# The Ground Floor AC (LOBBYSISTS)

## K Framework

## Part 1: White Rage

#### [Cunningham] PRIVATE INTERESTS ARE TAKING OVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS – right-wing corporations are paying to undermine racial education and hide injustice.

Cunningham: Cunningham, Maurice. [Chairman of the Political Science Department, University of Massachusetts at Boston; former assistant attorney general in Massachusetts] “The Corporate Critical Race Theory Attack: Chaos is the Product.” MassPoliticsProfs.org, September 3, 2021. <https://www.masspoliticsprofs.org/2021/09/03/the-corporate-critical-race-theory-attack-chaos-is-the-product/> CH

“The backlash” begins an opinion piece in Newsweek by Parents Defending Education outreach director Erika Sanzi, and these may be the most accurate two words published by those who are attacking “wokeness,” gender studies, and Critical Race Theory. The sad fact is that white backlash has a proven record of effectiveness in American politics and it is once again being employed in the service of right wing corporate interests. The end product desired has less to do with CRT than with spreading disruption, fear, and chaos across America’s most important democratic public institution, schools. According to the Washington Post, as of June 24 CRT (a theory developed in law schools and not well known among most Americans) has exploded on Fox News. The term was heard on Fox only 132 times in 2020 but has been mentioned 1,860 times this year, escalating month by month. The narrative is that grassroots parents groups have discovered the threat CRT poses to their children in schools and have arisen organically across the country to form local parent groups, a movement noticed and captured by websites and the powerful Fox News. The truth is that of an oligarch-funded and coordinated campaign using time tested techniques.

He adds:

Coincidentally or not in 2017 the civil rights-proclaiming Ms. Rodrigues and the radical right Ms. Sanzi were partners in another venture named Planet Mom, which featured a podcast and proposed radio show. In her paid position at Education Post Ms. Sanzi wrote of Ms. Rodrigues “I consider her a partner in this work. And a friend.” It’s a small planet, after all. The point is not Critical Race Theory, or charter schools, virtual schools, or home schools. The point is to undermine public education, keep taxes low, spread doubt of the efficacy of public goods, and demolish institutions like unions and local school communities that make demands on the Waltons and Kochs of the nation. It is, as Nancy MacLean has said, to put democracy in chains. Diverse-presenting National Parents Union and white backlash Parents Defending Education serve the same cause. Whither We Are Tending and What to Do About It I hope my colleagues in academia continue to speak out about the intellectual contributions of Critical Race Theory and the fine efforts of K-12 educators to provide the kind of schooling all our students need—open and honest about the nation’s race and history and our ongoing challenges, including corporate promoted white backlash. On the other hand, don’t expect any engagement from Nicole Neily or the anti-CRT bard Christopher Rufo, who has helped spike this ridiculous campaign. In a triumphant appearance at the Claremont Institute, Rufo described his annoyance at scholars trying to bait him into a discussion of what CRT really means and proclaimed “I don’t give a shit about this stuff.” (Nine minute mark) As Isaac Kamola has urged, start with follow the money and pursue that relentlessly. There’s a reason groups like PDE and NPU can’t come clean about their funding sources and amounts and that reason is that they know the public is suspicious of the Kochs and Waltons of the world and what’s more, the public and America’s billionaires are on a different page on policy issues. These are corporate generated right wing attacks. Say it. Name names. Come awake to the threat. Recognize what this is and that isn’t just about wokeness or even education but something else Koch and the Waltons can’t say out loud: to destroy the capacity of people to coalesce together and fight for a better life for themselves, a project that offends oligarchs ideologically and threatens their power and pocketbooks. They focus on education because schools have been a fertile locale for white backlash but also a source of great progress, because teachers unions are a barrier to them, and because local community organizations defy them. That means that teachers unions, school boards, superintendents, principals, lunch workers, school bus drivers, custodians, business, parents and students—everyone who serves their local school community—have to recognize that they need to fight together against this assault. In other words, join together to take action—exactly what the Waltons, Kochs, and other radical right billionaires fear. And stand up for a real education for all our children, not the white(wash) backlash being promoted by phony AstroTurf fronts like Parents Defending Education. Remember, fronts are fronting for someone and in this case, fronting for radical right billionaires. Money never sleeps. Follow the money.

#### [ROJ] The Role of the Judge is to Confront Educational Capitalism, which means they must use the round to reject the use of monetary control over learning.

#### [Casey] And that requires exposing the connections between capitalistic injustice and white supremacy as a means of resisting both.

Casey: Casey, Zachary A. [Associate Professor and Chair of Educational Studies, Rhodes College] “From White Supremacy to Solidarity: A Pedagogy of Anti-capitalist Antiracism.” University of Minnesota, May 2013. https://tinyurl.com/9kavhfr4 CH

Consciousness thus has the function here of working to connect the local and the universal, both what is immediately at hand and the structures, systems, and frames that inform and act on both individuals and groups. The need is for teachers to come to position themselves as conscious political actors, in an inherently political reality, and to draw connections between what they experience in their local contexts and how those experiences inform the larger context in which those experiences take place. For Marx, revolutionary consciousness is tied to an understanding of one’s position in relation to the means of production. When workers understand that the owners of the means of production alienate and dehumanize in the pursuit of profits, that this is fundamentally what capitalism functions to do, they can then articulate their aims for liberation with the understanding that the present economic system denies them their capacity to be fully human. For anti-capitalist antiracist pedagogy, this form of revolutionary consciousness is the product of learning and critical engagement with curricula, as outlined above. This consciousness is premised on the ability to see, in both local and global contexts, the present realities of white supremacy and the ways in which the logics of white supremacy function to legitimate capitalist exploitation. It is this ability to see that consciousness offers, not merely having an abstract principle, but rather a self-appropriated ability to read both the word and world in critical ways. Seeing the connection between local manifestations of white supremacy and global manifestations of capitalist abuse as a part of the same overarching system of signs and meaning is the principle aim for anti-capitalist antiracist pedagogy. Importantly, however, this cannot be thought of as merely an intellectual skill, and further cannot be learned through banking methods. These last two points need to be explained in further detail. Consciousness, and critical consciousness in particular, should be thought of less as an ability, and more of a way of being in the world. We can make rules for finding racism in practice, and we could learn those rules and then always be successful at identifying the racist connotations of a particular phrase or practice. But merely being able to name these processes offers us nothing. Rather, being able to name these processes and understanding their historical, social, and political dimension and the ways in which race and racism intersect in myriad other systems and forms of oppression, offers us the ability to not only understand racism, but to orient our lives in opposition to it. This orientation, this way of being, carries with it the profound capacity to act on oppressive realities because it refuses to take any system or reality as an inevitability. That is, no creation of human beings is devoid of context, and if we can understand capitalism, positivism, and instrumental reason as unnatural, as made by human beings, we are able to position ourselves in relation to these systems in ways that enable us to see cracks in the edifice. Consciousness of our oppressive order and the ways in which it has been created for particular aims is the precondition for radical solidarity.

#### [ROB] Thus, the Role of the Ballot is to Endorse the Debater who Better Ruptures Manifestations of Racial Capitalism. This means voting for the debater who offers the better response to systemic violence of capitalism; we filter material impacts through that lens.

## Part 2: Wrecked & Unchecked

#### [Utrata 1] CASH IS KING – the private space industry spends billions lobbying politicians to benefit companies while sidestepping checks – it’s outsourced colonization.

