



Connecticut



Who Is Buying Our Election?

A Pre-Election Guide to Connecticut Super PACs

About Us

Common Cause in Connecticut is a nonprofit, nonpartisan citizens' lobby working for open, honest, and accountable government for everyone. Our activism helped secure and continues to protect the strongest campaign finance law in the nation, the Citizens' Election Program, while also working to protect voting rights and advance racial and economic justice. We have over one million members and activists nationwide.

The **Connecticut Citizen Action Group** (CCAG) is a statewide membership based organization dedicated to actively engaging the residents of Connecticut in altering the relations of power in order to build a more just society.

Acknowledgments

This report was produced with the support of small dollar contributions from Americans who believe in transparent, open and accountable government as well as generous grants from the Voqal Fund and the Piper Fund. It was written by Cheri Quickmire, Executive Director of Common Cause in Connecticut and Tom Swan, Executive Director of Connecticut Citizen Action Group; Michael Sullivan contributed research and writing assistance to this report. CCAG's research and education affiliate, the Connecticut Citizen Research Group (CCRG), also contributed to this report.

The writers wish to express our thanks to Kerstin Diehn for her design and to Common Cause President Karen Hobert Flynn for her support in the preparation of this report.

October 19, 2018

Connecticut super PACs, which can raise and spend unlimited amounts of money to support or oppose electoral candidates, are being used as a tool for a handful of wealthy individuals, lobbying organizations, and businesses to buy our elections to serve their interests. A massive influx of several million dollars in super PAC donations thus far in 2018 — more than half of it from out-of-state interests — drowns out the voices of Connecticut citizens and candidates, undermines the goals of Connecticut's strong campaign finance laws, and damages public confidence in the integrity of our election system.

The U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United decision in 2010 lifted limits on political spending, enabling corporations, unions, lobbying organizations, and wealthy individuals to pour unlimited money influencing elections, as long as this spending is not done in coordination with candidates or their campaigns. The result has been a vast increase in these "independent expenditures" across the country. In Connecticut, super PACs (Political Action Committees), also known as "independent expenditure-only committees" are the primary channel for this type of spending this year. Super PACs cannot contribute directly to candidates.

Through [Connect the Dollars](#), our collaborative project to track independent expenditures in the state, [Common Cause in Connecticut](#) and the [Connecticut Citizen Action Group](#) have assembled this first comprehensive report on super PACs in Connecticut. **Using reports filed by these PACs with the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) through October 11, 2018, we have traced income all 19 active Connecticut super PACs and spending for the top five super PACs for the 2018 calendar year.** We will follow this pre-election report with another after the election.

While super PAC spending accounts for the majority of independent expenditures in the state, and is the primary focus of this report, other organizations can also make these expenditures to influence elections. These include political nonprofits, such as 501(c)(4) "social welfare" organizations, labor unions, and business trade associations. At the end of this report, we also highlight some of this spending in Connecticut.

Topics in this report include:

- What are Super PACs Hiding from Connecticut Voters?
- Key Findings: PAC Donors Across All PACs
- Profiles of the Five Largest Super PACs
- Other Organizations Making Independent Expenditures
- Appendix: Donors to National PACs

WHAT ARE SUPER PACS HIDING FROM VOTERS?

Unfortunately, we must base this analysis on reports from two major super PACs that are clearly false. As we will describe in this analysis, reports to the State Elections Enforcement Commission from Change Connecticut PAC and Protect Freedom PAC are filled with obvious errors and missing information that clearly violate their legal reporting requirements. Because of this missing or hidden information, it is impossible for voters to know exactly how much these PACs have actually raised and spent and which candidates they are benefiting. Their numbers simply do not add up. Specifically, there are major problems with the PACs' reports on:

- **Change Connecticut PAC** spending: This PAC appears to have repeatedly violated state law by failing to identify how the majority of their expenses have been used to support or oppose candidates. This omission is the subject of multiple formal complaints to the SEEC, and prevents voters from understanding who is trying to influence their vote. In addition, the PAC's summary of its unpaid expenses is wildly incorrect. Our review of spending data from all of its reports through its October 11 filing shows that they had \$348,001 in remaining unpaid bills. However, following a series of reporting errors, their October 11 filing reported that they had no unpaid expenses at all. In other words, \$348,001 in unpaid expenses had disappeared with no explanation or payment. Are they hiding these expenses to avoid disclosing which candidates benefited from them?
- **Protect Freedom PAC** donations: The individual donations disclosed by Protect Freedom PAC in its reports this year clearly add up to \$2,076,250. Yet their October 10 filing reports aggregate income for the year of \$1,216,250, a massive gap of \$860,000 within their own reports. They recorded multiple donations from five donors of matching amounts over time. (The largest examples are two separate \$450,000 donations from Reverse Anselmo on different dates.) A set of these matching donations adds up to \$860,000, the amount of the discrepancy. So it is possible that they have incorrectly recorded \$860,000 of duplicate donations. If so, they have not revised earlier reports to correct this, as required. Or it is possible that they have \$860,000 in extra cash on hand that they are concealing from public scrutiny. We should know.

