



End Citizens United

Mitch McConnell Campaign Finance Reform Record

May 7, 2019

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Executive Summary

Mitch McConnell has gladly positioned himself as the figurehead of the movement against campaign finance reform. For his entire career, he has done everything within his considerable power to kill meaningful attempts at reform, protect anonymous megadonors, and ensure that big money, not the American people, drove public policy. He has celebrated and defended the influence of corporate money, encouraged more big money in politics, and fought voraciously to protect the *Citizens United* court ruling that helped unleash unprecedented amounts of outside spending in campaigns. And he almost single-handedly turned the nation's campaign finance reform enforcement organization into an empty, useless shell—constantly deadlocked and barely functioning.

Why? Because McConnell is beholden to the billionaires and big corporations that have funded his rise to power. He has used campaign money as currency his entire career, from rewarding big donors with unmatched access to powerful lawmakers to orchestrating massive donor networks to help keep him and Republicans in power. McConnell has attracted this kind of support because his powerful donors—from Wall Street executives, to tobacco companies, to casinos—know that McConnell has their back in Congress.

McConnell has been the architect of our failed system—a system that puts billionaires and corporations above the American people, so easily able to buy their preferred public policies. McConnell represents the worst of big money Washington politics, and he cannot be trusted to serve anyone except the megadonors and special interests.

McConnell Has Made It His Life's Work To Kill Campaign Finance Reform And Hand Our Democracy To Wealthy Megadonors

TOP HITS

- Despite ample evidence to the contrary, McConnell has claimed that our campaign finance system didn't need any reform and what's more, didn't think people cared about it. Multiple polls have shown that the American people are worried about the corrupting influence of money in politics and support regulations to limit campaign spending.
- In 2019, the House introduced and pass the most comprehensive package of anti-corruption legislation since Watergate—the For The People Act, otherwise known as H.R. 1. But even before H.R. 1 was introduced, McConnell pledged that the bill would die in the Senate. Once it actually was introduced, McConnell wasted no time excoriating the bill for its disclosure requirements and efforts to reform the FEC, among other things. McConnell continued to maintain that he would stop it nothing to block H.R. 1 from the Senate floor.
- McConnell has spent his whole career fighting for big donors instead of the American people. One of his most hated pieces of legislation was the DISCLOSE Act—a bill that would require greater transparency into the flood of big money funding mysterious TV ads. McConnell even said that blocking the DISCLOSE Act was “one of the most important things we did in the past few years.”
- McConnell voted to block a constitutional amendment that would overturn *Citizens United*.
- McConnell embraced his status as the figurehead of the anti-reform movement. He was described as “perhaps the leading advocate for unrestricted campaign donations” and said that his “high-visibility” role in opposing reform was a “big plus” on his resume.

McConnell Didn't Think Anything Was Wrong With Our Campaign Finance System, Despite Ample Evidence To The Contrary

McConnell Didn't Think Our Campaign Finance System Needed To Be Reformed...

McConnell In 1994: “Frankly There’s Not Much That Needs To Be Reformed” And “Fundamentally The [Campaign Finance] System Is OK.” In 1994, McConnell wrote an article for the Heritage Foundation, stating: “Frankly, there’s not much that needs to be reformed. [...] My view—I’ve given a lot of thought to this—is that fundamentally the system is O.K.. There are some changes I would make, but I don’t think anything major.” [Heritage Foundation Lectures, “Why We Are Stopping Campaign Finance Reform,” [10/6/94](#)]

McConnell: H.R. 1 Is A “Solution In Search Of A Problem.” In March 2019, the Hill reported: “Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is pulling out all the stops to make sure not a single Republican senator backs the campaign finance and ethics reform bill that House Democrats are set to pass on Friday. [...] ‘For myself, I don’t see anything in here salvageable,’ he added. ‘This is a solution in search of a problem. What it really is is a bill designed to make it more likely Democrats win more often.’” [The Hill, [3/8/19](#)]

...But It Does

Brennan Center: Current Campaign Finance System “Unfairly Stacks The Deck In Favor Of The Few Americans Able To Give Exceptionally Large Contributions.” According to the Brennan Center: “There is a growing disconnect between average citizens and elected officials. Part of the blame lies with a campaign finance system that unfairly stacks the deck in favor of the few Americans able to give exceptionally large contributions.” [Brennan Center for Justice, accessed [3/14/19](#)]

“The Inundation Of Elections With Private Cash” Was Facilitated As Early As 1976 With *Buckley v. Valeo*. In May 2018, Vox reported:” Let’s put the hated decision into context. The inundation of elections with private cash is not the result of Citizens but rather was facilitated by the 1976 decision *Buckley v. Valeo*. That case established the legal framework sanctioning billions of dollars of independent private campaign spending. In it, the Court ruled that limits on campaign donations — direct donations to candidates — are constitutional but said it was unconstitutional to limit non-donation expenditures, such as independently funded advertisements.” [Vox, [3/7/18](#)]