**Utrata 1:** Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> MB

In the early years of Blue Origin, Bezos personally funded his company (by selling one billion of Amazon stock per year, he revealed in 2017) and initially focused on space tourism as a potential source of revenue, as well as a way—he claimed—to acclimate people to the idea of space travel. But Bezos watched as Musk’s SpaceX quickly eclipsed his company, both in size and success. Musk had funded SpaceX through a combination of venture capital investment and billions in government contracts. While Blue Origin has never launched a rocket that achieved orbit, SpaceX has been flying NASA cargo to the International Space Station since 2012. Bezos and Musk spend millions of dollars lobbying Congress to continue funding their projects, which already receive massive amounts of public money through government contracts. When Tesla received a $1.3 billion tax break to open a battery plant in Nevada in 2014, Bezos sent off an email to a fellow Amazon executive asking why Musk had been so successful at securing big government incentives. But now Bezos has nothing to complain about. Blue Origin routinely competes with SpaceX for contracts, and both companies spend millions lobbying Congress to continue funding these projects. After SpaceX initially won a contract to build a lunar lander, a short-lived amendment to the Endless Frontier Act which would have authorized $10 billion to NASA’s moon program and established a second award was even briefly nicknamed the “Bezos Bailout.” It is true that Musk has a particular talent for securing government funding across his business ventures. In her book The Entrepreneurial State (2013), Mariana Mazzucato debunks the notion that free markets and small states, rather than government investment in technological innovation, create economic success. She documents how Musk’s companies SpaceX, Tesla, and SolarCity have received billions in government support, including grants, tax breaks, and subsidized loans. On top of that, they have also secured billions more in procurement contracts and direct investments in new technologies from NASA and the Department of Energy. (This government support is not marginal. Tesla only had its first full-year profit in 2020, although Musk has accumulated much of his personal fortune through ownership of the company’s stock.) But this outsourcing of colonization efforts to private corporations is not just a feature of the neoliberal state; corporations have long been embedded in the history of colonization. In the early days of colonization, though companies’ home states often provided them money and legitimacy for their ventures overseas, governments did not always tightly control these endeavors. For instance, the British East India Company—a “company-state,” as coined by Philip Stern—maintained armed forces, waged and declared war, collected taxes, minted coin, and at one point “ruled” over more subjects than the British state itself. As J. C. Sharman and Andrew Phillips noted in Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World (2020), “in some cases, company-states came to wield more military and political power than many monarchs of the day.” Today states, not corporations, are perceived to be the truly dangerous actors in space exploration. But corporations have long been embedded in the history of colonization. Company-states were predicated on an understanding of sovereignty as divisible and delegatory, defying what we today consider “public” and “private” power. Compared to company-states at their zenith, even the largest modern-day multinational corporation—and certainly SpaceX and Blue Origin—has significantly less authority, with absolutely no military might to speak of. The monarchies that first granted monopoly charters to these voyaging companies, having evolved into modern states, have also consolidated sovereign authority and gained far more power than their antecedents in previous centuries. Today states, not corporations, are perceived to be the truly dangerous actors in space exploration. Particularly in the context of worsening U.S.-China relations, the militarization of space by states is often posited as the most likely way that celestial encounters may become violent. On this view, if private U.S. companies were to extract commercial resources from asteroids, it would be a much more peaceful prospect than the U.S. Space Force establishing a military base on the moon. However, this framing ignores corporations’ violent histories and the deep connection between private commercial pursuits and systems of capitalism and colonialism. Moreover, though states may help create and participate in these systems, they do not always control the forces they unleash. For example, there was nothing inevitable about the fact that the East India Company came under the control of the British state. Even when it did, it caused devastating impacts on both the places it claimed to “rule” as well as the state that had chartered and owned it, ushering in the age of the British Empire. As historian William Dalrymple, author of The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company (2019), noted, “It was not the British government that seized India at the end of the 18th century, but a dangerously unregulated private company. . . [that] executed a corporate coup unparalleled in history: the military conquest, subjugation and plunder of vast tracts of southern Asia. It almost certainly remains the supreme act of corporate violence in world history.”

#### [Shammas & Holen] And private entities can’t appropriate space without state support – they’re inextricably linked.

**Shammas & Holen:** Shammas, Victor L. [Oslo Metropolitan University, Work Research Institute, AFI] and Tomas B. Holen [Independent scholar, Oslo, Norway]. “One giant leap for capitalistkind: private enterprise in outer space.” *Palgrave Communications* 5 (1), 2019. researchgate.net/publication/330712900\_One\_giant\_leap\_for\_capitalistkind\_Private\_enterprise\_in\_outer\_space MB/CH

What role, then, for the state? The frontiersmen of NewSpace tend to think of themselves as libertarians, pioneers beyond the domain of state bureaucracy (see Nelson and Block, 2018). ‘The government should leave the design work and ownership of the product to the private sector', the author of a 2017 report, Capitalism in Space, advocates. ‘The private companies know best how to build their own products to maximize performance while lowering cost' (Zimmerman, 2017, p. 27). One ethnographer notes that ‘politically, right-libertarianism prevails' amongst NewSpace entrepreneurs (Valentine, 2016, p. 1047–1048). Just as Donald Rumsfeld dismissed the opponents to the Iraq War as ‘Old Europe', so too are state entities’ interests in space exploration shrugged off as symptoms of ‘Old Space'. Elon Musk, we are told in a recent biography, unlike the sluggish Big State actors of yore, ‘would apply some of the start-up techniques he’d learned in Silicon Valley to run SpaceX lean and fast…As a private company, SpaceX would also avoid the waste and cost overruns associated with government contractors' (Vance, 2015, p. 114). This libertarianism-in-space has found a willing chorus of academic supporters. The legal scholar Virgiliu Pop introduces the notion of the frontier paradigm (combining laissez-faire economics, market competition, and an individualist ethic) into the domain of space law, claiming that this paradigm has ‘proven its worth on our planet' and will ‘most likely…do so in the extraterrestrial realms' as well (Pop, 2009, p. vi). This frontier paradigm is not entirely new: a ‘Columbus mythology', centering on the ‘noble explorer', was continuously evoked in the United States during the Cold War space race (Dickens and Ormrod, 2016, pp. 79, 162–164). But the entrepreneurial libertarianism of capitalistkind is undermined by the reliance of the entire NewSpace complex on extensive support from the state, ‘a public-private financing model underpinning long-shot start-ups' that in the case of Musk’s three main companies (SpaceX, SolarCity Corp., and Tesla) has been underpinned by $4.9 billion dollars in government subsidies (Hirsch, [2015](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR29)). In the nascent field of space tourism, Cohen ([2017](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR8)) argues that what began as an almost entirely private venture quickly ground to a halt in the face of insurmountable technical and financial obstacles, only solved by piggybacking on large state-run projects, such as selling trips to the International Space Station, against the objections of NASA scientists. The business model of NewSpace depends on the taxpayer’s dollar while making pretensions to individual self-reliance. The vast majority of present-day clients of private aerospace corporations are government clients, usually military in origin. Furthermore, the bulk of rocket launches in the United States take place on government property, usually operated by the US Air Force or NASA. [Footnote 13](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#Fn13) This inward tension between state dependency and capitalist autonomy is itself a product of neoliberalism’s contradictory demand for a minimal, “slim” state, while simultaneously (and in fact) relying on a state reengineered and retooled for the purposes of capital accumulation (Wacquant, [2012](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR68)). As Lazzarato writes, ‘To be able to be “laissez-faire”, it is necessary to intervene a great deal' ([2017](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR36), p. 7). Space libertarianism is libertarian in name only: behind every NewSpace venture looms a thick web of government spending programs, regulatory agencies, public infrastructure, and universities bolstered by research grants from the state. SpaceX would not exist were it not for state-sponsored contracts of satellite launches. Similarly, in 2018, the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)—the famed origin of the World Wide Web—announced that it would launch a ‘responsive launch competition', meaning essentially the reuse of launch vehicles, representing an attempt by the state to ‘harness growing commercial capabilities' and place them in the service of the state’s interest in ensuring ‘national security' (Foust, [2018b](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR18)). This libertarianism has been steadily growing in the nexus between Silicon Valley, Stanford University, Wall Street, and the Washington political establishment, which tend to place a high value on Randian ‘objectivism' and participate in a long American intellectual heritage of individualistic ‘bootstrapping' and (allegedly) gritty self-reliance. But as Nelson and Block ([2018](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR46), p. 189–197) recognize, one of the central symbolic operations of capitalistkind resides in concealing its reliance on the state by mobilizing the charm of its entrepreneurial constituents and the spectacle of space. There is a case to be made for the idea that SpaceX and its ilk resemble semi-private corporations like the British East India Company. The latter, “incorporated by royal charter from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I in 1600 to trade in silk and spices, and other profitable Indian commodities,” recruited soldiers and built a ‘commercial business [that] quickly became a business of conquest' (Tharoor, [2017](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-019-0218-9#ref-CR59)). SpaceX, too, is increasingly imbricated with an attempt on the part of a particular state, the United States, to colonize and appropriate resources derived from a particular area, that of outer space; it, too, depends on the infrastructure, contracts, and regulatory environment that thus far only a state seems able to provide. Its private character, like that of the East India Company, is troubled by being deeply embedded in the state. As one commentator has observed of SpaceX, ‘If there’s a consistent charge against Elon Musk and his high-flying companies…it’s that they’re not really examples of independent, innovative market capitalism. Rather, they’re government contractors, dependent on taxpayer money to stay afloat' (cit. Nelson and Block, 2018, p. 189).

