



ABC News Alleges “Shadowy” Campaign Contributions

The 2010 midterm elections have been notable thus far for a variety of reasons, including the fierceness of the campaigns as well as the clear voter enthusiasm unparalleled by other such elections.

Additionally, these campaigns have witnessed a massive influx of donations from a variety of liberal and conservative organizations. According to ABC News, however, much of the campaign finance funds are funneled from “shadowy groups [which] have poured nearly \$227 million” into the 2010 elections. Upon closer examination, however, one must question the barometer by which ABC News rates organizations as “shadowy.”



ABC News cites a variety of examples for its claims:

Oil and gas industry services and investors have contributed \$415,000 from their company coffers to fund a group blasting Democratic Senate candidates in four states with attack ads.

A North Carolina pharmaceutical executive has spent \$3.4 million of his personal wealth to spearhead another group that has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on mailings to influence Senate races in nine states.

Labor unions and Las Vegas resorts are largely funding a group that has focused on attacking Republican challengers to Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s seat.

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The media outlet labels First Amendment Alliance, Rightchange.com, and Patriot Majority as three of the 230 “shadowy organizations” that have spent \$227 million on the 2010 elections thus far.

In 2010, the First Amendment Alliance has raised \$1.4 million, of which \$1.2 million has been spent on television ads targeting Democratic Senate candidates. Democratic-leaning group Patriot Majority has spent \$1.6 million on campaign ads against Nevada’s Republican Senatorial candidate Sharron Angle. Similarly, Rightchange.com has spent \$2.2 million in mailings targeting Democrats.

The figures come from Sunlight Foundation’s Reporting Group, which notes that of the \$227 million raised by shady organizations, \$103 million was spent to support Republican candidates, while \$67 million funded Democratic campaigns.

According to ABC News, “Campaign finance watchdog groups say the flood of money reflects an altered election spending landscape following a series of Supreme Court decisions that have cleared the way for independent groups to raise unlimited amounts of money from corporations, unions, and individuals to directly fund ads, mailings and other messaging expressly supporting or opposing federal candidates in the final days running up to an election. The interests backing the groups are not always apparent to



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voters, and often the donors remain secret.”

Alas, the heart of the issue.

The above quote reveals ABC News’ real gripe: the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision, which arguably made it permissible for large organizations to donate unlimited amounts of money to political campaigns without having to disclose their identity.

Democrats have attempted to undermine the Supreme Court ruling by passing the DISCLOSE Act, a campaign finance bill requiring groups running political advertisements to disclose their top donors — a measure that would undermine free speech.

Fortunately, despite various attempts made by Democrats to pass the DISCLOSE Act, it has failed to clear the Senate.

However, President Obama remains disgruntled by the government’s inability to control campaign finance and cites conservative organizations like Americans for Prosperity as shady groups hell-bent on stealing the election:

Right now all around this country there are groups with harmless-sounding names like Americans for Prosperity, who are running millions of dollars of ads against Democratic candidates all across the country. And they don’t have to say who exactly the Americans for Prosperity are. You don’t know if it’s a foreign-controlled corporation. You don’t know if it’s a big oil company, or a big bank. You don’t know if it’s a insurance company that wants to see some of the provisions in health reform repealed because it’s good for their bottom line, even if it’s not good for the American people.

Obama’s remarks indicate his disdain for both the Supreme Court’s ruling in Citizens United and the influx of funding into conservative campaigns.

Similar to the anxieties articulated by President Obama, Taylor Lincoln of Public Citizen ultimately sums up ABC News’ concerns: “We’re talking about a new kind of spending. There are probably a lot of corporate spenders out there that, for fear for their reputation and a sense of what was right and the law of the land, didn’t want to play that game. Now they don’t have to fear any kind of legal retribution. That’s a big deal.”

And for ABC News, organizations like First Amendment Alliance are "shady," largely because they are funded by oil and gas interests. ABC News reports that this group raised the majority of its money from three donors and spent \$120,000 on radio ads in 2008.

