



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on May 9, 2012

George Soros, Democratic Donors Contribute Millions to Super PACs

Prominent liberal donors, including financial guru George Soros, are ramping up efforts to support Democratic congressional nominees and President Obama's reelection effort, doling out up to [\\$100 million](#) to independent groups supporting the Democratic Party's election campaigns.

Mr. Soros, in particular, is tipping \$1 million each to America Votes, a group coordinating political activities for a slew of liberal-leaning organizations, and American Bridge 21st Century, a super PAC involved with election-related research and communications. The liberal billionaire's \$2-million contribution is his first significant political donation this year, and the funds are supposedly targeted at voter registration, grassroots organization, and other activities intended to augment Democratic turnout.



Announced in an email to supporters on Monday night, Soros' bulky donations indicate that wealthy liberals are prepared to offer tens of millions of dollars into what will likely be a costly presidential campaign. Fox News [reported](#) on other pro-Obama super PAC donors:

Soros' contributions add to a small but growing list of wealthy progressive individuals and groups contributing to super PACs supporting the Democratic incumbent. They include comedian Bill Maher and Hollywood producer Jeffrey Katzenberg, who have each given more than \$1 million to Priorities USA Action, a PAC founded by two former Obama aides. The Service Employees International Union has also donated \$1 million to the group, which can't legally coordinate with Obama's campaign.

Many Democrats and liberal donors have decried the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which ruled that the [First Amendment](#) precludes the government from placing restrictions on political expenditures by unions and corporations. The idea, liberal advocates affirm, is to avoid negative advertising and instead focus primarily on recruiting Democratic voters.

"George Soros believes the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United* opened the floodgates to special interests' paying for political ads," said Soros spokesman Michael Vachon. "There is no way those concerned with the public interest can compete with them. Soros has always focused his political giving on grass-roots organizing and holding conservatives accountable for the flawed policies they promote. His support of these groups is consistent with those views."



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The purported departure from the “conservatives’ approach” to negative campaigning, which helped secure notable GOP victories in the 2010 congressional elections, “partly reflects liberal donors’ objections” to the *Citizens United* decision, reports the *New York Times*. “The idea that we’re going to engage in an arms race on advertising with the Republicans is not appealing to many liberal donors,” asserted David Brock, founder of American Bridge 21st Century. The *Times* continued:

But in interviews, donors and strategists involved in the effort said they also did not believe they could match advertising spending by leading conservative groups like American Crossroads and Americans for Prosperity, and instead wanted to exploit what they see as the Democrats’ advantage in grass-roots organizing.

“Super PACs are critically important,” said Rob Stein, the founder of the Democracy Alliance, a group of liberal donors who will convene near Miami this week to discuss where to steer their money this year. But the liberal groups, he said, believe that local efforts and outreach through social media “can have an enormous impact in battleground states in 2012.”

But despite Democratic donors’ purported efforts to avoid negative campaigning, President Obama launched a \$25-million ad campaign against presumed Republican presidential rival Mitt Romney. The massive ad buy will paint a positive picture of the President’s plans for the future, while responding to various “attacks” from the Romney campaign, said senior campaign adviser David Axelrod.

“We’re going to treat every one of them as what they are, which is an adjunct to the Mitt Romney effort, and we’re going to be tough about that even as we make our positive case... to the American people,” Axelrod [told](#) reporters on Monday. “And we’ll wait and see if he can make a positive case to the American people and not just argue that the country has gone through a tough time and therefore elect me president.”

All in all, super PACs for Obama have struggled to match the large sums of donations from conservative groups like American Crossroads, which is slated to spend a sizable \$300 million on the presidential and congressional elections. Conservative groups, including super PACS that have dished out millions of dollars on election ads, ruled the advertising efforts in 2010, helping Republican candidates to gain control of the House of Representatives.

Critics contend that Obama’s past criticisms of “special-interest campaigning” have severely dulled the enthusiasm for liberal groups to raise vast sums of money for the President’s campaign. Many Democrats, including the President, [decried](#) the *Citizens United* decision, suggesting that it granted access for powerful special interests to hijack elections. Indeed, following the Supreme Court’s contentious ruling, Obama even went as far as to [call such practices](#) a “threat to our democracy.”

Photo: George Soros is delivers an address at the Organization of American States, Oct. 3, 2006, in Washington: AP Images



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