#### [Utrata 2] THAT MEANS REGULATION FAILS – states won’t control the companies they’re in bed with, since that costs them profits.

**Utrata 2:** Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> CH

Particularly in the context of worsening U.S.-China relations, the militarization of space by states is often posited as the most likely way that celestial encounters may become violent. On this view, if private U.S. companies were to extract commercial resources from asteroids, it would be a much more peaceful prospect than the U.S. Space Force establishing a military base on the moon. However, this framing ignores corporations’ violent histories and the deep connection between private commercial pursuits and systems of capitalism and colonialism. Moreover, though states may help create and participate in these systems, they do not always control the forces they unleash. For example, there was nothing inevitable about the fact that the East India Company came under the control of the British state. Even when it did, it caused devastating impacts on both the places it claimed to “rule” as well as the state that had chartered and owned it, ushering in the age of the British Empire. As historian William Dalrymple, author of The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company (2019), noted, “It was not the British government that seized India at the end of the 18th century, but a dangerously unregulated private company. . . [that] executed a corporate coup unparalleled in history: the military conquest, subjugation and plunder of vast tracts of southern Asia. It almost certainly remains the supreme act of corporate violence in world history.” As contemporary companies set out to colonize space, we should ask whether modern states have a better grasp on how to control corporations and the violence that may result from battles over who ought to rule these settlers and resources. Though Blue Origin and SpaceX are indebted to the U.S. government for funding, U.S. regulators’ ability to manage these corporations—especially Musk’s—already appears limited. Musk’s remarks toward U.S. regulators, even those investigating him, are infamous for being outrageous and crude—and his behavior is no less intransigent. For instance, in December of last year, SpaceX refused to comply with Federal Aviation Association (FAA) orders to abort a high-altitude test launch of its Starship rocket after the agency revoked its launch license due to atmospheric conditions. And this was not the first time Musk defied government authority. In May 2020 he re-opened his Tesla factory despite an Alameda county health order to shelter in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, requesting on Twitter that police “only arrest him” if law enforcement took action. His companies have been repeatedly investigated and fined for various other regulatory and safety violations. (Reports have claimed that the Tesla factory does not have proper hazard signage because Musk “does not like the color yellow.”) Is it simply the case that Musk, like many powerful men before him, receives preferential treatment from the state? Or are the state and its regulatory agencies truly unable to control him? Colonial destruction was justified by a specific ideology that made a certain view of the world, and humanity’s role in it, appear natural and inevitable. Musk, for his part, does not seem particularly cowed. After the December rocket launch incident, the FAA announced that additional measures, including having an FAA inspector on site, will be imposed on SpaceX during future launches. In response Musk tweeted on January 28 that the FAA “rules are meant for a handful of expendable launches per year from a few government facilities. Under those rules, humanity will never get to Mars.” For Musk, becoming an inter-planetary species is an existential matter for human civilization, far more important than rules and regulations. Both Bezos and Musk use the language of moral imperative when talking about space colonization: humanity must not merely explore space, but settle it, too. The two engineers can easily explain the technical dimensions of their plans to colonize the cosmos. Though these plans differ—Bezos wants to establish artificial tube-like structures floating close to Earth, whereas Musk wants to terraform Mars—the political philosophies underpinning them are remarkably similar. Both offer utopian visions of humanity in space that attempt to provide technological solutions to the political problems that colonialism and capitalism have caused.

#### [Utrata 3] AND appeals to extinction are a colonialist trope that justify infinite racialized violence for profit.

**Utrata 3:** Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> MB/CH

In 1982 Bezos said in his high school valedictorian speech that “the Earth is finite and if the world economy and population is to keep expanding, space is the only way to go.” His views have not changed much since then. “[Within a few centuries] we’ll be using all of the solar energy that impacts the Earth,” he told a crowd at an event hosted by Blue Origin. “That’s an actual limit.” This Malthusian logic underpins his arguments about the inevitability of humanity’s growth and the necessity of expanding into space. There are short-term problems, he explains, such as poverty and pollution, and there are long-term problems, such as running out of energy. If we do not want to become “a civilization of rationing and stasis,” Bezos warns, we must expand to the stars where “resources are, for all practical purposes, infinite.” For Musk space colonization is also a means to preserve human civilization, albeit as a hedge against eventual extinction. “I don’t have an immediate doomsday prophecy,” he told an international conference in 2016, “but history suggests that there will be some extinction event. The alternative is to become a space-faring civilization and multi-planetary species.” Whereas Bezos emphasizes the cyclical logic of capitalist growth—we must expand, in order to keep expanding—Musk is more explicit in his plans for colonial settlement. One of his proposals—to allow individuals to purchase one-way tickets to Mars which can be paid off through promised jobs in the new colony— has been called Martian indentured servitude. “Mars would have a labor shortage for a long time,” Musk explained, so “jobs would not be in short supply.” And while Bezos imagines that humans will be able to travel between Earth and space often, Musk contends that the Mars colony should be self-sufficient, able “to survive if the resupply ships stop coming from Earth for any reason.” And while Bezos imagines that humans will be able to travel between Earth and space often, Musk contends that the Mars colony should be self-sufficient, able “to survive if the resupply ships stop coming from Earth for any reason.” Imperialist conceptions of ownership transform space into an “empty frontier” where certain individuals can project their political dreams. For two entrepreneurs whose businesses have been lauded as exceptionally visionary, their celestial utopias stand out for their lack of political creativity and awareness. Bezos’s notion that imperial expansion is the only way to support an ever-growing population is an old colonialist appeal, now repackaged for the stars. The infinite need for resources, as well as the “poverty and pollution” that Bezos dismisses as short-term problems, are deeply enmeshed in capitalism’s cycles of extraction and are currently causing Earth’s climate crisis. Given the green-orientation of his enterprises, Musk is presumably aware of the climate crisis—or at least the opportunities it presents for government funding. Yet he has not explicitly named climate change as one of the potential “extinction events” that a Mars colony might protect against. Putting aside the question of whether terraforming Mars is actually feasible—for the record, a Nature Astronomy article suggests it is not—settling space won’t be cost-free to Earth. As science writer Shannon Stirone pointed out in The Atlantic, “Mars has a very thin atmosphere; it has no magnetic field to help protect its surface from radiation from the sun or galactic cosmic rays; it has no breathable air and the average surface temperature is a deadly 80 degrees below zero . . . . For humans to live there in any capacity they would need to build tunnels and live underground.” The environmental and human destruction necessary to make space habitable would dwarf any technological or political response needed to stop the climate crisis now. And—like capitalism and climate change—the impacts of colonizing space will be far worse for some rather than others, particularly in the Global South. For example, when Indonesian president Joko Widodo offered SpaceX the island of Biak in Papua, home to an ongoing secessionist campaign, local communities protested that the building of the launch station would cause vast ecological damage and community displacement. They had reason to worry. This is precisely what happened in Boca Chica, a small town on the southern tip of Texas where SpaceX had built a previous launch site. After SpaceX moved into town, residents of the Texas community were pushed out from their homes as the area became unsafe due to rocket activity, which has since damaged a wildlife refuge in the area. SpaceX has offered to purchase residents’ homes, but below the price many think is fair. An email from SpaceX to Boca Chica holdouts stated, “As the scale and frequency of spaceflight activities at the site continue to accelerate, your property will frequently fall within established hazard zones in which no civilians will be permitted to remain, in order to comply with all federal and other public safety regulations.” SpaceX’s impact on the area demonstrated little concern for its displacement and damage of the local community. While we all may use, explore, or research space, no state can claim to own it—though this does not mean states will not try. Musk and Bezos rely on the notion that colonizing space somehow differs from colonizing Earth. Implicit in their arguments is the belief that it was not the systems of colonial-capitalism, but rather the context surrounding their implementation, that wreaked havoc in the past.