Ironically, in its reporting of so-called "shadowy" donors, ABC News left out major Democratic campaign contributors like leftist billionaire George Soros. The New Hampshire Tea Party reports that Soros, through his pet group “Open Society,” “has been the source of funding for a number of groups including the Tides Foundation, MoveOn.org, Center for American Progress, the National Organization for Women, American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, NARAL Pro-Choice America, Amnesty International, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Human Rights Watch, the Malcom X Grassroots Movement, the National Lawyers Guild, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Coalition for an International Criminal Court, Planned Parenthood, the Nation Institute, the Pacifica Foundation (public radio), the Urban Institute, the American Friends Service Committee, Catholics for Free Choice, Independent Media Institute, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Immigration Law Center, and the



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National Council of La Raza ... just to name a few.”

Conservative pundit Glenn Beck notes that Soros’ groups make up the “shadow party” — “a nationwide network of unions, non-profit activist groups, and think tanks whose agendas are ideologically to the left, and which are engaged in campaigning for the Democrats. This network’s activities include fundraising, get-out-the-vote drives, political advertising, opposition research and media manipulation.” The Shadow Party spent \$300 million on Democratic campaigns in 2004.

According to the book *The Shadow Party*, by David Horowitz and Richard Poe, “The Shadow Party is the real power driving the Democratic machine. It is a network of radicals dedicated to transforming our constitutional republic into a socialist hive. The leader of these radicals is ... George Soros. He has essentially privatized the Democratic Party, bringing it under his personal control.”

However, Soros continues to allege that his campaign involvement began in 2004: “I made an exception of getting involved in 2004. And since I didn’t succeed in 2004, I remained engaged in 2006 and 2008. But I’m basically not a party man. I’d just been forced into that situation by what I considered the excesses of the Bush administration.”

In 2004 alone, Soros spent \$26 million of his own money in an attempt to defeat Bush.

Despite Soros’ assertions, however, [Discover The Networks](#) reports, “During the 2000 presidential election season, Soros first experimented with the idea of raising campaign funds through ‘Section 527’ groups. Such groups are used for raising ‘soft money’ which is not intended for ‘express advocacy’ of any particular candidate, but rather for ‘voter education,’ ‘issue-oriented’ political advertising, and other such nebulous enterprises.”

Discover the Networks adds, “The financial contributions that Soros and his fellow donors made to these 527s greatly exceeded the sums which campaign finance laws would have permitted them to give to any political candidate, political party, or Political Action Committee.”

Not only has George Soros been a major contributor to left-wing organizations and to Democratic political campaigns, but he has also been caught failing to disclose his campaign contributions on more than one occasion. For example, he was supposed to be fined \$775,000 in 2009 by the Federal Election Commission for failing to disclose a \$350,000 contribution that was funneled through the Drug Policy Action Network to help fund a ballot measure that would undermine California’s Three Strikes law for criminals; instead, he was given a slap on the wrist with a minor \$8,000 fine.

Yet despite these facts, Soros was not addressed as a “shadowy” donor by ABC News.

Additionally, ABC News did not seem to call into question that in 2008 alone, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) made 96 percent of its campaign contributions to Democratic campaigns. In 2010, SEIU and its affiliated state and local councils will spend an estimated total of \$20-\$30 million just to elect Democratic governors.

SEIU is the same organization behind the racial beating of black Tea Party conservative Kenneth Gladney, the intimidation tactic of sending nearly 500 SEIU protestors to the home of Greg Baer, a bank executive — frightening his teenage son in the process — and whose former president Andy Stearn stated, “We prefer to use the power of persuasion, but if that doesn’t work, we use the persuasion of power.”

Conservative pundit Michelle Malkin reports that SEIU invested \$61 million into Barack Obama, which was “paid off with cabinet appointments, executive orders, key personnel slots, and legislative goodies.”



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Nothing “shadowy” there.

Ironically, when the Republicans halted the passage of the unconstitutional DISCLOSE Act, President Obama asserted that the act was necessary to target “shadow groups” who would prove to be influential in the 2010 midterm elections.

It seems unlikely, however, that he was referring to Soros’ groups or his close allies at SEIU.



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