Campaign Finance Laws Enacted In The 1970s “Have Been Weakened By Additional Legislation And A Series Of Court Decisions.” In February 2018, NPR reported: “After the Watergate scandals in the 1970s, Congress passed a series of laws to reduce the influence of big donors in politics and to increase transparency. Forty years later, those laws have been weakened by additional legislation and a series of court decisions.” [NPR, [2/7/18](#)]

In Our Campaign Finance System, “Big Donors Benefit From A Largely Unregulated System That Caters To Them.” In February 2018, NPR reported: “Where the Watergate reforms established a single regulated system used by all candidates to finance their political campaigns, there are now three separate systems. Candidates and the political parties work mainly within vestigial, regulated system of the 1970s. Big donors benefit from a largely unregulated system that caters to them. And small-dollar, grass-roots supporters use the Internet to give spontaneously or on an automated schedule.” [NPR, [2/7/18](#)]

Half Of The Money Spent In The 2016 Elections, \$2.6 Billion, Came From Just Under 20,000 People. In February 2018, NPR reported: “In 2016, individuals spent \$5.2 billion on federal elections. Half of that money, \$2.6 billion, came from just 19,145 people, about as many as live in Johnstown, Pa. All of this comes from new research from the Bipartisan Policy Center, which examines American's campaign finance system and how it's coming apart.” [NPR, [2/7/18](#)]

Super PACs, Conduits For “Unlimited Political Funds,” Are “Exemplar For The New Campaign Finance System.” In February 2018, NPR reported: “The exemplar for the new campaign finance system is the superPAC, a conduit for unlimited political funds that is barely 8 years old. ‘SuperPACs as a vehicle for individual giving — their significance cannot be overstated,’ said Stanford Law School professor Nate Persily at a recent conference in Washington, D.C. Persily spearheaded the two-year research project for the Bipartisan Policy Center. Although superPACs were envisioned as independent operations, distant from the candidates they supported, the relationships are now much closer.” [NPR, [2/7/18](#)]

“The New Campaign Finance System Offers Big Donors New Places To Give Even More Money Than Before.” In February 2018, NPR reported: “Ginsberg cited the spending power of the Congressional Leadership Fund, a heavily-financed superPAC with ties to House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. CLF ‘has more offices on the ground, in individual states, than the Republican National Committee does, and the National Republican Congressional Committee, combined,’ Ginsberg said. The superPAC's [Federal Election Commission filings](#) show it raised \$26.6 million in 2017, including two donations of \$1 million each, but only \$1,517 from small donors. The bottom line: Even as small donors flock to support their favorite candidates, the new campaign finance system offers big donors new places to give even more money than before.” [NPR, [2/7/18](#)]

McConnell Said People Didn’t Care About Campaign Finance Reform...

2002: McConnell Didn't Think Campaign Finance Reform Was An Important Issue To Voters; Said No One "Has Ever Won Or Lost An Election On This Issue." In February 2002, the AP reported: "McConnell's position does come with political risks, but he doesn't believe the issue is overly important to voters. 'No one in the history of American politics has ever won or lost an election on this issue,' he said." [AP, 2/15/02]

McConnell Said Campaign Finance Reform Mattered To Voters As Much As "Static Cling." In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: "GOP senators were happy to let McConnell lead the charge against reform, freeing them from taking a politically risky stand, said Brian Minnich, a McConnell aide in the 1980s. McConnell insisted that voters do not care – 'This issue, for average Americans, ranks right up there with static cling,' he said in a public television interview -- and that was true, at least for Kentucky." [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

...But They Do

Surveys Showed That "The Public Is Disenchanted With The Campaign Finance System And Supports A Broad Array Of Reform Proposals Restricting Both Contributions And Expenditures." In January 2018, the Bipartisan Policy Center published a study on campaign finance reform in the U.S., in collaboration with NYU and Stanford Law Schools. The report stated: "In two national public opinion surveys conducted in 2015 and 2016 as part of this project, Professors Jeffrey Milyo and David Primo assess what the public knows about campaign finance, how concerned the public is about the role money plays in the political system, and what—if anything—can be done about it. Milyo and Primo find that the public is disenchanted with the campaign finance system and supports a broad array of reform proposals restricting both contributions and expenditures— positions that have been remarkably consistent over time, even as the campaign finance system has evolved significantly." [Bipartisan Policy Center, "Campaign Finance in the United States: Assessing an Era of Fundamental Change," [January 2018](#)]

HEADLINE: "Most Americans Want To Limit Campaign Spending, Say Big Donors Have Greater Political Influence." [Pew Research Center, [5/8/18](#)]