## Thus, I affirm:

#### [Skibba 1] Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust. I defend implementation of the topic through a coordinated treaty that bars ownership of space for commercial gain, modeled on the Antarctic Treaty of 1961.

Skibba 1: Skibba, Ramin. [Space writer at WIRED Magazine; astrophysicist; science writer and freelance journalist based in San Diego] “It’s time for a new international space treaty.” Salon.com, July 26, 2021. <https://www.salon.com/2021/07/26/its-time-for-a-new-international-space-treaty_partner/> CH

The Biden administration has so far focused its space policy not on treaties but on "norms," non-legally binding principles that they hope will evolve into international agreements with teeth. But it's hard to imagine that enforceable international space policies will be adopted unless Biden explicitly and enthusiastically calls for them, while urging Russian and Chinese leaders to do the same. More likely, whatever endeavors the space industry and military decide to pursue will retroactively become policy. This is already playing out in debates about the private harvesting of resources from the moon and asteroids, the types of spacecraft companies can put in orbit, and the kinds of space and anti-satellite weapons militaries can develop. If we were to design a new space treaty that would preserve space primarily as a place for exploration and collaboration rather than for war and commercial gain, what would it look like? It would coordinate travel and limit traffic in busy orbits in the atmosphere while also taking steps to limit the creation of space debris. (Cleaning up the mess already clogging low-Earth orbit is another story entirely.) It would also build on the Moon Agreement, prohibiting the deployment and testing of weapons — including electronic weapons — in the atmosphere. And it would prohibit deploying and testing any weapons in space, not just on the moon or other celestial bodies. It would create an independent, international organization to review proposals for mining resources and establishing colonies on the moon, Mars, and beyond. This sounds ambitious — and it is — but it's achievable. The Antarctic Treaty of 1961 enshrines many of the same principles for activity on Antarctica, and it still works six decades later. Public opinion on space seems to be shifting, too, with growing calls to jettison colonialist views of space exploration in favor of more egalitarian approaches. If scientists, non-governmental groups, space environmentalists, and other stakeholders put pressure on the Biden administration, it could become politically feasible for the president to take a stand and jumpstart space diplomacy with the U.S.'s rivals. To the extent that it would help make space exploration sustainable, peaceful, and beneficial to all humanity, it would be worth the cost in political capital. We only have one atmosphere, one moon, and one night sky to cherish.

## Part 3: Do It Now

#### [Skibba 2] THE TIME HAS COME – global action is key for any hope of change, and existing rules are vastly outdated.

Skibba 2: Skibba, Ramin. [Space writer at WIRED Magazine; astrophysicist; science writer and freelance journalist based in San Diego] “It’s time for a new international space treaty.” Salon.com, July 26, 2021. <https://www.salon.com/2021/07/26/its-time-for-a-new-international-space-treaty_partner/> CH

SPACE IS MUCH BUSIER than it used to be. Rockets are launching more and more satellites into orbit every year. SpaceX, the private company founded by Elon Musk, blasted more than 800 satellites into space in 2020 alone. Extraterrestrial tourism is about to take off, led by space barons Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Richard Branson, two of whom have already taken their first private space outings. The frenetic activity of space agencies and space companies around the world will extend beyond Earth’s atmosphere, too. Within a few years, the moon will see many more landers, rovers, and even boots on the lunar ground. So will Mars and eventually, perhaps even some asteroids. It’s an exciting time, but also a contentious one. An arena once dominated by the U.S. and Russia has seen the arrival of China and numerous other countries, with several nations establishing both a scientific and military presence in space. A burgeoning space industry, mostly led by U.S.-based companies, is angling for opportunities to monetize Earth-observing satellites, expensive visits to the edge of space, and trips to the moon with robotic and human passengers. Space junk clutters the atmosphere. Rival countries and companies hurtle satellites through the same orbits, and they eye the same key spots on the moon where water could be harvested from ice. Anti-satellite weapons tests by China and India that have flung debris into orbit illustrate just how precarious space is. All that is to say, things have changed considerably in the more than half century since international space diplomats hammered out the Outer Space Treaty, the agreement that continues to serve as the world’s basic framework on international space law. Before space conflicts erupt or collisions in the atmosphere make space travel unsustainable — and before pollution irreversibly tarnishes our atmosphere or other worlds — we need a new international rulebook. It’s time for the Biden administration to work with other space powers and negotiate an ambitious new space treaty for the new century. The Outer Space Treaty was deliberately written ambiguously. It outlaws nukes and other weapons of mass destruction being deployed in space, but makes no mention of lasers, missiles, and cyber weapons. The accord appears to ban private property in space and states that no nation can claim a piece of space or lunar territory as their own, but it does not explicitly restrict the extraction of resources like water and minerals. The Moon Agreement, which went into force in 1984, went further. It states that countries are required to inform others if they have spacecraft entering the same orbit. It declares that the exploration and use of the moon must be done for the benefit of everyone. Under the agreement, Moon explorers have to take care of the lunar environment as well. And importantly, it forbids the claiming of extraterrestrial resources as property. However, only 18 countries are party to the sweeping treaty, none of them space-faring nations. In recent years, policies on space law have taken an industry-friendly turn, particularly in the U.S. The Obama administration signed the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act of 2015, also known as the Space Act, which, in theory, allows American companies to mine the moon and other celestial bodies however they wish and to keep the resources. Other countries, like Luxembourg, have followed suit.

#### [Skibba 3] AND we need new tools to rupture the public-private connection – companies exploit the lack of existing checks.

