

## Betsy DeVos Awarded Cabinet Spot After Family Spends Millions for Republicans

Betsy DeVos, President-elect Trump's nominee for Secretary of Education, has a record that renders her unfit to serve in government. On multiple occasions, DeVos has ignored, flouted, or directly broken campaign finance laws. Worse, DeVos' statement that she and her family "are buying influence... [and] we expect a return on our investments," when coupled with their donations to help elect Senators who will vote on her nomination, creates a significant conflict of interest for those Senators. The Senators can resolve that conflict by recusing themselves from voting on her nomination.

### Betsy DeVos: "I Have Decided... to Stop Taking Offense at the Suggestion We Are Buying Influence. Now, I Simply Concede the Point."

In 1997, Betsy DeVos wrote an op-ed in which she admitted:

"I have decided, however, to stop taking offense at the suggestion that we are buying influence. Now I simply concede the point. They are right. We do expect some things in return. We expect to foster a conservative governing philosophy consisting of limited government and respect for traditional American virtues. We expect a return on our investment... Furthermore, we expect the Republican party to use the money to promote these policies, and yes, to win elections." ([Roll Call, 9/6/97](#))

As Politico later noted, DeVos thus "said she expects politicians to champion her causes after receiving financial support." ([Politico, 12/20/16](#))

## Betsy DeVos and Family Have Given Key Senators Over \$250,000

### The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Will Decide Whether to Refer DeVos to the Full Senate

The Senate HELP Committee has jurisdiction over nominees for Secretary of Education. The committee "must report it to the full Senate or be discharged from its further consideration before [the nomination] may be considered on the floor." ([Congressional Research Service, 8/23/16](#))

### The DeVos Family Has Given Six HELP Committee Senators \$256,400

DeVos Family Donations to HELP Committee Senators' Campaigns	
Senator	Amount
Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)	\$43,200

Todd Young (R-IN)	\$48,600
Bill Cassidy (R-LA)	\$70,200
Richard Burr (R-NC)	\$43,200
Tim Scott (R-SC)	\$49,200
Orrin Hatch (R-UT)	\$2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$256,400</b>

Source: FEC filings

### Betsy DeVos Has Contributed \$31,400 To Five of These Senators

<b>Betsy DeVos Donations to HELP Committee Senators' Campaigns</b>	
<b>Senator</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)	\$5,400
Todd Young (R-IN)	\$5,400
Bill Cassidy (R-LA)	\$7,800
Richard Burr (R-NC)	\$5,400
Tim Scott (R-SC)	\$7,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,400</b>

Source: FEC filings

### DeVos Family Has Given More Than \$900,000 to Republican Senators

The DeVos family Has Given \$930,600 to the Campaigns of 23 Sitting Republican Senators

<b>DeVos Family Donations to Senators' Campaigns</b>	
<b>Senator</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)	\$43,200
Dan Sullivan (R-AK)	\$23,400
Tom Cotton (R-AR)	\$26,000
John McCain (R-AZ)	\$36,600
Cory Gardner (R-CO)	\$46,800
Marco Rubio (R-FL)	\$101,300
David Perdue (R-GA)	\$20,800
Chuck Grassley (R-IA)	\$21,600
Todd Young (R-IN)	\$48,600
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	\$36,400
Bill Cassidy (R-LA)	\$70,200
Roy Blunt (R-MO)	\$33,100

Steve Daines (R-MT)	\$46,800
Richard Burr (R-NC)	\$43,200
Thom Tillis (R-NC)	\$70,200
Rob Portman (R-OH)	\$51,000
Jim Inhofe (R-OK)	\$1,000
Pat Toomey (R-PA)	\$55,800
Tim Scott (R-SC)	\$49,200
Mike Rounds (R-SD)	\$46,800
John Thune (R-SD)	\$8,000
Orrin Hatch (R-UT)	\$2,000
Ron Johnson (R-WI)	\$48,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$930,600</b>

Source: FEC filings

### Betsy DeVos Has Given \$115,000 to the Campaigns of 20 Sitting Republican Senators

<b>DeVos Family Donations to Senators' Campaigns</b>	
<b>Senator</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)	\$5,400
Dan Sullivan (R-AK)	\$2,600
Tom Cotton (R-AR)	\$2,600
John McCain (R-AZ)	\$5,600
Cory Gardner (R-CO)	\$5,200
Marco Rubio (R-FL)	\$10,500
Chuck Grassley (R-IA)	\$5,400
Todd Young (R-IN)	\$5,400
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	\$3,600
Bill Cassidy (R-LA)	\$7,800
Roy Blunt (R-MO)	\$6,100
Steve Daines (R-MT)	\$5,200
Richard Burr (R-NC)	\$5,400
Thom Tillis (R-NC)	\$5,200
Rob Portman (R-OH)	\$7,800
Pat Toomey (R-PA)	\$7,800
Tim Scott (R-SC)	\$7,400
Mike Rounds (R-SD)	\$5,200
John Thune (R-SD)	\$3,000
Ron Johnson (R-WI)	\$7,800

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$115,000</b>
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Source: FEC filings

## DeVos Family Has Spent Millions More to Elect Republican Senators

### DeVos Family Has Given Over \$13 Million to Pro-Republican Groups

The DeVos family has also given more than \$13 million in donations to Super PACs, PACs, and party committees that have helped elect sitting Republican senators. The largest of those donations are in the table below.

