Matthew and I negate; resolved: The benefits of First Amendment protection for anonymous speech outweigh the harms.

Contention One: Falsifying Facts

Corporate influence in policy actions is pervasive in two ways.

First, through lobbying. **Eliot Metzger with The Guardian reports** that businesses don't have to disclose their stance on policy issues, opening up the possibility to offer empty public support while privately lobbying for the opposition. This in and of itself creates contradictory politics.

Second, through research. **Walter Hickey from Business Insider furthers** that anonymous donors have historically funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to influence the stance and publications of think tanks and academic groups.

Empirically, **Robert Klitzman from Columbia University finds** that a third of published studies examined didn't disclose their funding source and 80% of studies failed to identify a conflict of interest.

This has drastic implications for how our public policy is shaped, in the past, present, and future.

Naomi Oreskes from the University of California at San Diego writes in her book, *Manufacturers of Doubt*, that fossil fuel and tobacco companies have had a long track record of stalling and subverting regulatory action by funding contradictory studies and undermining the scientific consensus.

Sharon Beder from the University of Wollongong corroborates, explaining that corporate funding can remove the government's motivation to act in cases like climate change.

While reported heavily in the 1990s, the problem continues today. **Michael Bastasch from The Daily Caller reports** that Willie Soon, a Harvard-Smithsonian scientist, allegedly received $1.2 million from energy interests, funding that he did not disclose at the behest of the donor.

When the conflict of interest is so apparent and the outcomes of the research so misleading, anonymity cannot be justified.

Contention Two: Jilting Generativity

David Post from Temple University defines 'generativity' as "a system's capacity to produce unanticipated change through unfiltered contributions from broad and varied audiences."

In this sense, generativity is the backbone of the Internet as it exists today, an open forum of communication and constant innovation.

However, **Bryan Choi of Yale University underlines** that generativity and anonymity cannot coexist without conflicting. This is because retaining both would leave the Internet unregulated.

Choi continues that regulators, faced with the imperative to check abuses on the Internet, either direct their actions toward the individual offender or limit the Internet's ability as a whole to host the potentially malicious activity.

Given protections on anonymity, however, the choice then defaults to an attack on generativity.

This is problematic for two reasons.

First, **Choi outlines** that generativity is the reason why the Internet is so dynamic. A static Internet instead would prevent the ability to challenge new rules and regulations.

Second, **Choi discusses** that we haven't even realized the full potential of generativity of the Internet, which implies that innovation is sustainable for years to come.

Where there is continued potential in the Internet, we must ensure that generativity does not collapse.

Contention Three: Corrupting Constitutionality

Corporations constantly are changing the way we interpret the First Amendment, but this continues to be a problem.

Jamie Isani in the South Florida Legal Guide highlights that in the 2011 case of *Sorrell v. IMS Health*, the Supreme Court ruled that commercial information constituted 'speech.'

Put another way, **Antony Page of Indiana University explains** that corporations are entitled to some First Amendment protections, including not being compelled to speak. This is their commercial right to anonymity, or a lack of disclosure by the corporation.

Problematically, **Cydney Posner from Cooley LLP posits** that a lack of disclosure allows corporations to insulate themselves from liability, undermining their corporate social responsibility.

Corporate social responsibility on a broader scale **is defined by the International Institute for Sustainable Development** as a business's obligation to society at large, instead of as an isolated economic entity.

Without accountability to the public, we can expect the worst.

Already, we have seen this occur. The 2014 case of *National Association of Manufacturers v. SEC* saw a decision ruling that companies did not have to disclose whether the minerals they mined came from "conflict-free" areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This repealed a provision of the Dodd-Frank law that was put into effect in 2010.

As **The Enough Project notes,** disclosure of the minerals' origins had resulted in a 65% decline in the profits of warlords, indicating that anonymity would only allow for a resurgence in those very profits and thus a prolonging of the conflict.

In both the DRC and as a whole, corporations are no longer accountable to their consumers, and this has far-reaching implications already seen.