Skibba 3: Skibba, Ramin. [Space writer at WIRED Magazine; astrophysicist; science writer and freelance journalist based in San Diego] “It’s time for a new international space treaty.” Salon.com, July 26, 2021. <https://www.salon.com/2021/07/26/its-time-for-a-new-international-space-treaty_partner/> CH

It states that countries are required to inform others if they have spacecraft entering the same orbit. It declares that the exploration and use of the moon must be done for the benefit of everyone. Under the agreement, Moon explorers have to take care of the lunar environment as well. And importantly, it forbids the claiming of extraterrestrial resources as property. However, only 18 countries are party to the sweeping treaty, none of them space-faring nations. In recent years, policies on space law have taken an industry-friendly turn, particularly in the U.S. The Obama administration signed the U.S. Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act of 2015, also known as the Space Act, which, in theory, allows American companies to mine the moon and other celestial bodies however they wish and to keep the resources. Other countries, like Luxembourg, have followed suit. In 2020, the Trump administration went further, proposing the industry-friendly Artemis Accords, an attempt to further push the case for granting companies property rights in space. The accords comprised bilateral agreements with just 12 countries — notably without Russia and China, and without the involvement of the United Nations or any other international institution — putting them outside international space law. More than half a century after humans first set foot on the moon, there remains no clearly established, agreed-upon rules governing space activity. In the absence of such a framework, the U.S. has embraced a de facto “launch first and ask questions later” strategy. The lack of international cooperation is one reason engineers were so caught off guard in 2019, when satellites launched by SpaceX and the European Space Agency nearly crashed into one another. Experts in space law can’t even agree on major questions such as what kind of responsibility space actors have to keep space clean and uncontaminated with debris, as there’s really no framework in place. The Biden administration has so far focused its space policy not on treaties but on “norms,” non-legally binding principles that they hope will evolve into international agreements with teeth. But it’s hard to imagine that enforceable international space policies will be adopted unless Biden explicitly and enthusiastically calls for them, while urging Russian and Chinese leaders to do the same. More likely, whatever endeavors the space industry and military decide to pursue will retroactively become policy. This is already playing out in debates about the private harvesting of resources from the moon and asteroids, the types of spacecraft companies can put in orbit, and the kinds of space and anti-satellite weapons militaries can develop. More than half a century after humans first set foot on the moon, there remains no clearly established, agreed-upon rules governing space activity.

#### [Utrata 4] And util logic fails – it sacrifices POC for white men’s dreams.

**Utrata 4**: Utrata, Alina. [Ph.D. candidate, Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge; Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar] “Lost in Space.” *Boston Review*, July 14, 2021. <https://bostonreview.net/articles/lost-in-space/> MB/CH

As Bezos and Musk extol the virtues of using public money to move humanity into the stars, we should ask: Who are these colonies for? The ideals guiding billionaires’ race to space are not new. Lofty utopian visions have often obscured violent processes that prioritize abstract visions of “human civilization” over some human lives. For his part, Bezos looks at this as a utilitarian calculation, a numbers game. If humanity expands into space, he urges, “trillions of humans” can prosper, “which means thousands of Einsteins or Mozarts.” He fails to acknowledge that the genius of those future Einsteins and Mozarts exists now, on Earth, but unrealized and unrecognized in the very cycles of poverty Bezos dismisses as a short-term problem. Furthermore, and more importantly, the value of human life should not be based on some arbitrary utilitarian calculation of humans’ intellectual contribution to “civilization” or their ability to replicate the legacies of two white men. Musk is more explicit about his willingness to sacrifice human life. Mars is “not for the faint of heart,” he has pronounced. There’s a “good chance you’ll die. And it’s going to be tough, tough going. But it’ll be pretty glorious if it works out.” In fact, his belief in the necessity of human sacrifice for this glorious future was openly celebrated in his Saturday Night Live skit “Chad on Mars” in which a Martian settler embarks on a suicide mission after a technical malfunction in the colony’s oxygen distribution systems. In the clip Musk remains safely in command back on Earth, thanking the doomed settler on behalf of humanity as his demise is broadcast live worldwide. When the settler perishes at the end of the skit, Musk shrugs his shoulders and walks away, nonchalantly reminding his team, “Well, I did say people were going to die.” While Bezos and Musk are right that colonizing space will not result in the genocide of nonexistent extraterrestrial populations, the colonial destruction of indigenous communities was but one component in a global regime of racial violence. Indeed, the labor needed to support the system of colonial-capitalism in the United States fueled the atrocities of the Atlantic slave trade. In pursuit of America’s “manifest destiny” along the Western frontier, white railroad company owners brutally exploited Asian migrants. One in ten Chinese laborers died building the transcontinental railroad. It is no coincidence that casual discussions of colonization are happening in an industry that is still dominated by white men. Bezos has said that he first became obsessed with space when he was five years old, watching the Apollo moon landing on television exactly fifty-two years before his plans to launch himself into space. Listening to Bezos and Musk speak about their childhood obsession with rocket ships to adoring crowds, one perceives another reason why two of the richest men on Earth are spending billions in public money to get to space: they think it’s cool. One wonders what the five-year-old Bezos would have thought upon learning that Wernher von Braun, whose work was foundational to the Apollo program, was a former Nazi, or that he used slaves to build his rockets in wartime Germany—20,000 of whom died in his factory. Utopian dreams, even in space, always have a human cost. Utopian dreams, even in space, always have a human cost. Remember that the labor needed to support colonial-capitalism in the United States fueled the atrocities of the Atlantic slave trade. Bezos and Musk’s technological visions of becoming an “interplanetary species” do not answer the political question of what kind of future awaits us (whoever “us” is) in space. Will we find, like the British East India Company, that SpaceX and Blue Origin’s space colonies are ultimately incorporated into an arm of the state, inadvertently transforming the United States into an intergalactic empire? Will space corporations, following the Virginia or Massachusetts Bay Companies, break free of their home states (and planets) and become independent governing entities on the moon or Mars? Or will Bezos and Musk, in the image of King Leopold’s horrifically violent Belgian Congo, wrangle their way into becoming personal kings of princely celestial estates? And will states be able to stop them? The language of inevitability that proponents of space colonization deploy obscures another, better option: that we do not colonize space at all.

#### [McCann] Next, failing to act magnifies capitalistic violence – the benefits of appropriation ONLY go to the rich, leaving others behind on an uninhabitable planet.

**McCann:** McCann, Jessie. [Writer at The Lumberjack] “Billionaire space race: Leaving the planet in turmoil.” The Lumberjack,2021. https://www.jackcentral.org/opinion/billionaire-space-race-leaving-the-planet-in-turmoil/article\_f68a7462-27b5-11ec-b235-1f813b9f69ba.html JP/CH

Last July, we saw billionaires Richard Branson and Jeff Bezos engage in a private spaceship flight competition. Since the pandemic started, billionaires have seen their fortunes increase by tens of billions and are continuing to throw money into extravagant projects. Between the catastrophic state of our climate, the spread of diseases and the rates of poverty, any investment in less fortunate people could go a long way, but we have yet to see them go the extra mile toward that. Space travel has involved massive government projects throughout history, whereas recently, there's been a switch to private industry. This shift only worked to benefit these billionaires' companies, putting them at the forefront of scientific achievement. The point of this so-called race is said to be “making humanity multiplanetary.” However, framing this project to be for the good of humanity is a deceiving sentiment. In reality, it all comes down to billionaires’ potential profits from satellite launches and rocketry firms. With as unbelievable of a goal as this, their first step to achieving it is space tourism. **Reaching a culmination of waste, the companies are in the process of creating tourism programs with unthinkable costs that only cater to the richest.** The fact of the matter is that Earth is undeniably in a state of crisis, but space is much worse. **With barely liveable conditions, space inhabitance was not made for the human race;** it will take centuries, if ever, before the moon or any other planet can become a home to humans**.**  A fatal flaw of these plans is that billionaires are rooted in an idealistic way of thinking — they truly believe living in space is the answer to Earth’s rotting. Even then, that is if they are considering the environmental impact they have or if they are simply doing this for their own gain and glory. **With Bezos’ carbon footprint resting at 2224.2 tonnes and Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk estimated at 2084 tonnes in 2018, these men prove themselves to be more concerned with company profit than means of sustainability.** Due to the high amount of resources rapidly used, Branson’s and Bezos’ flight programs were only a few minutes long, a fleeting moment in space costing millions; I cannot see how this could be interpreted as a necessary endeavor, above all else. As far as the exact costs of the spaceships go, Musk’s SpaceX originally spent $1.2 million on lobbying in the first half of 2021, while Bezos gradually increased spending in hopes to beat SpaceX for the $2.9 billion NASA contract.Although NASA awarded SpaceX the contract for the moon landing project, it was promptly suspended due to legal pressure from Bezos’ company. Nothing screams boredom and greed more than a billionaire begging for billions more. Critics specifically called out Branson for his focus on self-image and commercialization of his spaceship program. He coined himself "Astronaut 001" and provides a spaceflight experience geared toward customers, but he is really only selling the company name. People are so fed up with financial elites that there is even a petition going around on change.org requesting Bezos not be allowed to return to Earth. Although intangible, the 150,000 signatures exemplify how citizens are reacting to the exploits of the rich. Instead of providing money and resources to better the planet we live on, these billionaires are preaching a future among outer space. NASA has previously funded earth science initiatives, but funding was repealed by congressional conservatives in an effort to focus on interplanetary exploration. Across the board, billionaires are leading the scene, and preserving the planet is the last thing on their agenda. The days when accomplished scientists ventured into space for exploration are long over and have been replaced by billionaires’ pursuits to treat space like a new toy. We are witnessing a dystopian future evolve now more than ever, wherein all we are meant to do is sit back and watch it unfold. The problems that plague the Earth have yet to be accounted for, and employing space as a method of escape is the least efficient use of spending. Addressing solutions for restoring Earth is much more viable than fleeing it.

