



What is Turning Point USA?

Turning Point USA is a right-wing nonprofit with the stated mission “to identify, educate, train, and organize students to promote the principles of freedom, free markets, and limited government.”

Turning Point maintains the Professor Watchlist. It claims that the purpose of the watchlist is to identify professors who “discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom,” but most entries are not about instances of discrimination or propagandizing in the classroom. Many entries on the Professor Watchlist concern faculty members’ social media posts or scholarly publications. In a number of instances, listings have led to campaigns of online harassment against faculty members.

Turning Point’s budget of over eight million dollars is funded by donors, many of whom prefer to remain anonymous. However, founder Charlie Kirk admits that donors include those “in the fossil-fuel space” – perhaps why Turning Point has organized campus opposition to calls for schools to divest from fossil-fuel companies.

Turning Point actively recruits and provides financial support to conservative candidates running for student government positions. At several institutions, Turning Point candidates have dropped out of races after it was discovered that they had violated university spending rules.

Turning Point claims to have “over 300 chapters on college campuses across the country.”

Turning Point may have violated federal rules prohibiting 501(c)(3) charities from engaging in political activity by aiding Republican political campaigns, according to reports in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the *New Yorker*.

Sources:

Jane Mayer, “A Conservative Nonprofit That Seeks to Transform College Campuses Faces Allegations of Racial Bias and Illegal Campaign Activity,” *New Yorker*, December 21, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a-conservative-nonprofit-that-seeks-to-transform-college-campuses-faces-allegations-of-racial-bias-and-illegal-campaign-activity>.

Michael Vasquez, “Inside a Stealth Plan for Political Influence,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 7, 2017, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Inside-a-Stealth-Plan-for/240008>.

Richard Luscombe, “‘We’re under Attack’: Young Conservatives Gather to Reject Political Correctness,” *Guardian*, December 23, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/dec/23/conservative-student-summit-florida-turning-point-usa-trump>.