobbs bans in place in Republican-run states including Indiana, where Rokita has <u>advocated</u> for a total ban, Amazon has given Raga \$150,000.

In June 2022, shortly after Dobbs, a DoorDash spokesperson <u>said</u> the company would cover "certain travel-related expenses" for employees forced to travel out of state for abortion care, adding: "It's paramount that all DoorDash employees and their dependents covered on our health plans have equitable, timely access to safe healthcare." This year, Doordash has paid \$150,000 to Raga.

CVS Health has said it is <u>committed</u> to "making out-of-state abortion healthcare services more accessible and affordable" for employees in states with abortion bans. In 2024, it has given Raga \$125,000.

The pattern of companies donating through Raga to Rokita – and other politicians at odds with professed corporate values – is repeated regarding climate policy. Amazon, Doordash and CVS Health are also publicly committed to action to combat climate change. In Indiana, Rokita has been <u>prominently</u> involved in <u>lawsuits</u> against the US Environmental Protection Agency <u>and</u> the Securities and Exchange Commission over carbon emissions standards.

None of the companies responded to requests for comment. Last year, in response to Guardian <u>reporting</u> about donations to 527 committees used for efforts to pass a strict abortion

ban in North Carolina, a spokesperson for the software giant Intuit outlined one corporate defense.

"Our financial support does not indicate a full endorsement of every position taken by an individual policymaker or organization," the spokesperson said. "Intuit is non-partisan and works with policymakers and leaders from both sides of the aisle to advocate for our customers. We believe engagement with policymakers is essential to a robust democracy and political giving is just one of the many ways Intuit engages on behalf of its customers, employees, and the communities it serves."

In the same report, a Bank of America spokesperson <u>said</u> 527 committees could only use its donations for "operational and administrative purposes, not to support any candidates or ballot initiatives". The CPA argued that given 527 committees exist to elect governors, attorneys general and other state officials, that is a distinction without a difference.

In a statement to the Guardian about donations to Raga by companies publicly committed to supporting rights Republican attorneys general have attacked, Bruce Freed, president of CPA and a co-author of the 2024 report, said: "Today's political environment makes it even more important that companies have policies and a framework in place for approaching, managing and evaluating the risks of political spending.

"They need this to give them control over their spending and to protect themselves."

Mike Schmul, the chair of the Indiana Democratic party, said his party's candidate against Rokita, Destiny Wells, was "the only candidate in the race for AG who has received the support of Hoosiers first, not special interests and out-of-state mega-donors.

"Todd Rokita is out of touch with the issues that matter, attacking women and doctors, and threatening the medical privacy of Hoosiers. The choice is clear."