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Tesla Ticks Up, Meta Is Down in Corporate Political Money Index

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By Kate Ackley / October 30, 2026 05:00AM ET / Bloomberg Government

The number of public companies sharing details about their political spending ticked up slightly during this midterm election year, when corporate influence featured as a prominent concern among voters, according to an annual scorecard shared first with Bloomberg Government.

The Center for Political Accountability and the Zicklin Center for Governance and Business Ethics at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School on Friday are releasing an annual rating based on companies' policies to voluntarily disclose otherwise hidden details of their political spending, including money sent to 501(c)(4) organizations.

Altria Group Inc., General Motors Co., and Mastercard Inc. were among the 114 companies designated as "trendsetters" in [this year's index](#) with a score of at least 90, up from 112 companies in the 2025 index.

However, Meta Platforms Inc. was among the companies that dipped, dropping 10 points from last year's report, [97.1](#) to 87.1, according to the index. The company didn't provide comment on the change.

Earning a high rating on the CPA-Zicklin index could help insulate companies that come under the congressional microscope in the next Congress, said Bruce Freed, president of the Center for Political Accountability. He said his center was "in serious discussions with leading companies" to increase the number of businesses taking voluntary disclosure steps.

Palantir Technologies Inc., a company that congressional Democrats have said they'd investigate, and Blackstone were dubbed "basement dwellers" for receiving a rating of zero on the index. Neither company responded to requests for comment.

Tesla, a company of Elon Musk, whom congressional Democrats have also said they'd investigate if in the majority, climbed out of the basement dwellers category with a score of 5.7 in this year's index.

The score gives companies points for voluntarily disclosing beyond legal requirements and for having strong board oversight in place, Freed said. For example, companies earn points for publicly saying how much money they've given to nonprofit organizations that spend in elections.

That kind of transparency could help companies next year as corporate-linked political spending and influence campaigns, including donations to projects favored by President Donald Trump, are likely to be atop the congressional investigations agenda if Democrats win control of the House or Senate in the midterm elections.

"Having strong scores, being trendsetters is something that helps show they're committed to being a corporate responsible citizen," Freed said. "With the type of hearings and examination that companies are going to be going through on their political spending, showing they have those strong policies for due diligence and risk management and board oversight become more important."

Ashley Lerner, director of political and industry affairs at GM, said the company takes "pride" in prioritizing transparency.

"We've built clear governance and guardrails to keep our political activity compliant, transparent, and aligned with GM's values," she said. "That includes defined approval processes, training and controls, periodic review, and public disclosure practices that help stakeholders and investors understand what we support and why."

The midterm elections are on pace to shatter previous spending records with a rise in corporate- and executive-linked donations to outside groups, such as super PACs.

With all the cash flowing into the midterms, "results from the 2026 Index reflect leading companies maintaining political disclosure and accountability best practices, in line with prevailing shareholder sentiment about good governance," the introduction to the index said.

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