Americans "Overwhelmingly Support Limits On Political Campaign Spending, And Most Think New Laws Could Effectively Reduce The Role Of Money In Politics." In May 2018, the Pew Research Center reported: "Americans overwhelmingly support limits on political campaign spending, and most think new laws could effectively reduce the role of money in politics." [Pew Research Center, [5/8/18](#)]

Poll Found That 75% Of 2018 Voters In Battleground House Districts Said Cracking Down On Washington Corruption Was Their Top Priority. In January 2019, Vox reported: "Embracing anti-corruption and pro-democracy reforms are very good politics, and there's polling from End Citizens United, shared exclusively with Vox, to back that up. The organization's survey found that 75 percent of 2018 voters in battleground House districts said cracking down on Washington corruption was their top priority, followed by 71 percent who wanted to protect Social Security and Medicare, and 70 percent who listed growing the economy and jobs." [Vox, [1/3/19](#)]

McConnell Pledged To Stop Meaningful Campaign Finance Reform In Its Tracks

McConnell Excoriated The For The People Act, Which Would Get Big Money Out Of Politics And Shine A Light On Dark Money

McConnell Called H.R. 1, The For The People Act, A "Power Grab" And "A Naked Attempt To Change The Rules Of American Politics To Benefit One Party." In January 2019, McConnell wrote in the Washington Post: "House Democrats won't come to the table and negotiate to reopen government, but they've been hard at work angling for more control over what you can say about them and how they get reelected. They're trying to clothe this power grab with cliches about 'restoring democracy' and doing it 'For the People,' but their proposal is simply a

naked attempt to change the rules of American politics to benefit one party. It should be called the Democrat Politician Protection Act.” [Washington Post, op-ed, [1/17/19](#)]

McConnell Criticized The Disclosure Requirements In H.R., Including Those For Dark Money Groups. In January 2019, McConnell wrote in the Washington Post: “It would also empower that newly partisan FEC to track and catalogue more of what you say. It would broaden the type of speech the commission can define as ‘campaign-related’ and thus regulate. Many more Americans would have to notify the feds when spending even small amounts of money on speech or else be penalized. That partisan FEC would also get wide latitude to determine when a nonprofit’s speech has crossed that fuzzy ‘campaign-related’ line and then forcibly publicize the group’s private supporters.” [Washington Post, op-ed, [1/17/19](#)]

McConnell Said H.R. 1 Would Be “Upending The FEC, Squeezing Taxpayers, Attacking Privacy And Jeopardizing Our Elections.” In January 2019, McConnell wrote in the Washington Post: “From the First Amendment to your ballot box, Democrats want to rewrite the rules to favor themselves and their friends. Upending the FEC, squeezing taxpayers, attacking privacy and jeopardizing our elections are a price they’ll happily pay for this partisan power grab.” [Washington Post, op-ed, [1/17/19](#)]

McConnell “Has Been Aggressively Bashing” H.R. 1. In March 2019, Mother Jones reported: “Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), like many other Republicans in Congress, has been aggressively bashing HR 1, the sweeping anti-corruption bill that Democrats passed in the House last week. McConnell has called the bill a ‘radical, half-baked socialist proposal’ and a ‘political power grab’ by Democrats, and has made it clear he won’t bring the measure up for a vote in the Senate.” [Mother Jones, [3/14/19](#)]

Bill Would Require Disclosure Of Campaign-Related Expenditures Over \$1,000 And Contributions Over \$10,000

Bill Would Require Disclosure Of Campaign-Related Expenditures Over \$1,000 And Contributions Over \$10,000. “It would require corporations, organizations, and political committees to disclose campaign-related expenditures of more than \$1,000 and any donors contributing more than \$10,000 in an election cycle.” [CQ, [3/8/19](#)]

Bill Would Require Expanded Disclaimers On Online Political Ads And Establish Reporting Requirements For Platforms Selling Online Ads

Bill Would Require Expanded Disclaimers On Online Political Ads And Establish Reporting Requirements For Platforms Selling Online Ads. “It would expand political advertising disclaimer requirements to online political ads and establish reporting requirements for online platforms selling political ads.” [CQ, [3/8/19](#)]

Bill Would Prohibit Foreign Entities From Making Political Donations

Bill Would Prohibit Foreign Entities From Contributing Political Donations To Campaigns, Super PACs, Or Presidential Inaugural Committees. “It would prohibit foreign entities from contributing to a political campaign, super PAC, or presidential inaugural committee.” [CQ, [3/8/19](#)]

Bill Would Include New Regulations On Lobbying, Corporate Contributions, And Foreign Political Communications

