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OpenAI Employees Are Funding a Political Fight Against Their Own President

Researchers charged with studying AI's risks are spending their own money to counter the political influence of one of their company's co-founders.

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Seven current OpenAI employees have given more than \$215,000 to a super PAC created partly to counter a political network backed by OpenAI president and co-founder Greg Brockman, [WIRED first reported Wednesday](#).

[Guardrails Alliance](#) supports candidates who favor tighter safety rules for frontier [AI](#) companies.

The opposing [Leading the Future](#) network, which is backed by Brockman, announced more than \$100 million in backing when it launched last year. Its namesake super PAC reported [\\$75.8 million in receipts](#) through June 30. Federal filings show Brockman and his wife, Anna, each contributed \$12.5 million—half of their \$50 million commitment to the broader effort.

The donations expose an unusual conflict inside OpenAI: Researchers who study the risks of advanced AI are helping finance a political operation designed partly to blunt the influence of their own president.

'Don't Shame Them. Give Them a Way to Convert'

An OpenAI researcher has given at least \$428,000

Juan Felipe Cerón Uribe, an OpenAI research engineer who has worked on strategies to mitigate AI's societal harms, gave \$200,000 to Guardrails Alliance.

That was only part of his political spending. Federal records compiled by Transformer show Cerón Uribe also gave \$200,000 to Dream NYC, a super PAC that spent approximately \$2.48 million supporting New York Assemblymember Alex Bores's unsuccessful bid for Congress.

Bores co-authored the state's [RAISE Act](#), which imposes safety and reporting requirements on the largest AI developers. His primary became an early test of the rival AI political networks: Leading the Future spent approximately \$8.2 million opposing him, while pro-safeguard groups spent more than \$19 million supporting him. Roughly [\\$27 million](#) in outside spending flooded the race before he narrowly lost.

Cerón Uribe contributed another \$14,000 to Scott Wiener's congressional campaign and \$7,000 each to Bores and Manny Rutinel. His disclosed giving to those two super PACs and three candidates totals at least \$428,000.

Cerón Uribe told *WIRED* that four years of safety research could be wasted unless it translated into rules that hold private companies accountable. He said donating was an "easy" decision because Guardrails was pushing back against Brockman and other technology billionaires seeking to keep AI unregulated.

Leading the Future disputes the suggestion that it wants to prevent all AI regulation. The network says it supports federal rules while opposing policies it believes would stifle innovation.

The FEC filing confirms that another OpenAI researcher—Gabriel Wu—gave Guardrails \$5,000. Guardrails told *WIRED* that alignment researchers Julie Steele and Jason Wolfe also gave \$5,000 each and that at least three additional current employees would appear in future disclosures.

The activity extends beyond Guardrails. A Transformer analysis of FEC records shows contributors listing OpenAI as their employer gave about \$220,000 directly to Bores, Wiener, and Rutinel.

Guardrails remains heavily outfunded. It reported \$741,777.63 in receipts through June 30 and aims to raise \$15 million during the 2026 election cycle. In comparison, Leading the Future's namesake super PAC had already raised nearly \$76 million.

But the employees' titles may matter more than the size of their checks.

"The very people building this technology, who have the greatest visibility into current risks and capabilities, are worried that we aren't on track to get this right," Sneha Revanur, founder and president of AI-policy group Encode, told Inc.

Revanur offered a more favorable interpretation of the split, arguing that the donations suggested OpenAI employees felt able to “criticize and even flatly oppose the actions of their leaders.”

The spending is accelerating as states pursue AI rules without a comprehensive federal framework, turning lawmakers who back those efforts into targets for rival industry and safety groups.

The fight was already inside OpenAI

OpenAI employees pressed global affairs chief Chris Lehane about the company’s relationship with Leading the Future during a May meeting. [OpenAI later said](#) Brockman made his contribution in a personal capacity, that the company did not control the network, and that no outside political organization spoke for OpenAI.

CEO [Sam Altman](#) has not publicly responded to the employee donations.

“Contributions by top executives can pose a serious risk to a company,” Bruce Freed, president of the Center for Political Accountability, a nonpartisan nonprofit that advocates for greater disclosure and oversight of corporate political spending, told Inc.

Freed said boards should consider the reputational consequences of executives’ personal political activity when it overlaps with a company’s business or regulatory interests.

That distinction is especially difficult to maintain when the donor remains the company’s president, rather than a retired founder or passive investor.

OpenAI can separate Brockman’s checkbook from the company on paper. But its own researchers are treating his political spending as an OpenAI problem.