

Cui Bono?

Charlotte Sanborn, Legislative District 40 / House District 79

I am addressing SJ107 and any other amendments that propose a virtual or hybrid session.

I urge those of you who think it is acceptable to replace our public meetings with a private profit-seeking digital enterprise to consider a few things before cancelling in person public legislative sessions, one of the cornerstones of our democracy.

Completely missing from the discussion thus far is the age-old question: Who is benefiting from all of this?

In case it's not completely obvious, the answer is: drug companies and Big Tech. These industries are in the business of making money. We should not be assisting that.

Many of you have placed your utmost faith in the vaccine for a return to normal. Since Trump's Operation Warp Speed initiative, how many *billions* of dollars have gone to these drug companies? How many more billions will follow? Why must our basic rights be held hostage to liability-exempt drug profiteers?

The media tells us that until the Most Holy Vaccine arrives, we have technology to save us in the meantime. Pay no attention to the "suicide nets" outside of Chinese factories where all of our electronics are manufactured. Pay no attention to the child slavery and human rights abuses in the war-torn countries where the minerals used in all of our electronic devices are harvested. But at least let's look at Zoom.

According to CNN, Zoom profits skyrocketed 3300% through July. They are on track to reach 2.3 billion dollars in revenue for 2020. How much of these profits come from Montana taxpayers, I wonder?

Consider Zoom's track record for a moment. Never mind the child pornography that surprised viewers during a Montana church "service". Never mind that many tech experts warn that the Zoom app is basically spyware. Never mind that "deepfakes" are getting easier to make every moment and create a glaring potential for fraud.

In June, Zoom shut down the account of human rights groups in China for the crime of commemorating the 1989 massacre at Tianamen Square. Will they shut down my account while I try to defend the human rights of Montanans?

Yes - our livelihoods, our health, our privacy, our right to our own bodies, our children's education, our institutions, and our happiness have been taken from us by government overreach. And just when we need to address our grievances, this amendment seeks to rob us of that basic right as well. This is unacceptable.

In 2019 the health and pharmaceutical industry spent \$295 million on lobbying, more than any other sector, followed by a mere \$156 million by the electronics manufacturing and equipment industry. Those recipients of funding or favors from these interests are obligated to disclose that and recuse themselves from this vote. Otherwise this reeks of conflict of interest and corruption.

Our rights are being trampled, and we've had enough. You have the opportunity this week to set a dangerous precedent or secure the future of democracy in Montana, and I urge you to reject any type of virtual or hybrid legislative session.

Thank you for your time.

Sources:

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