Bill Would Include New Regulations On Lobbying, Corporate Contributions, And Foreign Political Communications. “Among other provisions, it would require the Government Publishing Office to make all

congressionally mandated reports publicly available; require anyone lobbying on behalf of a foreign interest to register with the Justice Department and disclose any transactions; and require the establishment of a code of conduct for federal judges. As amended, the bill would include several provisions tightening regulations on lobbying, campaign contributions, and foreign influence, including requiring any entity making a lobbying contact with a federal official to disclose whether they are a registered lobbyist and identify their client; prohibiting lobbying contracts on behalf of foreign countries determined to have violated human rights; requiring corporations that contribute to campaigns to facilitate the assessment of political views of their shareholders; and prohibiting foreign nationals and agents from financing certain political communications supporting or opposing political candidates or issues.” [CQ, [3/8/19](#)]

McConnell Pledged To Block H.R. 1 Before It Was Even Introduced

December 2018: McConnell Said Democrats’ Anti-Corruption Bill, H.R. 1, Was “Not Going To Go Anywhere In The Senate.” In January 2019, the Wall Street Journal reported: “Mr. McConnell pointed to a legislative package Democrats have been readying for months and plan to introduce in Congress early next year. It includes sweeping campaign-finance, ethics and election-security provisions. ‘That’s not going to go anywhere in the Senate,’ Mr. McConnell said.” [Wall Street Journal, [12/3/18](#)]

McConnell Made It Clear There Was No Way He Would Even Consider Allowing H.R. 1 To Get To The Senate

HEADLINE: “Only One Roadblock On The Road To Reform: Mitch McConnell.” [New York Times, editorial, [3/8/19](#)]

HEADLINE: “McConnell Won’t Allow Vote On Election Reform Bill.” [Politico, [3/6/19](#)]

When Asked Why He Wouldn’t Allow H.R. 1 On The Senate Floor, McConnell Said “Because I Get To Decide What We Vote On.” In March 2019, Politico reported: “When asked at a news conference why he wasn’t bringing the House electoral reform bill to the Senate floor, McConnell said, with a grin, ‘Because I get to decide what we vote on.’” [Politico, [3/6/19](#)]

McConnell: H.R. 1 “Is Never Going To Become Law. I Certainly Don’t Plan To Even Bring It To The Floor Here In The Senate.” In March 2019, the Hill reported: “The Kentucky senator said earlier this week that House Democrats’ sweeping anticorruption bill, known as H.R. 1, would never become law. ‘This sprawling 622-page doorstop is never going to become law. I certainly don’t plan to even bring it to the floor here in the Senate,’ McConnell said of the legislation Monday.” [The Hill, [3/6/19](#)]

H.R. 1 Was “Already Dead On Arrival” In The Senate; McConnell Vowed That It “Will Not Get Any Floor Time.” In March 2019, Vox reported: “But the bill is already dead on arrival in the Senate, where Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has vowed he won’t bring it up. ‘This is a terrible proposal; it will not get any floor time in the Senate,’ McConnell told reporters on Wednesday.” [Vox, [3/8/19](#)]

McConnell Voted Against Shedding Light On Dark Money Megadonors

McConnell Has Repeatedly Voted Against The DISCLOSE ACT

McConnell Voted Against DISCLOSE Act. In July 2012, McConnell voted against a: “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., motion to proceed to the bill that would require groups and companies to disclose independent campaign expenditures and donations to independent groups over \$10,000.” The motion was rejected 53-45. [CQ; S. 3369, Vote #180, [7/17/12](#)]

- **McConnell Voted Against DISCLOSE Act.** In July 2012, McConnell voted against a: “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., motion to proceed to the bill that would require groups and companies to disclose independent campaign expenditures and donations to independent groups over \$10,000.” The motion was rejected 51-44. [CQ; S. 3369, Vote #179, [7/16/12](#)]
- **The DISCLOSE Act “Would Require Certain Tax-Exempt Groups Involved In Political Advertising -- Which Currently Are Not Required To Disclose The Names Of Their Donors -- To Release The Names Of Those Who Give Donations Of \$10,000 Or More.”** “Senate Republicans again Tuesday blocked Democratic legislation that would require greater transparency into who is behind much of the secretive, often negative campaign advertising filling the airwaves this election season. Supporters of the DISCLOSE Act mustered 53 votes in an effort to advance the bill, but fell short of the 60 needed to break a GOP filibuster. Democrats unanimously supported the bill, while Republicans voted unanimously against it. The legislation, which needs 60 votes to succeed, failed on a 51-44 vote Monday. The legislation would require certain tax-exempt groups involved in political advertising -- which currently are not required to disclose the names of their donors -- to release the names of those who give donations of \$10,000 or more. A similar vote Monday ended with the same result.” [CNN, [7/17/12](#)]
- **The DISCLOSE Act “Would Require Greater Transparency Into Who Is Behind Much Of The Secretive, Often Negative Campaign Advertising Filling The Airwaves.”** “Senate Republicans again Tuesday blocked Democratic legislation that would require greater transparency into who is behind much of the secretive, often negative campaign advertising filling the airwaves this election season. Supporters of the DISCLOSE Act mustered 53 votes in an effort to advance the bill, but fell short of the 60 needed to break a GOP filibuster.” [CNN, [7/17/12](#)]