As a result of erroneous reports from these PACs, we have to summarize income and spending by Connecticut super PACs under two sets of estimates – depending on which total income figures for Protect Freedom PAC and can be believed, and which total spending figures for Change Connecticut PAC can be believed.

Even the total amount raised by all super PACs is unclear. **If we believe Protect Freedom PAC received \$2.1 million, as their reports on individual donations indicate, then all super PACs combined received \$6.9 million. If we are to believe that Protect Freedom PAC has raised \$1.2 million, as their summary of aggregate totals report, then the total for all super PACs combined is \$6.1 million.**

KEY FINDINGS: PAC DONORS ACROSS ALL PACS

About four out of five dollars in donations to Connecticut super PACs are going to Republican PACs.

- Overall, under the higher Protect Freedom PAC income estimate, super PACs affiliated with the Republican Party or single GOP candidates have raised \$5.8 million, accounting for 83% of all super PAC donations in 2018. This is 34 times the \$170,000 raised by Democratic PACs.
- Under the lower Protect Freedom PAC income estimate, GOP super PACs have received \$4.9 million, making up 81% of all super PAC donations, which is 29 times what Democratic PACs have raised.

Connecticut super PACs that have been active in 2018 can be broadly categorized into:

- **Party-affiliated and single candidate PACs.** These are explicitly partisan PACs that target their funds to candidates of one party or single candidates. Some are funded exclusively by national party-affiliated PACs. Among all donations to these partisan PACs, Republican PACs have received 97%. The largest are Change PAC and Protect Freedom PAC, both of which support GOP nominee Bob Stefanowski.
- **Business PACs.** These are formed and funded by business leaders and advocacy groups. The largest by far is Realtors for Connecticut PAC.
- **Issue PACs.** These are focused on particular public policy issues, including charter schools, environmental protection, or reproductive health care.

Funding by type of PAC

Type	Under higher Protect Freedom PAC income estimate		Under lower Protect Freedom PAC income estimate	
	Amount	%	Amount	%
Party-Affiliated	3,550,500	51%	3,550,500	59%
Candidate	2,376,070	34%	1,516,070	25%
Business	616,099	9%	616,099	10%
Issue	370,305	5%	370,305	6%
Unknown	130	0%	130	0%
Total	6,913,104		6,053,104	

Totals depend on whether Protect Freedom PAC received \$1.2 million or \$2.1 million.

Funding for partisan PACs

Party	Under higher Protect Freedom PAC income estimate	Under lower Protect Freedom PAC income estimate
	Amount	Lower estimate
Democratic: party-affiliated or single candidate	170,000	170,000
Republican: party-affiliated or single candidate	5,756,570	4,896,570
Total	5,926,570	5,066,570

Totals depend on whether Protect Freedom PAC received \$1.2 million or \$2.1 million. In either case, among all donations to these partisan PACs, Republican PACs have received 97%.

There are no active super PACs funded by labor unions to date, and the purpose of one small PAC, Friends of Connecticut PAC, is not known. There are also no single candidate super PACs supporting individual Democratic candidates.

The following tables summarize the 2018 income, type, and purposes of all 19 active Connecticut super PACs that have filed income and expense reports this year. The total income across all PACs is 6,053,104 or 6,913,104, depending on whether the Protect Freedom PAC received \$1.2 million or \$2.1 million.

Party-affiliated PACs

Super PAC	2018 Income	Focus
Change PAC	2,580,000	GOP candidate for Governor (Bob Stefanowski). Funded by Republican Governors Assoc. (DC).
Change Connecticut PAC	800,500	GOP candidates for General Assembly & statewide office (other than Governor). Funded by Republican State Leadership Cmte (DC)
Our Connecticut PAC	125,000	Democratic candidate for Governor (Ned Lamont). Funded by Democratic Governors Assoc. (DC).
Connecticut Values PAC	45,000	Democratic candidates for General Assembly. Funded by Democratic Legislative Campaign Cmte (DC).

Change PAC and Our Connecticut PAC are funded by national PACs that support the nominee of the party, and therefore should be considered party, rather than single candidate committees.

Candidate PACs

Super PAC	2018 Income	Focus
Protect Freedom PAC	1,216,250 or 2,076,250	Bob Stefanowski (Governor)
FixCT PAC	145,000	Steve Obsitnik (Governor)
CT Rising PAC	104,800	Mark Boughton (Governor)
Connecticut's Bright Future PAC	50,020	David Stemerma (Governor)

Business PACs

Super PAC	2018 Income	Focus
Realtors for Connecticut PAC	604,420	Realtors
Stronger CT PAC	8,969	Business (staff leaders from CT Business and Industry Assoc.; and food, restaurant and home builder trade associations)
Property Owner Defense League PAC	2,710	Business (landlords)