## Extra

#### [Mitchell] Further, the history of corporate kickbacks from the state justifies acting now.

Mitchell: Mitchell, Kirk. [General assignment reporter, *The Denver Post*] “Denver aerospace company pays $100,000 to settle kickback allegations.” *The Denver Post*, December 21, 2016. denverpost.com/2016/12/21/united-launch-alliance-kickback-allegations/ CH

United Launch Alliance, a joint venture of Lockheed Martin and Boeing Corp. formed to provide cost-efficient spacecraft launch services to the federal government, has paid the United States $100,000 to settle allegations that a subcontractor paid its employees kickbacks in order to win contracts. As a result of the preferential treatment, Centennial-based ULA, and by extension, the U.S. government, paid higher costs for certain contracts to subcontractor Apriori Technologies between 2011 and 2015, acting U.S. Attorney Robert Troyer said in a news release Wednesday. According to Troyer, Apriori Technologies paid gratuities to certain ULA employees in order to induce ULA to award the consulting company contracts related to technology, compliance and project management. ULA voluntarily disclosed the allegations of misconduct to the U.S. The Air Force’s Office of Special Investigations, the National Reconnaissance Office’s Office of the Inspector General, and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service conducted a joint investigation of the allegations, the news release says. The settlement agreement is neither an admission of liability by ULA, nor a concession by the U.S. that its claims are not well founded, according to the news release.

#### [Gangawat] Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.

**Gangawat:** Gangawat, Amanya. [Amity University Kolkata] “Re-exploring Terra Nullius and Property Rights in Space: Could a Lunar Settlement Claim the Lunar Estate?” *Advanced Space Law,* 2020. JP

**Since such an initiative requires a lot of funding, individuals must not be given the right to own a Moon plot**. However, they can visit the space with the help of such Corporations. **Since the principle followed in outer space is the concept of res communis, these private entities must be created and funded by individuals, but they must collaborate with the government.** Inthe past two decades, through a combination of technology, policy, and will, governments of more than a dozen countries have successfully transferred many space operations to the private sector, and it has yielded good results. Hence, there is a need to create a treaty that the Nation- State must consent to and be a party and make a collaborative effort to specialize such entities. It must be noted that the proposed regime does not favour private entities as a whole. Instead, it impresses upon the fact that Nations’ Collaborative efforts can open future prospects without providing much harm. However, a complete understanding of Nation-states is required for this 20 Advanced Space Law, Volume 6, 2020 Re-exploring Terra Nullius and Property Rights in Space: Could a Lunar Settlement Claim the Lunar Estate? by Amanya Shree Gangawat purpose. If each state start building their own Corporation, such a proposed regime would be a complete failure. **Hence, instead of claiming lands on the lunar estate, such objects in outer space must be utilized for the greater good and for the larger masses. Now, a question can be raised, that not everyone will be able to afford it, then the answer to this question is that, when Nations collaborate together, they must resort to the solution of using such technology which adheres to this question**. There must also be guidelines governing such entities to avoid any conflict and establish a Dispute Resolution Body in case of any dispute. **Moreover, there is a need for all Nations to come forward and make a ban on such individuals’ claims**. There must also be legislation banning all such individual’s claims on the plot of the Moon. The proposed regime requires a two-tire support system from: i) private entities and government and ii) cooperation among governments in order to be implemented effectively; iii) there should be no discrimination based on the capacity, power, or economy of the State. Each State must have equal rights in respect of this purpose. Once the requirement is fulfilled, the proposed regime can act to leverage the new frontier’s opening. Throughout the discussion, we find that the land on the Moon can benefit society as a whole. **It can also be concluded that the principle followed in outer space is that of res communis, which means it is the common heritage of mankind.** Hence, collaboration with private entities is essential for the purpose of capacity building and cost reduction. Most countries like Ukraine, India, the USA, Russia, UK have signed and ratified the “Outer Space Treaty,” which makes it impossible for any person to lay claim on a piece of land in space legally. According to this Treaty, outer space, which includes Moon and other celestial bodies, is common to all mankind, and therefore it cannot be owned by any nation. To maintain a balance between the development of the society and Natural resources, as well as to benefit all, one can take resort to the above-proposed regime. This can open a new frontier through private entities and the government’s initiatives at the National level and increase the cooperation among governments at the International level. With new affordable spaceflight technologies on the horizon, such activity in space will be a possibility in the near future. Therefore, to conclude, one can use the lunar estate, for the benefit of all, but one cannot sell a plot of Moon, of which he himself is not the owner, and any such person claiming such land on the basis of a document is unforce able. **Moreover, a settlement is a better option than just claiming a random land on the lunar surface.**

#### [Utrata] idea that space is open for taking – colonial logic that justifies settler genocide colonization transforms space into property

**Utrata**: Utrata Alina [PhD Candidate in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge, and a Gates-Cambridge and Marshall scholar.] “Lost in Space” Boston Review, 2021. MB

After all, no one lives there. This perspective ignores the fact that colonial destruction was justified by a specific ideology that made a certain view of the world, and humanity’s role in it, appear natural and inevitable. The idea that space is open for the taking simply because “no one is there” finds root in the exact colonial logics that have justified settler genocide for centuries: that only certain people, using resources in certain ways, have a claim to land and ownership. Imperialist conceptions of ownership thus transform space into an “empty frontier” where certain individuals can project their political dreams, whether they be extractive manufacturing industries or settler colonies. In his recent book Theft is Property! (2019), Robert Nichols interrogates the recursive logic of colonial dispossession, which relies on the simultaneous processes of transformation and theft. As he puts it: Colonization entails the large-scale transfer of land that simultaneously recodes the object of exchange in question such that it appears retrospectively to be a form of theft in the ordinary sense. . . ‘dispossession’ may be coherently reconstructed to refer to a process in which new proprietary relations are generated but under structural conditions that demand their simultaneous negation. In one move, land is both transformed into property, and taken away. The same logic allows Musk and Bezos to claim that space is both “empty” and free for the taking. Of course, that we do not use space is a lie, even if no one owns or occupies a plot of land on the moon. Just as we all use waterways and air, “ownership” cannot determined by whose territory these resources reside in. For example, the increased light pollution (or “light graffiti”) caused by the thousands of orbiting satellites has affected many communities on Earth, from astronomers and their scientific research to indigenous communities who rely on celestial navigation for cultural practices and survival. But because these communities aren’t “properly” using or appropriating space’s resources, they aren’t considered its rightful owners—and therefore have no claim to space. But these communities have no less of a claim to the skies than Musk and Bezos, according to international law. The Outer Space Treaty states that the “exploration and use of outer space . . . shall be the province of all mankind.”