McConnell Voted Against DISCLOSE Act. In July 2010, McConnell voted against a: “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the motion to proceed to the bill that would require chief executives to appear during advertisements funded by their companies or unions and prohibit certain companies from contributing to elections.” The motion was rejected 57-41. [CQ; S. 3628, Vote #220, [7/27/10](#)]

- **The DISCLOSE Act Was Designed To Address The *Citizens United* Decision – It Would Require Corporations And Unions Running Political Ads To Publicly Identify Top Donors, And Restrict Foreign-Controlled Corporations From Spending Money In U.S. Elections.** “President Obama today urged the Senate to pass the DISCLOSE Act, a bill designed to address the Supreme Court's controversial *Citizen's United* decision allowing corporations and unions to spend unlimited amounts of money on campaign advertising. [...] Also known as the Democracy is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections Act, the DISCLOSE Act mandates that corporations and unions spending on campaigns and running political advertising publicly identify top donors and related information. It would also restrict foreign-controlled corporations from spending money in U.S. elections.” [CBS, [7/26/10](#)]
- **The DISCLOSE Act Would Prohibit Any Company With Foreign Investment Of More Than 20% From Making Independent Expenditures.** “The DISCLOSE Act was crafted by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), the head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chair Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) in coordination with the White House. [...] Another provision of the bill would prohibit any company with foreign investment of more than 20 percent from making campaign-related expenditures.” [Open Secrets, [6/24/10](#)]

McConnell Voted Against DISCLOSE Act. In September 2010, McConnell voted against a: “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., motion to proceed to the bill that would require chief executives to appear during advertisements funded by their companies or unions and prohibit certain companies from contributing to elections.” The motion was rejected 59-39. [CQ; S. 3628, Vote #240, [9/23/10](#)]

McConnell Said That Blocking The DISCLOSE Act Was “One Of The Most Important Things We Did In The Past Few Years”

McConnell: “One Of The Most Important Things We Did In The Past Few Years Was To Block Passage Of DISCLOSE.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “Fortunately, Republicans have been alert to these dangers. One of the most important things we did in the past few years was to block passage of DISCLOSE. But the assaults keep coming.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell Voted To Retain *Citizens United* And Its Harmful Effects

McConnell Blocked A Constitutional Amendment That Would Have Overturned *Citizens United*

McConnell Voted To Block Constitutional Amendment To Let Federal And State Lawmakers To Set Limits On Money Raise And Spent By Candidates And Others To Influence Elections In September 2014, McConnell voted against a: “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the joint resolution that would propose a constitutional amendment that would allow federal and state lawmakers to set limits on money raised and spent by candidates and others to influence elections. It would give Congress and the states the power to distinguish between people and ‘corporations or other artificial entities created by law’ and to block such entities from spending money on elections. It also would stipulate that Congress or the states would not be able ‘to abridge the freedom of the press.’” The cloture motion failed 54-42. [CQ; S.J. Res. 19, Vote #261, [9/11/14](#)]

- **Amendment Allowed Congress And States To Regulate Campaign Finance, Prohibited Supreme Court From Reversing Future Congressional Actions On Campaign Finance.** As reported by The Hill, “The amendment from Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) would have authorized Congress and the states to regulate and limit fundraising and spending on federal candidates. It also would have prohibited the Supreme Court from reversing any future campaign finance legislation passed by Congress.” [The Hill, [9/11/14](#)]
 - **Headline: “Senate GOP Blocks Constitutional Amendment On Campaign Spending”** [The Hill, [9/11/14](#)]

McConnell Was Proud Of His Opposition To Campaign Finance Reform

McConnell Said His “High-Visibility Role” In Opposing Campaign Finance Reform Was A “Big Plus” On His Resume. In October 1990, the Washington Post reported: “McConnell contends that his high-visibility role in opposing the campaign finance legislation helped him by showing he is a major player in Congress. ‘It’s a big plus in my resume,’ he said recently.” [Washington Post, 10/31/90]

HEADLINE: “Leading Opponent Of Campaign Finance Reform Will Keep Fighting.” [AP, 2/15/02]