Issue PACs

Super PAC	2018 Income	Focus
Build CT PAC	118,250	Charter schools
CT League of Conservation Voters PAC	100,000	Environmental
Change Course CT IE PAC	75,000	Charter schools
Planned Parenthood Votes! Connecticut PAC	47,856	Reproductive health care
Leaders for a Stronger Connecticut PAC	25,251	Charter schools
Everytown for Gun Safety Victory Fund PAC	2,438	Gun control
Equal Education for All PAC	1,510	Charter schools

Unknown Focus

Super PAC	2018 Income	Focus
Friends of Connecticut PAC	130	Unknown

Funding for Connecticut super PACs is dominated almost entirely by a handful of big money interests – partisan national PACs, lobbying organizations, and a few wealthy individuals. Contributions from only 11 donors account for 92% (under a higher Protect Freedom PAC income estimate) or 91% (under a lower estimate) of all donations contributed to Connecticut super PACs thus far in 2018.

The following are the largest contributors through the October 11 reports filed by Connecticut super PACs. For Revere Anselmo, Richard Uihlein, and Raymond Debbane, we provide two figures, given that Protect Freedom PAC *may* have incorrectly duplicated its donation reports.

Largest donors	Amount	Occupation/description	Recipient
Republican Governors Association	2,580,000	National Political Action Committee (PAC) that supports GOP candidates for Governor	Change PAC (supports Bob Stefanowski)
Reverge Anselmo, Greenwich CT	likely 730,000 or 1,430,000	Writer and film producer; son of founder of PanAmSat satellite network	Protect Freedom PAC (supports Bob Stefanowski)
Republican State Leadership Committee, Washington DC	800,000	National PAC that supports GOP candidates for state legislature and statewide office (other than Governor)	Change Connecticut PAC (supports GOP candidates)
Connecticut Association of Realtors, Inc.	604,420	501(c)(6) trade association that advocates for realtor interests	Realtors for Connecticut PAC
Richard Uihlein, Lake Forest, IL	likely 100,000 or 200,000	CEO of Uline Corp., shipping supply company, and with wife, the 3rd largest political donor in U.S. in 2018 (10/14)	Protect Freedom PAC (supports Bob Stefanowski)
Alice Walton, Bentonville AR ¹	175,000	Self-described philanthropist, daughter of Walmart founder Sam Walton, ranked by Forbes as wealthiest woman in the world	Two charter school PACs: Build CT & Change Course CT IE PAC
Raymond Debbane, Greenwich CT	likely 100,000 or 150,000	CEO of Invus Group, an equity investment firm, and Board Chair of Weight Watchers	Protect Freedom PAC (supports Bob Stefanowski)
Democratic Governors Association, Washington DC	125,000	National PAC that supports Democratic candidates for Governor	Our Connecticut PAC (supports Ned Lamont)
CT League of Conservation Voters, Hartford CT	100,000	501(c)(4) organization that advocates for environmental protection	CT League of Conservation Voters PAC
Denis Nayden, Stamford CT	100,000	Chairman of James Alpha Holdings, LLC, an asset management and financial services company ²	Protect Freedom PAC (supports Bob Stefanowski)
Thomas McInerney, Westport CT	100,000	CEO of Bluff Point Associates, a private equity firm	FixCT PAC (supports Steve Obsitnik)
Total	5,514,420 or 6,364,420 (depending on Protect Freedom PAC donors)		

Totals depend on whether Protect Freedom received \$1.2 million or \$2.1 million. Until Protect Freedom PAC corrects its donation reports, we cannot be certain of these donation amounts.

National PACs contribute the largest share of income, followed by individual donations. Almost all (99%) of the \$3.6 million in national PAC contributions to Connecticut super PACs come from four party-affiliated PACs — the Republican Governors Association, Democratic Governors Association, Republican State Leadership Committee, and Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee.

While direct contributions from individual businesses make up a small share of overall donations, business interests, through a variety of paths, are a primary driver of super PAC money. Contributions from business trade associations make up the third largest share of contributions. This trade association money has come exclusively, thus far, from the Connecticut Association of Realtors, donated to their Realtors for Connecticut PAC. In addition, most of the major individual contributors are business executives, and, as we will detail below, corporations and their executives are major contributors to the national PACs that have, in turn, donated to Connecticut super PACs. There have been no direct contributions to super PACs from labor unions thus far this year.

Contributors by type	Under higher Protect Freedom PAC income		Under lower Protect Freedom PAC income estimate	
	Amount	% of total	Amount	% of total
National PACs (gray money)	3,550,250	51%	3,550,250	59%
Individuals	2,600,336	38%	1,740,336	29%
501(c)(6) business trade associations (dark money)	604,420	9%	604,420	10%
501(c)(4) “social welfare” organizations (dark money)	102,438	1%	102,438	2%
Businesses: corporations, LLCs, & LLPs	55,460	1%	55,460	1%
Total	6,913,104		6,053,104	

Totals depend on whether Protect Freedom received \$1.2 million or \$2.1 million. Breakdown does not include \$200 from an unknown type.