#### [Massoglia et al] The private space industry spends billions of dollars to lobby politicians for funds, benefiting companies and sidestepping checks.

Massoglia et al: Massoglia, Anna [Investigative Researcher at OpenSecrets], and Julia Forrest [Contributing Reporter, *Michigan Advance*]. “Lobbying spending skyrockets as billionaire space race takes off.” OpenSecrets.org, July 30, 2021. https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2021/07/lobbying-spending-skyrockets-as-billionaire-space-race-takes-off/ CH

This month’s sub-orbital rocket launches by former Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin and Sir Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic, which followed Tesla CEO Elon Musk’s SpaceX, attracted attention to billionaires’ efforts to commercialize space travel. These billionaires’ “space race” comes as lobbying spending by their space travel and aerospace manufacturing companies also soars. Branson’s Virgin Galactic, along with its affiliates VOX Space and Virgin Orbit, spent $360,000 lobbying the federal government in the first half of 2021 with its spending jumping from $60,000 in the first quarter of the year to $300,000 in the second. Musk’s SpaceX spent $1.2 million on lobbying in the first half of 2021, on track to outpace the $2.2 million the company spent on lobbying in 2020. Bezos’ Blue Origin spent $910,000 in the first half of 2021, boosting its spending from $320,000 in the first quarter to $590,000 over the last three months after the space company was beat by SpaceX for a $2.9 billion NASA contract to land astronauts on the moon. NASA awarding SpaceX the $2.9 billion contract in April came as the space agency began to rely on private companies for space ventures. The deal also launched Musk’s company to the top of the private space company leaderboard. NASA said it picked SpaceX for the job in order “to preserve a competitive environment at this stage” of the moon landing program. But SpaceX’s NASA contract was suspended following pressure from Bezos’s Blue Origin and defense contractor Dynetics Inc. The rival contractors filed protests with the Government Accountability Office claiming NASA’s evaluation of their proposals was flawed and the contractors should have had a chance to revisit their bids in light of NASA’s funding shortfall. Now, senators are trying to push NASA to move forward with the moon landing project. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) added an amendment to a bill passed by the Senate to authorize around $10 billion in additional spending through 2026. The spending would allow NASA to sidestep the GAO and enable the space agency to contract with multiple companies on the project. However, Congress would still have to appropriate the money to NASA to fund the program even if they contract with several private companies. Bezos announced Monday that Blue Origin would waive up to $2 billion in payments from NASA for the current and next two fiscal years in exchange for a fixed-price contract to construct a lunar lander on the moon for astronauts. Blue Origin also wants to complete a pathfinder mission to low-Earth orbit with its own funds. In an open letter to NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, Bezos said the covered costs would be a total waiver of NASA payments and pushed NASA to embrace the offer in order to boost competition. “Instead of this single source approach, NASA should embrace its original strategy of competition,” Bezos said. “Without competition, a short time into the contract, NASA will find itself with limited options as it attempts to negotiate missed deadlines, design changes, and cost overruns.” The tumult around the lunar landing contract follows an incident in 2019 when SpaceX filed a lawsuit in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims against the Air Force for excluding Musk’s company from $2.3 billion in funding for space launch initiatives. That funding went to Blue Origin and two other companies. Over the weekend, NASA announced that SpaceX was awarded a $178 million contract to launch a spacecraft to Jupiter, Reuters reported. Branson, Musk and Bezos’ business empires have all drawn significant amounts of money from the federal government while spending money to lobby the government for even more funds. Blue Origin has been awarded more than $480 million in federal government contracts since the start of 2020. The federal government awarded more than $2.5 billion to SpaceX during that same period and Virgin’s VOX Orbit and Virgin Space were awarded around $35 million. Space X also won two contracts with the Pentagon totaling over $159 million in March to use their Falcon 9 rockets to complete two space missions. The missions are expected to be completed by 2023. Amazon and Tesla, where Bezos and Musk made their respective fortunes, have spent significant sums on lobbying and been awarded big federal contracts outside of the space industry. Amazon spent roughly $5 million on lobbying expenditures in the first fiscal quarter of 2021, whereas Musk’s Tesla spent only around $260,000 in lobbying expenditures throughout the first half of 2021. Since 2018, Amazon has hired over 600 former government officials and employees. The tech giant has also hired 66 former government officials for Amazon Web Services in order to become essential to military and intelligence communities according to POLITICO.

#### [Schwartz] Space appropriation increases the role billionaires play in politics as lobbying has dramatically increased.

**Schwartz:** Schwartz, Brian. [Political Finance Reporter, Dickinson College Grad.] “Elon Musk said he prefers to stay out of politics – his lobbying efforts, campaign donations and tweets say otherwise” *CNN,* 2021. JP