McConnell “Embraced The Idea Of Being The Republican Point Man” On Opposing Campaign Finance Reform. In February 2002, the AP reported: “McConnell came to oppose campaign finance laws when he was teaching a political science class at the University of Louisville in the 1970s. The issue became even more important to him during his successful 1984 challenge to two-term incumbent Sen. Walter Huddleston. McConnell said he realized then that any restriction on free speech tends to favor the status quo. When he arrived in the Senate, he embraced the idea of being the Republican point man on the issue.” [AP, 2/15/02]

McConnell Was “Perhaps The Leading Advocate For Unrestricted Campaign Donations.” In July 2018, Roll Call reported: “Monday’s announcement by the Treasury Department that it will no longer collect information about donors to some political nonprofits was met with applause from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell,

perhaps the leading advocate for unrestricted campaign donations. At the same time, it ignited a campaign finance fight with the midterm elections less than four months away.” [Roll Call, [7/17/18](#)]

McConnell “Opposes Campaign Finance Reform.” In November 2018, the Hill reported: “It’s unlikely either bill would get enough Republican votes in the Senate to stop a filibuster led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.), who opposes campaign finance reform.” [The Hill, [11/11/18](#)]

Opposition To Campaign Finance Reform Was “The Animating Policy Issue” Of McConnell’s Career. In October 2014, the Washington Post reviewed a biography of McConnell. In their review, they stated: “MacGillis provides an impressive study of McConnell's fierce opposition to campaign finance reform, the animating policy issue of his long career.” [Washington Post, review, 10/19/14]

Editorial: Killing Campaign Finance Reform Proposals “Can Seem Like [McConnell’s] Singular Legislative Passion.” In March 2019, a New York Times editorial stated: “This grade-school taunt masks a deep current of fear and loathing. Loathing, because Mr. McConnell is a longtime enemy of campaign finance reform. Killing such efforts can seem like his singular legislative passion.” [New York Times, editorial, [3/8/19](#)]

McConnell Wanted MORE Big Money In Politics

TOP HITS

Not only does McConnell not think big money in politics is a problem—he actually supports MORE big money in politics, saying that it “ought to be applauded and encouraged” while shrugging off the potential corrupting influence.

McConnell has been consistently dismissive of the problem of big money in politics, saying that “there’s nothing wrong with money” and “you’ve got to have money in politics”

To McConnell, nothing is more a celebration of the First Amendment than people pouring massive amounts of money into our political system. He even said that common-sense disclosure proposals would be stifling “the First Amendment rights of conservative donors.”

To McConnell, “campaign contributions are speech.” We will never have to guess whose side he’s on when it comes to big money in politics.

McConnell Thought That Big Money In Politics “Ought To Be Applauded And Encouraged”

McConnell Thought That Big Money In Politics “Ought To Be Applauded And Encouraged.” In August 1997, the New York Times reported: “Braced by the Supreme Court’s firm ruling that equates uncrimped campaign spending and free speech, Senator McConnell argues tenaciously that the political spending should not be curtailed. ‘I don’t think it’s a scandal at all,’ the Senator said of modern political spending, which reached an estimated \$2 billion last year for the Presidential and Congressional races, nearly double the spending of 1992. ‘I think it ought to be applauded and encouraged. For Americans to contribute to the party they believe in and the candidate of their choice, bearing in mind these contributions are limited and fully disclosed, I think is something that is healthy for democracy.’” [New York Times, 8/21/97]

McConnell: Virginia Doesn’t Have Contribution Restrictions And “Elected Officials In Virginia Are No More Prone To Scandal Than Officials In States That Impose Contribution Limits.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “Campaign contributions are speech, and in case anybody thinks unlimited contributions are a bad idea, or somehow far-fetched, just look across the Potomac to Virginia, which imposes no restrictions on contributions whatsoever. Last I checked, elected officials in Virginia are no more prone to scandal than officials in states that impose contribution limits.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell Supported Higher Contribution Limits

McConnell: “I Think They The Big Mistake They Made In The 1970s Was Not Indexing The Contribution Limit To Inflation.” In 1994, McConnell wrote an article for the Heritage Foundation, stating: “I Think the big mistake that they made in the 1970s was not indexing the contribution limit to inflation, because a thousand dollar contribution in the mid-1970s is not worth \$400 and something.” [Heritage Foundation Lectures, “Why We Are Stopping Campaign Finance Reform,” [10/6/94](#)]

McConnell “Pushed Through Higher Limits For Campaign Contributions To Party Organizations.” In December 2015, Mother Jones reported: “In last year’s budget deal, McConnell pushed through higher limits for campaign contributions to party organizations, allowing wealthy donors to chip in hundreds of thousands of dollars.” [Mother Jones, [12/17/15](#)]

McConnell: “You’ve Got To Have Money In Politics.”