Under Connecticut law, super PACs must disclose their donors. However, the majority of funds for Connecticut super PACs are from “dark” or “gray” money sources, with donors that are undisclosed or difficult to trace. These sources account for 62% of all donations (under a high Protect Freedom PAC income estimate) or 70% (under a low Protect Freedom estimate). These include:

Nonprofit advocacy organizations, like 501(c)(6) trade associations and 501(c)(4) “social welfare” organizations. A trade association like the Connecticut Association of Realtors is not required to disclose the sources of the \$604,000 it contributed to the super PAC it runs. These organizations could be considered a source of “dark money,” in that the ultimate source of these funds is not publicly traceable. The money may come from a handful of donors or from hundreds of people.

National PACs. While these PACs must disclose donors, they gather donations from many sources and distributed it among many recipients, so it is not possible to connect dollars from a specific donor through a national PAC to a state PAC. These difficult-to-trace funds are called “gray money.”

More than half of donations to Connecticut super PACs are from out-of-state interests. Under a higher Protect Freedom donor figure, 58% of donations are from out-of-state donors, compared to 65% under a lower Protect Freedom figure. There are eight super PACs that are funded mostly or entirely with out-of-state money, including six that use “Connecticut” in their names and all four of Connecticut’s party-affiliated super PACs.

Super PAC	Major funder	Share of 2018 donations from out-of-state
Build CT PAC	Alice Walton (AR)	91%
Change Connecticut PAC	Republican State Leadership Committee (DC)	100%
Change Course CT IE PAC	Alice Walton (AR)	100%
Change PAC	Republican Governors Association (DC)	100%
Connecticut's Bright Future PAC	Andrew Balson (MA) & Julian Robertson (NY)	100%
Connecticut Values PAC	Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DC)	100%
Everytown for Gun Safety Victory Fund PAC	Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund (NY)	100%
Our Connecticut PAC	Democratic Governors Association (DC)	100%

Campaigns are not required to disclose the source of very small individual contributions, which are not included in the analysis above, and make up a small fraction of one percent of donations. The CT PAC reports provide an AR address for Alice Walton, so that is used here, though news accounts indicate she lives in TX.

Many super PACs wrap themselves in sheep's clothing, choosing vague and innocuous names that disguise their funders and agendas. Super PACs across the country are notorious for choosing value-laden, inoffensive, and vague names that reveal nothing about their goals and backers. Few voters could guess that Build CT PAC and Leaders for a Stronger CT PAC are run by charter school advocates, that Stronger CT PAC is operated by business advocates, or that Change Connecticut PAC is funded by a national Republican PAC. They would also probably not assume that several PACs that use "Connecticut" in their names are mostly or entirely funded by money from outside of the state.

PROFILES OF THE FIVE LARGEST CONNECTICUT SUPER PACS

We reviewed 2018 donors and expenses for the largest five super PACs in the state with the largest amount of donations, as documented in reports filed by the PACs **through October 11. The expense and balance on hand totals below include costs that are paid, as well as those incurred but not yet paid**, so these totals may differ from the calculations used in the SEEC reports (which report on paid and unpaid expenses separately, and only account for paid expenses when calculating balance on hand).

Change Connecticut PAC

Type	Party-affiliated
Focus	Supports GOP candidates for General Assembly & statewide office (other than Governor).
Income	800,500
Expenses	618,531 (our calculation of paid & unpaid expenses) or 270,530 (the PAC's claim as of Oct 11, which ignores its \$348,001 in unpaid expenses)
Balance on hand	181,969 (our calculation) or 529,970 (PAC's claim, ignoring unpaid expenses)

Expenses include those that have been paid, as well as those there were incurred but not paid as of Oct 11 filings. Balance on hand also takes unpaid expenses into account.

Change Connecticut PAC is almost entirely funded by the Republican State Leadership Committee, a national PAC that has funneled \$800,000 to the local organization. The only other donation was \$500 from the PAC's chair, William Phillips of Milford. Among the [board members](#) of the RSLC is former Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell, an ironic role for the elected official who signed Connecticut's Citizens Election Program bill into law in 2005. While the RSLC supports both state legislative candidates and those candidates for statewide office (other than Governor), the focus of Change Connecticut PAC thus far has been on General Assembly candidates.

In the 2016 election, the RSLC was the sole funder of the Grow CT PAC, which targeted its support to GOP candidates in 14 swing state legislative districts in the state in the 2016 general election and a 2017 special election. Of these 14 targeted districts, 10 of the candidates they supported won and nine of these seats flipped from Democratic to Republican control, according to our analysis.

As far back as November 2017, the [RSLC announced](#) that Connecticut's state legislative election would be a priority target for its spending. With a General Assembly narrowly divided between Democrats and Republicans, the RSLC has returned to try to increase the number of GOP seats.

According to [campaign finance data](#) filed with the Internal Revenue Service, the following are the Republican State Leadership Committee's largest national donors from January 2017 through June 2018. Only 0.4% of the RSLC's donations came from Connecticut donors.

