



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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NATIONAL SECURITY, THE  
BORDER, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SEAPOWERS AND PROJECTION FORCES

September 6, 2024

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President  
American Medical Association  
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Dr. Scott,

We are greatly concerned by the ongoing politicization of the medical profession through advocacy efforts by organizations that the American Medical Association (AMA) has and continues to partner with regarding federal elections. One such organization, *Vot-ER*, while claiming to be non-partisan, has partisan leadership and has joined efforts against legislation that would promote secure elections in line with current law. While the American Medical Association operates under the mission to promote the “art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health,” we hope you understand how the mixing of politics and medicine can undermine the AMA’s central mission.

*Vot-ER* was founded in 2019 by Dr. Alister Martin, who, from 2021-2022, was a White House fellow with the Office of the Vice President and the White House Office of Public Engagement.<sup>1</sup> While receiving funding from left-wing dark money groups associated with Arabella Advisors, including the Tides Foundation and Progressive Multiplier Fund<sup>2</sup>, in a clear conflict of interest, Dr. Martin was then invited by the Biden-Harris Administration to serve on the “HHS Advisory Panel on Outreach and Education.” While serving in his HHS advisory role, *Vot-ER* joined partisan lobbying efforts against the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act<sup>3</sup>, which strengthens federal law to ensure non-citizens do not illegally vote in federal elections. Dr. Martin’s employment in the office of a candidate for President, leadership of an organization funded by left-wing groups, and on-record advocacy demonstrate compelling evidence of bias that threatens the credibility of the medical profession, which the AMA should not take part in or face a similar loss of public trust.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the AMA and others in the medical profession have sought to regain the confidence of groups that found their trust in the health establishment diminished. Further involving the AMA in voter registration and other political matters leverages credibility in an arena with negative returns. Public health leaders have pointed to the specter of the future of health care in a low-trust environment and how it may endanger patients.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/18/white-house-appoints-2021-2022-class-of-white-house-fellows/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/vot-er-a-healthier-democracy/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://civilrights.org/resource/civil-rights-groups-letter-in-opposition-to-save-act-2/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/opinion/medical-skepticism-doctors-trust.html>

AMA's past forays into political engagement, including blog posts "*Why it's OK for doctors to ask their patients about voting*"<sup>5</sup> and "*Another question for patients: Are you registered to vote?*"<sup>6</sup> assert that doctors and patients benefit from these civic discussions. However, the partnership with electronic health records company Epic Systems touted publicly by Dr. Martin and Vot-ER Executive Director Aliya Bhatia as "guiding adults in recognizing voting as a right and responsibility, ... making significant strides at the critical intersection of our health and our democracy" through "a free module that adds voter registration questions straight into the intake process and after-visit summaries"<sup>7</sup> has already spurred media and congressional inquiry and skepticism.<sup>8</sup> While we understand that both Epic Systems and Vot-ER have since claimed that no such partnership exists, the concerns with Vot-ER's approach still remain. Investigative reporting has already unearthed that Vot-ER has targeted institutionalized patients with voter registration materials as well as other vulnerable populations in the midst of treatment.<sup>9</sup> Some doctors even go as far as to credit the cessation of suicidal thoughts with registering to vote, muddling the waters between treatment and activism.<sup>10</sup> These unscrupulous practices undermine credibility and politicize the medical profession.

We strongly encourage the AMA to reverse course away from efforts that undermine the AMA's core mission of promoting the "art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health." The politicization of health care provides no benefit to medical providers or patients. When patients seek medical advice from a doctor, the expectation is that such conversations are beyond the realm of partisanship, which even seemingly neutral questions can incite.

We welcome your prompt response and explanation for how AMA will proceed to steer clear of politicization of the medical profession and loss of credibility from working with groups like Vot-ER in the future, including the 2024 election cycle.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress



Chip Roy  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/health-equity/why-it-s-ok-doctors-ask-their-patients-about-voting>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/health-equity/another-question-patients-are-you-registered-vote>

<sup>7</sup> <https://medpagetoday.com/opinion/second-opinions/111237>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/house/3128009/left-wing-dark-money-group-house-investigation/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://freebeacon.com/elections/meet-the-little-known-activist-group-that-has-tens-of-thousands-of-doctors-registering-patients-to-vote/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.pn.2023.09.9.34>