McConnell: “You’ve Got To Have Money In Politics.” In 1994, McConnell wrote an article for the Heritage Foundation, stating: “We ought to have to go out and get support. There’s nothing wrong with money. How else are you going to pay for the TV? You’ve got to have money in politics.” [Heritage Foundation Lectures, “Why We Are Stopping Campaign Finance Reform,” [10/6/94](#)]

McConnell: “There’s Nothing Wrong With Money. How Else Are You Going To Pay For The TV?” In 1994, McConnell wrote an article for the Heritage Foundation, stating: “We ought to have to go out and get support. There’s nothing wrong with money. How else are you going to pay for the TV?” [Heritage Foundation Lectures, “Why We Are Stopping Campaign Finance Reform,” [10/6/94](#)]

McConnell Accused Democrats “Of Trying To Stifle The First Amendment Rights Of Conservative Donors.” In June 2012, NPR reported: “Last week, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said it's time to roll back the Watergate-era requirement for public disclosure of campaign donors. He accused President Obama and liberals of trying to stifle the First Amendment rights of conservative donors.” [NPR, [6/18/12](#)]

McConnell: “Liberals Really Believe That The Participation Of Individuals In The Political Process Is A Corrupting Thing.” In 1994, McConnell wrote an article for the Heritage Foundation, stating: “But more broadly, philosophically, liberals really believe that the participation of individuals in political process is a corrupting thing, a tainting thing.” [Heritage Foundation Lectures, “Why We Are Stopping Campaign Finance Reform,” [10/6/94](#)]

For McConnell, “Campaign Spending Is Key To His Expansive Interpretation Of The First Amendment.” In July 2018, Roll Call reported: “For McConnell, campaign spending is key to his expansive interpretation of the First Amendment.” [Roll Call, [7/17/18](#)]

McConnell: “Campaign Contributions Are Speech.”

McConnell: “Campaign Contributions Are Speech.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “Campaign contributions are speech, and in case anybody thinks unlimited contributions are a bad idea, or somehow far-fetched, just look across the Potomac to Virginia, which imposes no restrictions on contributions whatsoever.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell Supported And Encouraged The Flood Of Dark Money Into Our Politics

TOP HITS

McConnell sees absolutely nothing wrong with anonymous, unaccountable spending in politics.

He fought to allow anonymous megadonors to keep their donations secret, and cheered a decision from the Treasury Department saying they would no longer collect information about donors to some political nonprofits. As his home state paper editorial board said, “more dark money in U.S. politics pleases Mitch McConnell.”

McConnell opposed the most basic of disclosure laws, saying that the rules should only cover donors to candidates and parties—leaving the American people in the dark about the million-dollar donors to super PACs and other political spenders.

McConnell even expressed concern about disclosure of any individual donors at all, saying that it was time to “roll back” public disclosure of campaign donors. Even Antonin Scalia agreed that requiring disclosure of donations fostered political courage, but McConnell said “I don’t think regular citizens should have to experience any political courage at all.”

McConnell has held up efforts to require electronic filing for Senate candidates, a practice that would make Senate campaign finances more transparent and easier for ordinary citizens to access.

McConnell Opposed Efforts To Crack Down On Dark Money Political Spending

McConnell Fought To Allow Anonymous Megadonors To Keep Their Donations Secret

McConnell Buried A Provision In 2015 Spending Bill That Would Prohibit The IRS And SEC From Cracking Down On Shady Political Spending. In December 2015, Mother Jones reported: “Conservative Solutions Project has run more than 4,882 ads in support of Marco Rubio this election—and not a dime of its funding has been made public. As a politically active nonprofit, the outfit is theoretically regulated by the Internal Revenue Service, but thanks to clever legislative maneuvering by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and congressional Republicans, there’s no danger that the IRS will apply any special scrutiny to the people or corporations generously financing this key component of Rubio’s run for president. (His actual campaign unveiled its first ad just a few weeks ago). Buried deep in the massive end-of-the-year spending bill released late Tuesday night were provisions that not only prohibit the IRS from cracking down on groups like Conservative Solutions Project, but that block the Securities and Exchange Commission from prying into the political spending of public companies.” [Mother Jones, [12/17/15](#)]

- **Provision Would Bar The IRS From Spending Any Money To Revise Or Create Rules That Would Limit How Much Nonprofit Groups Can Spend On Politics.** In December 2015, Mother Jones reported: “One McConnell amendment barred the IRS from spending any money from its budget over the next two years to revise or create new rules that would limit how much nonprofit groups can spend on politics.” [Mother Jones, [12/17/15](#)]
- **Provision Would Also Prevent The SEC From Creating A Rule To Force Corporations To Disclose Whether They Were Donating To Any Entity Engaged In Political Spending.** In December 2015,