- Judicial Confirmation Network, a ["dark money" group](#) that promotes conservative judicial appointments, \$1,525,000
- Reynolds American, a tobacco company, \$846,554
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, a trade group, \$827,819
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Related Entities, \$535,379
- BNSF Railway Company, a freight railroad network, \$525,778
- Rent Stabilization Association Of New York, a trade association of property owners and agents, \$500,000
- William Holtzman, President of Holzman Corp., an oil company, \$475,000
- Altria Client Services, Inc., a [subsidiary](#) of Altria Group, a tobacco company, \$467,297
- Astrazeneca Zeneca Services, a pharmaceutical company, \$426,717
- State Government Leadership Foundation, a [dark money group](#) funded by corporations, \$421,333

As noted earlier, the Change Connecticut PAC's summary of its unpaid expenses is clearly incorrect. Our review of spending data from all of its reports through its October 11 filing shows that they had \$348,001 in remaining unpaid bills. However, following a series of reporting errors that begin with their September 26 report, when they eliminated \$359,956.12 in unpaid bills, their October 11 filing reported that they had no unpaid expenses at all. In other words, \$348,001 in unpaid expenses — more than half (56%) of all their expenses this year — have disappeared from their reports with no explanation or payment. This makes no sense. Are they hiding these expenses to avoid disclosing which candidates benefited from them? Have these been paid by another source?

Some super PACs appear to be engaged in a strategy of sneak attacks, concealing the candidates who are the targets of their spending in their reports until shortly before the election. To avoid tipping off opposing candidates to their priorities and strategies, these PACs have every incentive to avoid identifying tying their expenses to candidates and to delay spending until shortly before the election, leaving as little time as possible for opposing candidates, journalists, and voters to question or challenge their messages and attacks.

Change Connecticut PAC has taken this stealth strategy to an extreme. Between June and October 10, 2018, Change Connecticut has spent \$618,531, and yet as of its October 11 filing, it claimed that 81% of this money was not used to support or oppose any candidate.

The only targeted spending they acknowledge as of their October 11 report is some digital advertising costs for state senate elections, opposing Democratic candidates:

- \$25,834 opposing Matt Lesser, and
- \$33,216 opposing Norm Needleman
- \$30,448 opposing Steve Cassano
- \$29,139 opposing James Maroney

In fact, in their October 11 filing, they effectively reversed disclosures about targeted candidates that they made in their September 26, October 7 and October 10 filings. In the earlier filings, they reported \$116,608 in direct mail, polling, and strategy consulting expenses they incurred opposing four Democratic state senate candidates — Lesser, Needleman, James Maroney, and Steve Cassano. At that time, these expenses were incurred, but not yet paid. In their October 11 filing, they reported these expenses as paid, but did not report the candidates targeted as required. Thus they have effectively reversed their earlier reporting and “untargeted” these expenses. Are they covering their tracks? Why did they reverse course on these disclosures?

It appears implausible that none of the following expenses by the PAC (as of the October 11 filing) were intended to influence the outcome of any particular election:

- \$170,000 in polling and related consulting costs from Eagle Point Strategies. Were none of these questions about particular candidates or targeted to voters in specific districts?
- \$143,946 on research dossiers from Percipient Strategies. Were they not researching a single candidate they planned to support or oppose?
- \$86,608 on direct mail from Kap Print. Did these mailers not mention any candidates?
- \$43,350 on strategy consulting from Convergence Media. Did none of this consulting involve a discussion of specific candidates?

On August 1, Connecticut House Democratic candidates [filed a complaint](#) with the State Elections Enforcement Commission alleging that Change Connecticut violated state laws. They indicated that a consultant used by Change Connecticut made requests to local officials for police and voting records concerning state legislative candidates. The complaint alleges that Change Connecticut violated state law by:

- Failing to identify which candidates it supported or opposed with these candidates, and
- Delaying a public report on their research expenses weeks past the 24-hour deadline.

Common Cause in Connecticut has also filed a complaint against Change Connecticut PAC in October, 2018 on similar grounds.

Change Connecticut’s Democratic counterpart, a super PAC called Connecticut Values, is funded solely by \$45,000 from the Democratic State Legislative Committee, and has spent only \$15. So Change Connecticut has raised 18 times more than Connecticut Values and has outspent it by more than \$600,000 thus far.

Change PAC

Type	Party-affiliated
Focus	Republican candidate for Governor (Bob Stefanowski)
Income	2,580,000
Expenses	2,431,938
Balance on hand	148,062

Expenses include those that have been paid, as well as those there were incurred but not paid as of Oct 11 filings. Balance on hand also takes unpaid expenses into account.

Formed this year, the PAC’s sole funder is the Republican Governors Association (RGA), a national 527 political action committee, which also directly runs Change PAC. It has the greatest funding of any Connecticut super PAC, with \$2.6 million from the RGA so far.

The RGA supports Republican candidates for Governor across the country. In August, an RGA spokesperson indicated to the Hartford Courant that Connecticut was its [top priority](#) and represented the party’s best chance in the country of turning a seat held by a Democrat to the Republican Party.

