

POLITICAL GIVING AND WILLINGNESS TO CAVE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

When Jason Leopold linked to a WSJ report titled, "Obama breaks bread with Silicon Valley execs," I quipped, "otherwise known as, Obama breaks bread w/our partners in domestic surveillance." After all, some of the companies represented—Google, Facebook, Yahoo—are among those that have been willingly sharing customer data with federal law enforcement officials.

Which is why I found this Sunlight report listing lobbying and political donations of the companies so interesting.

	Lobbying (2010)	Contributions to Obama (2008)
Apple	\$1,610,000.00	\$92,141.00
Google	\$5,160,000.00	\$803,436.00
Facebook	\$351,390.00	\$34,850.00
Yahoo	\$2,230,000.00	\$164,051.00
Cisco Systems	\$2,010,000.00	\$187,472.00
Twitter	\$0.00	\$750.00
Oracle	\$4,850,000.00	\$243,194.00
NetFlix	\$130,000.00	\$19,485.00
Stanford University	\$370,000.00	\$448,720.00
Genentech	\$4,922,368.00	\$97,761.00
Westly Group	\$0.00	\$0.00

Just one of the companies represented at the meeting, after all, has recently challenged the government's order in its pursuit of WikiLeaks to turn over years of data on its users: Twitter. And the difference between Twitter's giving and the others' is stark.

Does Twitter have the independence to challenge the government WikiLeaks order because it hasn't

asked or owed anyone anything, politically?

Mind you, there's probably an interim relationship in play here, as well. Those companies that invest a lot in politics also have issues—often regulatory, but sometimes even their own legal exposure—that they believe warrant big political investments. Which in turn gives the government some issue with which to bargain on.

Maybe this is all a coinkydink. And maybe having broken bread with Obama, Twitter will cave on further government orders.

But I do wonder whether there's a correlation between those telecommunication companies that try to buy political favors and those that offer federal law enforcement favors in return.