



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on August 25, 2011

July Fundraising Numbers Show Democrats Ahead of Republicans

While GOP presidential hopefuls surround President Obama in election polls, the Democratic Party is scrambling to revamp its fundraising efforts. Through July, the three national Republican party groups — the Republican National Committee (RNC), the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), and the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) — have raised a combined \$105 million this year, a whopping 19 percent less than the combined \$129 million pocketed by the Democratic National Committee (DNC), the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC).



President Obama's poll matchups against GOP presidential candidates have aroused concern from the Democratic Party, as the President's approval numbers continue to wane, hovering around an all-time low of 40 percent. In the latest [Gallup poll](#), "Mitt Romney leads Obama by two percentage points, 48% to 46%, Rick Perry and Obama are tied at 47%, and Obama edges out Ron Paul and Michele Bachmann by two and four points, respectively." Gallup's generic presidential poll [shows](#) Obama ahead of a generic "Republican presidential candidate," 45 percent to 39 percent.

The Democratic Party experienced a slowdown in fundraising during the debt ceiling debate, which endured throughout the whole month of July, but retains a \$24 million lead over the Republicans' fundraising efforts. But critics suggest that Obama's control of the executive is a pivotal asset to the Democratic Party, and one that presents an illusory advantage.

Politico [reported](#):

Most of the Democratic Party committee fundraising superiority — \$22 million worth — comes from the DNC's advantage over the RNC, which is largely the result of Obama's fundraising prowess. With the debt ceiling debate raging in July, the DNC's fundraising lagged at least partly because it canceled 10 events that were to have featured the president.

The official Republican Party explanation for the disparity is that the Democrats' control of the White House gives them a huge campaign cash advantage that, plus the fact that Obama's fundraising activities significantly outpaced those of the previous five presidents during their first terms.

Republican leaders and party groups argue that being as close as they are to the Democrats' fundraising efforts is an accomplishment. "Considering the DSCC outraised the NRSC by \$70 million in the 2008 cycle, and their party now controls the White House, it certainly has to concern Senate Democrats to see their fundraising advantage dramatically eroded over the last 24 months," asserted NRSC



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spokesman Brian Walsh.

Indeed, a significant part of the Democratic campaign advantage stems from Obamas reelection campaign, as \$22 million [goes](#) to the DNC which receives generous portions from the Presidents five-figure fundraising dinners. Unfortunately for the President, the debt ceiling debacle placed a brief blockade on his campaigning, but now that its “resolved,” he is back to dining for donations.

DSCC spokesman Matt Canter argues that comparing party committee donations does not reflect the Democrats advantage if taking into account their Senate incumbents and challengers. “Not only has the DSCC raised more money month after month than our counterpart, but Senate Democrats already have more than \$70 million on hand to wage campaigns this cycle,” he alleged.

One particular concern for some Republicans was the DCCCs slim lead over the NRCC through the first seven months of this year, \$37.7 million to \$37.4 million. “With the majority in the House of Representatives, we should be kicking their butts in fundraising if there is strong leadership,” a former GOP finance official said. “For them to be trailing, I find that to be astounding.”

But other Republicans remain optimistic, as NRCC Chairman Rep. Pete Sessions (R-Texas) said their fundraising is “strong” and that “Americans all across this nation know that every dollar to the NRCC diminishes Democrats drive to make Nancy Pelosi speaker again.”

Others assert that party committees fundraising clout has been undermined by outside GOP-allied groups that were strengthened by the January 2010 Supreme Court decision which eliminated donation limits from individual groups:

The most notable among them are American Crossroads and Crossroads Grassroots Policy Strategies, which were conceived by Bush-era GOP operatives.

“Karl Rove and his crew Ed Gillespie and a sitting member of the (Republican National Committee), former Chairman Mike Duncan form American Crossroads, and where are they going to go to get money?” asked Michael Steele, the former RNC chairman.

“They are going to go to the donors who theyve cultivated for the last 15 or 20 years, and that largely rests in the base of the RNC,” said Steele, who told POLITICO that during his chairmanship, which ended in January, major donors told him they were urged by Crossroads fundraisers not to give to the RNC.

Although party committees continue to play a dominant role in campaigning, independent groups are beginning to grapple a prominent position in the campaign race, as they can now contribute unlimited donations to candidates. However, one distinct advantage party committees hold is they are allowed to coordinate directly with their candidates campaigns, something independent groups are restricted from doing.

Indeed, campaign season is surging forward, and 2012 presidential candidates, congressional members, and their respective party committees are in fundraising mode. But its still early. With new “Super PACs” being formed by both party groups American Crossroads (Karl Roves so-called “shadow RNC”) for the Republicans and the AFL-CIO for the Democrats ([announced](#) they were considering it this week) the tug-of-war campaign game is sure to make the 2012 elections interesting.



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