Only 2% of donations to the RGA are from Connecticut, according to our analysis of data from campaign finance data from the Internal Revenue Service. The RGA’s largest funders in the 2018 election cycle (January 2018 through June 2018) were:

- Paul Singer, Founder and Principal of Elliott Management, a hedge fund, \$2,250,000
- Mountaire Corporation, a poultry processor and one of the [largest private companies](#) in the U.S., \$1,600,000
- Bernard Marcus, [billionaire](#) retired founder of Home Depot, \$1,500,000
- John Joe Ricketts, [billionaire](#) on the Forbes 400 list and founder of TD Ameritrade, \$1,500,000
- Centene Management Company LLC, a health insurance company, \$1,400,000
- WMC Jobs Fund, a Wisconsin PAC, \$1,250,000
- Rex Sinquefeld, co-founder of Dimensional Fund Advisors, an investment firm, and founder of the Show-Me Institute, a free-market think tank, \$1,000,000
- JWC III Revocable Trust, a trust of Joseph W. Craft III, president and CEO of Alliance Resource Partners, a coal producer, \$750,000
- Karen Buchwald Wright Revocable Trust, \$750,000
- PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), a trade association, \$725,000

It has also spent the most of any Connecticut Super PAC — a total of \$2.4 million, which went almost entirely to

- TV advertising - \$2,086,154,
- Digital advertising - \$260,541, and
- Consultants - \$84,809, including \$60,809 for communications consulting.

The overwhelming majority (90%) went to spending against Ned Lamont, primarily through negative TV ads. Only 6% of their spending has been supportive of Bob Stefanowski.

Type of Spending	Amount	% of total
Opposing Ned Lamont	2,198,465	90%
Supporting Bob Stefanowski	148,230	6%
Not targeted	85,242	4%
Total	2,431,938	

By contrast, the Our Connecticut PAC, which was formed and run directly by the Democratic Governors Association in D.C., has only raised \$125,000. This funding has come entirely from the DGA, which supports Democratic Gubernatorial nominees. Governor Dan Malloy served as its Chair in 2016 and 2017. It has spent \$104,348, almost all of it going to candidate research by a consulting firm. About two-thirds of these research expenses (66%) have been for opposition research against Stefanowski and the GOP primary candidates.

In other words, the Change PAC (the RGA) has raised 21 times and spent 23 times more than its Democratic counterpart, Our Connecticut (the DGA), in Connecticut this year.

Protect Freedom PAC

Type	Candidate
Focus	Support Bob Stefanowski for Governor
Income	\$2,076,250 or \$1,216,250 (see below)
Expenses	1,143,930
Balance on hand	932,320 or 72,320 (depending on income)

Expenses include those that have been paid, as well as those there were incurred but not paid as of Oct 11 filings. Balance on hand also takes unpaid expenses into account.

Protect Freedom PAC was formed and is operated directly by a national PAC with the same name, which also contributed \$250 to its Connecticut campaign. This single candidate committee supported Bob Stefanowski through his successful primary GOP election. The national PAC was [formed in 2017](#) by supporters of conservative libertarian U.S. Senator Rand Paul. The Chair of Protect Freedom PAC's local efforts is Michael Biundo, who was an advisor to Rand Paul's 2016 Presidential primary campaign and Donald Trump's general election campaign.

As noted earlier, the individual donations disclosed by the Protect Freedom PAC in its reports this year clearly add up to \$2,076,250. Yet their October 10 filing reports aggregate income for the year of \$1,216,250, a massive gap of \$860,000 within their own reports. They recorded multiple donations from five donors of matching amounts over time. These donors are Reverage Anselmo (two \$250,000 donations and two \$450,000 donations), Richard Uihlein (two \$100,000 donations), Raymond Debbane (two \$50,000 donations), Nicholas Perricone (two \$5,000 donations), and Brian Navarro (two \$5,000 donations). If one donation in each of these pairs is a duplicate, this would total \$860,000, the amount of the discrepancy. So it is possible that that they have incorrectly recorded \$860,000 worth of duplicate donations. If so, they have not revised earlier reports to correct this and remove the duplicates, as required. Alternately, they may have \$860,000 in extra cash on hand that they will spring on an unsuspecting electorate by election day. We cannot know, but the PAC should clearly correct their reports immediately, so the public can understand who is paying to influence their votes.

Its largest donations were:

- \$730,000 or \$1,430,000 from Reverage Anselmo of Greenwich, a writer and [film producer](#) in Greenwich. Anselmo is the son of Rene Anselmo, [founder of PanAmSat](#), the first private satellite network, and his mother Mary was previously on the [Forbes 400 list](#) of wealthiest Americans. Reverage also formerly served on the board of PanAmSat.
- \$100,000 or \$200,000 from Richard Uihlein of Illinois, CEO of Uline Corporation, a shipping supply company, and the [third largest political donor](#) to federal campaigns and PACs in the U.S. in the 2018 election cycle. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Uihlein and his wife Elizabeth have contributed \$33 million (as of October 8). This has gone primarily to ["outside spending"](#) groups like super PACs. The couple are becoming well-known for their low profile and have been called "the [most powerful conservative couple you've never heard of](#)" by the New York Times. Politico has called Richard "the [biggest Republican megadonor you've never heard of](#)."
- \$100,000 or \$150,000 from Raymond Debbane of Greenwich, CEO of [Invus Group](#), an equity investment firm, and [Board Chair](#) of Weight Watchers.