<b>DeVos Family Donations to Selected Groups</b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Republican National Committee	\$5,890,591
Freedom Partners Action Fund	\$2,750,000
Senate Leadership Fund	\$1,000,000
American Crossroads	\$1,000,000
National Republican Senatorial Committee	\$890,600

Source: FEC filings

### DeVos-Backed Groups Spent More Than \$38 Million to Elect Three HELP Committee Senators

The DeVos family has contributed millions of dollars to Super PACs Freedom Partners Action Fund, Senate Leadership Fund, and American Crossroads, and hundreds of thousands of dollars to the National Republican Senatorial Committee. The four groups have spent \$38,197,060 since 2014 to help elect Senators Young, Cassidy, and Burr.

<b>Super PAC Spending in HELP Committee Senators' Races</b>	
<b>Senator</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Todd Young (R-IN)	\$16,750,936
Bill Cassidy (R-LA)	\$4,717,919
Richard Burr (R-NC)	\$16,728,205
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$38,197,060</b>

Source: Center for Responsive Politics analysis of FEC filings

## Betsy DeVos Co-Founded an Organization Whose Goal Was “to End All Legal Restrictions on Money in Politics”

In 1997, Betsy DeVos helped found the James Madison Center for Free Speech and served as a board member. “The non-profit’s sole goal was to end all legal restrictions on money in politics. Its honorary chairman was Senator Mitch McConnell.” (Mayer, Jane. *Dark Money*. 2016. p. 246)

The Madison Center employed James “Jim” Bopp as general counsel, and “virtually every dollar from [Center] donors went to his firm.” Since the Madison Center is legally a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible charity, it effectively served as a tax-deductible pass-through for the DeVos family and others to fund challenges to campaign finance laws. (Mayer, p. 247; [The James Madison Center, accessed 1/5/17](#))

Bopp has been described as the “intellectual architect” behind the series of court cases, including *Citizens United v. FEC*, that have eliminated most of our campaign finance system and created “the new era of big money.” ([The Atlantic, 10/2012](#))

## **Betsy DeVos Chaired a Group That Spends Dark Money on Elections**

### **DeVos Chaired “American Federation for Children,” a 501(c)(4) Nonprofit That Does Not Disclose Donors**

DeVos chaired the American Federation for Children, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit that does not disclose its donors. ([The Center for Responsive Politics, 12/1/16](#); [American Federation for Children, 2014, p. 3](#))

### **AFC Has Spent Millions on Elections**

The “American Federation for Children” has spent more than \$5 million on elections. Additionally, “it has funneled money into other ‘dark money’ groups that support contenders for state supreme court seats.” ([The Center for Responsive Politics, 12/1/16](#))

## **Betsy DeVos Led a PAC That Was Fined for Campaign Finance Violations**

### **DeVos Headed the “All Children Matter” PAC in 2008**

DeVos served as chair of ACM PAC in 2008, and “is the only person who has been listed on All Children Matter’s leadership page since 2006.” ([Center for Responsive Politics, 12/1/16](#))

### **In 2008, ACM PAC Was Fined \$5.2 Million for Campaign Finance Violations**

In 2008, ACM PAC asked the Ohio Election Commission if it could transfer money from its federal PAC to its state arm. The OEC advised against making a transfer in excess of Ohio’s

\$10,000 legal contribution limit. ACM PAC ignored this advisory and did so anyway, transferring \$870,000. ([Politico, 11/29/16](#))

The Ohio Election Commission, composed of two Republicans, two Democrats, and one independent, unanimously found ACM to be in violation of state law. Per statute, the group was fined \$5.22 million dollars. The organization also owes over \$91,000 in late fees for its failure to pay the fine. (Grand Rapids Press, 4/13/08; [Politico, 11/29/16](#))

### **DeVos and Trump Claim That *Citizens United* Retroactively Renders Her Group's Violation Acceptable**

Per Politico, "A Trump transition representative suggested that the fine is no longer legally binding because of the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision." However, "the transfer by DeVos' group happened two years before *Citizens United*, and court records suggest that the Supreme Court ruling wasn't a factor in the All Children Matter case." Super PACs, which can accept unlimited donations, did not exist in 2008. ([Politico, 12/14/16](#))

### **ACM Was Also Fined for Campaign Finance Violations in Wisconsin**

In 2009, All Children Matter was fined \$500 by Wisconsin's Government Accountability Board for failing to register its national PAC in Wisconsin before the national PAC donated to its state chapter. ([The Associated Press, 3/28/11](#))

## **The DeVos Family Is Closely Tied to the Koch Brothers**

Per a recent DeVos profile, "it would be hard to find a better representative of the 'donor class' than DeVos, whose family has been allied with Charles and David Koch for years. Betsy, her husband Richard, Jr. (Dick), and her father-in-law, Richard, Sr., whose fortune was estimated by Forbes to be worth \$5.1 billion, have turned up repeatedly on lists of attendees at the Kochs' donor summits, and as contributors to the brothers' political ventures... While the DeVoses are less well known than the Kochs, they have played a similar role in bankrolling the rightward march of the Republican Party." ([The New Yorker, 11/23/16](#))