**Elon Musk has told his tens of millions of social media followers that he “would prefer to stay out of politics.” Yet, with a mix of trash talk and big spending, the multibillionaire mogul behind Tesla and SpaceX has become a political force.** Musk himself has personally taken shots at politicians and government regulators, including digs at President Joe Biden and a recent sexually tinged insult aimed at a U.S. senator. Behind the scenes, Musk and his biggest companies, SpaceX and Tesla, have for years worked to influence the U.S. political landscape, including through lobbying and political donations. Combined, SpaceX and Tesla have spent over $2 million on lobbying this year. Musk has also recently vocally opposed Biden’s support for organized labor. In particular, he objects to a tax credit proposal that would give a $4,500 discount to consumers buying electric vehicles made by unionized autoworkers, giving Big Three automakers an edge over Tesla, Toyota and others. Musk has also ranted against a proposed billionaire’s income tax, accused federal vehicle safety regulators of anti-Tesla bias, and upbraided the Federal Aviation Administration for having a “fundamentally broken regulatory structure,” in his view. His companies have put their money to work to influence the government in other ways. During the third quarter, which spanned from July through September, Tesla and SpaceX both lobbied Biden’s White House and other parts of his administration, according to recent disclosures. Musk’s aerospace company, SpaceX, has spent just under $1.8 million this year alone on lobbying, after spending over $2 million last year, according to data from the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics. Tesla, the electric car and renewable energy company he runs, has spent over $400,000 on federal lobbying this year through September, already more than it spent in the entirety of last year. By way of comparison, Ford has spent $2.6 million on lobbying this year. (The company sells millions of vehicles annually, while Tesla has not yet surpassed 1 million deliveries in a single year.) Jeff Bezos’ aerospace venture, Blue Origin, has spent around $1.4 million on lobbying so far this year. Musk, Tesla, SpaceX and the White House did not return requests for comment for this story. Working with both sides Even when he avoids commenting on a hot button issue, such as Texas’ restrictive abortion law, Musk makes political waves. “In general, I believe government should rarely impose its will upon the people, and, when doing so, should aspire to maximize their cumulative happiness,” Musk told CNBC in a September tweet responding to a question about the Texas law. “That said, I would prefer to stay out of politics.” Musk’s companies and private foundation are growing their operations substantially in Texas. Musk hasn’t been shy about backing certain candidates, either. In 2020, Musk verbally endorsed Andrew Yang as a Democratic candidate for president, based on Yang’s support of a universal basic income. He also called California’s coronavirus stay at home orders “fascist” and famously kept Tesla’s Fremont, California, factory running for weeks, openly defying the orders. During that time, he tweeted “Take the red pill,” including a red rose emoji with the tweet. The “red pill” is a symbol from “The Matrix” co-opted by right wing extremists and others, while the red rose is a symbol used by the Democratic Socialists of America. Musk has regularly contributed to candidates of both parties, too, according to data from the Center for Responsive Politics that dates back to about 2002 (see chart below). Other business leaders such as longtime investors Nelson Peltz and Leon Cooperman employ the same bipartisan giving strategy. Musk has contributed to a wide variety of campaigns, with the most recent Federal Election Commission filings showing he gave to the Republican National Committee. Those individual contributions do not include the SpaceX political action committee’s $210,000-plus in campaign contributions to congressional candidates from both sides of the aisle during the first half of 2021. Musk, historically, has contributed slightly more to Democrats and their causes, according to data from the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics. In the previous 2020 election cycle, Musk contributed to Sens. Chris Coons, D-Del., Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., Jack Reed, D-R.I., and Gary Peters, D-Mich. He also gave to Sens. John Cornyn, R-Texas, and Thom Tillis, R-N.C. Musk’s companies also rely on lobbyists with links to both major parties. Recently, Tesla and SpaceX hired at least two new lobbyists that have prior experience working on Capitol Hill. Jonathan Carter, who was a legislative aide to Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., became a policy advisor to Tesla in April, according to his LinkedIn page. Carter was a “lead staff member to Senator Blumenthal on Auto Safety, Census, Small Business, Sports, and Trade issues,” his profile says. Blumenthal is a member of the Commerce, Science and Transportation committee, which has jurisdiction over highway safety, transportation and nonmilitary aeronautical and space science, among other items that impact Tesla’s business. Blumenthal has publicly taken aim at Tesla’s driver assistance systems, marketed as Autopilot and Full Self-Driving software. In a tweet in September, Blumenthal said using this technology was a form of “Russian Roulette” for drivers. Carter was among a group of Tesla lobbyists that in the third quarter lobbied Biden’s White House, the Departments of Energy and Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Commerce. Carter’s team also engaged with House and Senate lawmakers last quarter. A disclosure report shows that the lobbying effort by Tesla focused on a variety of issues, including solar permitting, autonomous vehicle related policies, infrastructure, the Highway Trust Fund and EV charging. Meanwhile, over that same time period, Musk suggested at a conference in late September that he and Tesla were being treated unfairly because they weren’t invited to an electric vehicle summit at the White House. “Does this sound maybe a little biased or something? And you know, just — it’s not the friendliest administration. Seems to be controlled by unions, as far as I can tell,” Musk said at the time. The White House summit was in August. His space company in the third quarter also recently hired at least one former aide to a powerful senator and has engaged directly with Biden’s administration, including the White House. Joseph Petrzelka, who was an aide to Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., for over four years, became a global government affairs manager for SpaceX in September, according to his LinkedIn page. Feinstein is a member of the transportation, housing and urban development subcommittee, which is under the Senate Appropriations Committee. Their jurisdiction covers the Department of Transportation. **Though Petrzelka is not listed on SpaceX’s third quarter report, the company spent $590,000 directly lobbying lawmakers, including Biden’s Executive Office of the President, Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics & Space Administration, the Department of Transportation, the National Security Council and the Federal Aviation Administration. NASA certified SpaceX in November 2020 to carry astronauts to-and-from orbit.** SpaceX also lobbied members of Congress. For its part, SpaceX has notched federal contracts worth a total of about $10.5 billion since 2003, most of that from its work with NASA. In 2021, those contracts have amounted to around $2 billion with $1.6 billion of that from NASA, according to data tracked by Govwin by Deltek that was viewed by CNBC. SpaceX is going through a tense, environmental review process that will determine whether they can start building out and launching their Starship vehicle from a site in Boca Chica, Texas, or whether they need to complete a more formal assessment that could cost them years. The over $500,000 paid by SpaceX last quarter for lobbying does not include separate fees paid to outside government influencers. **SpaceX paid $90,000 in the third quarter to Invariant, which was founded by longtime lobbyist Heather Podesta, to lobby the Executive Office of the President, the Department of Transportation and Department of Interior, according to the latest disclosure report. Podesta, who has raised campaign money for Democrats for well over a decade, is one of the Invariant lobbyists engaging lawmakers for SpaceX**. The lobbying report says the firm attempted to influence the Biden administration for SpaceX to “support commercial launch provisions in NASA programs, appropriations, reconciliation, and S.1260, United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021.” SpaceX also hired Miller Strategies, which is run by Jeff Miller, a staunch ally of House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif, and former President Donald Trump**. SpaceX paid the firm $30,000 in the third quarter to lobby the House and Senate on “issues as they relate to space transportation and space transportation costs,” according to the latest lobbying report**. Miller was one of the lobbyists trying to influence lawmakers for SpaceX last quarter.

#### [Weber] Private-public partnerships force us to only invest in private sector interests.

**Weber**: Weber, Christopher. [Writer for the Next City] "The Problem With Public-Private Partnerships", Next City. May 7, 2012. EM

**On Chicago’s South Side, 63rd Street was once a mecca of culture and business.** Amelia Earhart went to a high school on the street. Duke Ellington confabbed with Tony Bennett between gigs. Hugh Hefner (only arguably cultural, but certainly a businessman) assembled the first issues of his magazine in a nearby apartment. **Today, 63rd Street is a tabula rasa.** It’s a boulevard of grass, a razed meadow in the heart of America’s third-largest city. Not even drug dealers hang out here. There’s no place to sit, no stoops to command. You can find similar swaths of no-man’s land in inner cities all over the country: Detroit, St. Louis, Cleveland, Buffalo. **Unlike these cities, Chicago has the money to rebuild 63rd Street.** But will it? Not if it can get someone else to foot the bill. The conundrum can be summed up by a wonky phrase on the lips of mayors nationwide: **Public-private partnership, which codes for getting corporate America to pay for something once funded by tax dollars alone.** By chance, the crown prince of this neoliberal school of government is Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Almost every month, the former White House chief of staff and Obama chum launches a new public-private partnership. Just this spring, he announced a $7 billion plan to modernize the city’s infrastructure. Under the plan, investors and private companies would pony up for improvement projects, most to be determined, in return for interest, profit shares or both. In pushing to privatize once-public assets, Emanuel is widely seen as a role model. He sounded the gospel during a recent mayors roundtable on Charlie Rose. “We have great corporations in Chicago who are, in my view, the best of corporate citizens,” Emanuel said. “I couldn’t achieve anything I’m trying to do without their participation.” Agreed Mayor Alvin Brown of Jacksonville: “[These partnerships are] the wave of the future. Government can’t do it alone.” **The problem is that the public-private partnerships, as Emanuel outlines them, are tilted toward the private side. They let corporate interests drive public investment. Projects that fail to align with the interests of private funders go begging. 63rd Street shows how big that hole is. What company is going to invest in building affordable housing and livable communities here? These honorable causes stand to be big losers in the era of the public-private partnership.** Not only has Emanuel refused to invest here — he’s actively cutting back on the city’s role in the neighborhood. For instance, he wants to close half of the city’s mental health clinics, including one just off 63rd Street. The reason? Insufficient funds. Perhaps Emanuel can make everyone happy by swinging a deal to lease the street to the highest bidder, just as Chicago has leased its Skyway and parking meters. Imagine it: “Coming to the South Side: Boeing Boulevard (formerly 63rd Street), brought to you by Boeing, builder of bombers and bungalows.” Also, a new mental health clinic, sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline. Realistically, City Halls in Chicago and nationwide must invest in depopulated districts like 63rd Street because no one else will. The community that 63rd Street runs through was home to 81,000 residents in the 1960s. Today, it has less than a third of that, just 26,000. This is prime real estate, an easy commute from the Loop.?If it and similar neighborhoods aren’t repopulated, and soon, there won’t be much of a city left.