- \$100,000 from Denis Nayden of Stamford, [Chairman](#) of James Alpha Holdings, LLC, an asset management and financial services company; Vice Chairman of Avolon Holdings Limited, an international aircraft leasing company; and the Chairman of Varagon Capital, a direct lending asset manager. He formerly served as [Chair and CEO](#) of General Electric Capital.

Protect Freedom spent the vast majority of its money on:

- TV advertising - \$859,860
- Digital advertising - \$165,000
- Direct mail - \$38,672
- Phone banks (calling voters) - \$25,000
- Polls - \$14,148

Combining expenditures from Change PAC and Protect Freedom PAC, Bob Stefanowski has benefited from \$3.4 million in targeted super PAC spending. By comparison, the Stefanowski campaign itself reported total income of \$2.4 million, as of their October 10 filing, not counting \$2.65 million in loans the candidate made to his campaign.

FixCT PAC

Type	Candidate
Focus	Support Steve Obsitnik in GOP primary for Governor
Income	145,000
Expenses	132,833
Balance on hand	12,822

Expenses include those that have been paid, as well as those there were incurred but not paid as of Oct 11 filings. Balance on hand also takes unpaid expenses into account.

FixCT PAC focused its support for Steve Obsitnik in the GOP Gubernatorial primary. Candidate campaigns and Super PACs are not legally permitted to coordinate their activities. In June, the State Elections Enforcement Commission launched an investigation of the Obsitnik campaign and whether it had illegally raised campaign contributions or coordinated its activities with the FixCT PAC. This investigation may have been related to the common use of a digital marketing firm, Connect Strategic Communications, by both the Obsitnik campaign and FixCT PAC, which may have raised questions about coordination through the vendor. No resolution of this investigation has yet been shared on the [SEEC website](#).

Its largest contributions were:

- \$100,000 from Thomas McNerney of Westport, CEO of [Bluff Point Associates](#), a private equity firm. Thomas and Paula McNerney are ranked among the [top political contributors](#) in the country by the Center for Responsive Politics. They have given \$2.2 million in the 2018 cycle (as of October 8), with about [half of this going](#) to outside spending groups, including super PACs.
- \$25,000 from Alan Masarek of Milford, CEO of Vonage Holdings, the telecommunications company.

The vast majority of its \$132,178 in expenses went to \$88,622 for digital advertising and \$32,598 for legal and compliance consultants. It did not spend on TV advertising.

Realtors for Connecticut PAC

Type	Business
Focus	Business - realtor interests
Income	604,420
Expenses	55,000
Balance on hand	549,420

Expenses include those that have been paid, as well as those there were incurred but not paid as of Oct 11 filings. Balance on hand also takes unpaid expenses into account.

This PAC was formed and is run directly by the Connecticut Association of Realtors, which contributed all of its \$604,420 in income. The Association, which calls itself the state's [largest professional trade association](#), had a [\\$3 million budget](#) in 2016, according to their IRS tax filing. It spent \$746,190 on [lobbying expenses](#) during the 2017-18 legislative session, placing it among the top 14 lobbying organizations during this period, according to filings with the Office of State Ethics. In May 2017, the Association [sponsored a rally](#) at the Capitol calling for calling for business growth, creating new jobs, and cutting state spending. It was attended by more than 2,000 realtors, joined by legislative leaders on the stage. [At the rally](#), Association President Michael Barbaro said, "In the future, perhaps if we don't get what we want, we'll put our shoulders behind replacing the people the people that didn't get us there." The Association also sponsored primary and general election [Gubernatorial debates](#) in 2018.

The PAC has only spent \$55,000 of its money, directing it to polling. It did not indicate that any of this money was used to support or oppose candidates, raising questions about what other purpose there would be for this amount of polling. So with only weeks left before the election, it is unclear how Realtors for Connecticut will target its substantial funds, leaving candidates and voters little time to respond.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS MAKING INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES

While the focus of this report is on Connecticut state-level super PACs, which are responsible for the vast majority of independent expenditures in the state, there are other organizations making significant independent expenditures to influence elections. Some of these organizations, such as labor unions, have legal structures that are different from state super PACs. They are not required to disclose their donors and so can be considered a source of dark money. Another is a national PAC.

These expenses were documented in reports to the State Elections Enforcement Commission through October 11. Expenses include those that are paid or incurred.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

AFSCME is a public employee union that is making independent expenditures as a 501(c)(5) labor organization, not a PAC. It has spent \$75,195 thus far, primarily on:

- \$36,352 for digital advertising
- \$15,479 for direct mail
- \$15,405 for canvassing
- \$1,293 for phone banks (calling voters)

Most of their expenses, including all digital ads and mailings, were targeted to support Ned Lamont for Governor. Canvassing expenses were split between supporting Lamont and several Democratic state senate candidates — Steve Cassano, Matt Lesser, Mary Abrams, Jorge Cabrera, Julie Kushner, and Mae Flexer. Phone banks supported these candidates, as well as additional state senate candidates, Christine Cohen and James Maroney.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

SEIU is making independent expenditures as a 501(c)(5) labor organization, rather than as a PAC. By our calculation of their individual expenses, they have spent \$332,405 so far:

- \$247,420 on canvassing (door knocking)
- \$61,442 on campaign literature
- \$23,543 on political consulting and communications services

The majority of these expenses (\$277,326) have been targeted to support Ned Lamont, with other expenses supporting state senate candidates — Mary Abrams, Julie Kushner, Jorge Cabrera, and Vickie Nardello.

Our summary of the SEIU's individual expenses matched the totals in their reports until their October 10 filing, when they reported aggregate paid expenses of \$481,605, with another \$19,293 of incurred but unpaid expenses, for a total of \$500,898. We could not identify individual expenses in their reports that would add up to this amount. The reasons for this discrepancy are not clear.

National Association of Realtors Fund

The **National Association of Realtors** operates multiple national PACs. It began its spending in Connecticut in October. It is not immediately clear if the Fund is operated as a national super PAC. (The focus of this report is on state-level super PACs.) The local agent listed in campaign filings for the NAR Fund is Jim Heckman, General Counsel and Government Affairs Director at the Connecticut Association of Realtors, suggesting that the state and national associations are coordinating their respective super PACs. (See Realtors for Connecticut PAC profile above.)

The NAR Fund has spent \$126,202 supporting GOP state senate incumbents through direct mail and digital advertising:

- \$53,373 for Scott Frantz,
- \$39,953 for Michael McLachlan (who is also a commercial realtor), and
- \$32,876 for George Logan.

ENDNOTES

1 Reports on Alice Walton's state and federal political donations provide an address in Bentonville, AR, which is also the headquarters of Walmart, so that address is used in this report. However, Forbes and other news sources indicate that she lives in Texas.

2 The Protect Freedom PAC's filing records with the SEEC indicate that Dennis Nayden is an executive at Oak Hill Capital Partners, but [Bloomberg](#) and [Nayden's bio](#) on the James Alpha Management website indicate that he has left Oak Hill.

APPENDIX: DONORS TO NATIONAL PACS THAT FUND CONNECTICUT SUPER PACS

For a list of the largest donors to the Republican Governors Association and the Republican State Leadership Committee, see the profiles above of Change PAC and Change Connecticut. The following are the largest donors to the Democratic Governors Association and Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee between January 2017 and June 2018. These data are from [campaign finance reports](#) from the Internal Revenue Service.

Democratic Governors Association (DGA)

The DGA is the sole funder of the Our Connecticut PAC, which it operates. Only 3% of the DGA's donations from CT. The DGA's largest national donors are:

- Jay Pritzker, founder of the Pritzker Group, a private investment firm, and a member of one of the [wealthiest families](#) in the U.S., \$2,000,000
- America Works USA, a Democratic leadership PAC, \$1,575,000
- Anthem, Inc., health insurer, \$925,000
- Pfizer Inc., pharmaceutical company, \$850,000
- David Maltz, Treasurer of Double M Inc., \$600,000
- PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), a trade association, \$585,000
- Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn, \$525,000
- Aetna, health insurer, \$500,000
- AFSCME, a public employee union, \$500,000
- American Beverage Association, a trade organization, \$500,000
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, a health insurer, \$500,000
- Democrat Republican Independent Voter Education, \$500,000
- UnitedHealth Group, a managed health company, \$500,000
- Vincent J. Ryan, Investor at Schooner Capital Corporation, \$500,000
- Walmart, \$500,000

Democratic Leadership Campaign Committee (DLCC)

The DLCC is the sole funder of the Connecticut Values PAC, which it operates. About 5% of the DLCC's donations come from Connecticut. The DLCC's largest donors are:

- AFSCME, a public employee union, \$1,050,000
- Donald Sussman, a Greenwich, CT hedge fund manager, \$800,000
- IBEW PAC Voluntary Fund, a PAC of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, \$360,000
- IBT - DRIVE Committee, a PAC of the Teamsters union, \$350,000
- International Association of Fire Fighters, a union, \$315,000
- AFT Solidarity 527, a PAC of the American Federation of Teachers union, \$300,000
- UFCW, a food and commercial worker union, \$295,000
- PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), a trade association, \$250,000
- AstraZeneca, a pharmaceutical company, \$200,000
- International Union of Painters and Allied Trade, \$200,000
- Walmart Stores Inc., \$200,000



65 Hungerford Street
Hartford, CT 06106
860.549.1220
commoncause.org/CT



30 Arbor Street 6N
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 233-2181
ccag.net