Mother Jones reported: “The other amendment targets the SEC. It’s long been suspected that corporations, including those regulated by the SEC, channel substantial amounts to political nonprofits. *Citizens United* allowed corporations to take a more active role in influencing elections, but since the decision little corporate funding has flowed to political outfits that must disclose their donors. That may be because corporations are directing their political spending to dark-money nonprofits instead, to keep their fingerprints off the donations. Transparency activists have prodded the SEC to force publicly traded corporations to disclose whether they are donating to any outfit that engaged in political spending. But, like the IRS provision, the new budget prevents the SEC from creating a new rule on this front.” [Mother Jones, [12/17/15](#)]

McConnell Cheered A Decision From The Treasury Department Saying They Would No Longer Collect Information About Donors To Some Political Nonprofits. In July 2018, Roll Call reported: “Monday’s announcement by the Treasury Department that it will no longer collect information about donors to some political nonprofits was met with applause from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, perhaps the leading advocate for unrestricted campaign donations. At the same time, it ignited a campaign finance fight with the midterm elections less than four months away.” [Roll Call, [7/17/18](#)]

- **HEADLINE: “More Dark Money In U.S. Politics Pleases Mitch McConnell.”** [Lexington Herald-Leader, editorial, [7/17/18](#)]
- **Editorial: McConnell Praised A Decision “That Will Make It Easier For Foreign Interests To Illegally Funnel Money Into U.S. Politics And Elections.”** In July 2018, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “On the day after President Donald Trump deepened doubts about this country’s commitment to its European allies and western-style democracy, what did Majority Leader Mitch McConnell do? He stood on the Senate floor to praise a decision that will make it easier for foreign interests to illegally funnel money into U.S. politics and elections.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, editorial, [7/17/18](#)]
- **McConnell “Especially Questions The Ban On Secret Contributions, Which He Says Stifles Free Speech.”** In June 2012, NPR reported: “McConnell especially questions the ban on secret contributions, which he says stifles free speech.” [NPR, [6/18/12](#)]
- **McConnell Said Donor Anonymity Was “Good For Democracy”; “We Don’t Need The Government Micromanaging In This Country Who Gets To Speak And Who Doesn’t.”** In June 2012, NPR reported: “Speaking at the venerable conservative think tank American Enterprise Institute, Senator McConnell said this kind of anonymity is good for democracy.” McConnell said: “That’s the whole point of my speech today. We don’t need the government micromanaging in this country who gets to speak and who doesn’t.” [NPR, [6/18/12](#)]

McConnell Opposed Basic Disclosure Laws

McConnell Believed That Disclosure Rules Should Only Cover Donors To Candidates And Parties. In June 2012, NPR reported: “Last week, he made it clear that disclosure rules should only cover donors to candidates and parties, and not the outside groups.” McConnell said: “I don’t think everybody else in the country ought to have to pay that price as a condition for speaking out and being involved in causes that they feel strongly about.” [NPR, [6/18/12](#)]

McConnell: Attempt To Require Government Contractors To Disclose Political Donations Means That “If You Want A Government Contract, You Better Support Our Causes, Or At Least Keep Your Mouth Shut When It Comes To The Causes We Oppose.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “Over at the White House, the President’s lawyers recently circulated a draft executive order that would have required anyone bidding for a government contract to disclose political donations, including those of affiliates and subsidiaries, officers and directors in excess of \$5,000. The message of the order was clear: if you

want a government contract, you better support our causes, or at least keep your mouth shut when it comes to the causes we oppose.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell Wanted To Roll Back Public Disclosure Of Campaign Donors

McConnell “Said It’s Time To Roll Back The Watergate-Era Requirement For Public Disclosure Of Campaign Donors.” In June 2012, NPR reported: “Sunday was the 40th anniversary of the Watergate break-in — the opening act in a wide-ranging, White House scandal that was fueled by secret campaign money. Last week, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said it’s time to roll back the Watergate-era requirement for public disclosure of campaign donors.” [NPR, [6/18/12](#)]

McConnell Disagreed With Justice Scalia That Requiring Disclosure Of Donations Fostered Political Courage; “I Don’t Think That Regular Citizens Should Have To Experience Any Political Courage At All.” In June 2012, campaign finance advocate Fred Wertheimer said on NPR: “Justice Scalia said requiring people to stand up in public for their political acts fosters civic courage, without which democracy is doomed.” NPR reported that “McConnell said this is one place where he and Scalia part ways,” quoting McConnell as saying: “I don’t think that regular citizens should have to experience any political courage at all.” [NPR, [6/18/12](#)]

McConnell Suggested That Disclosure Of Political Donations Could Lead To People “Swatting” Those They Didn’t Agree With. In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “Justice Thomas goes on to note that the advent of the Internet has made these tactics even easier to pull off, and thus increases the likelihood that the public will be discouraged from participating in the political process. It’s a point that’s underscored by recent news reports of a tactic known as Swatting, something Andrew Breitbart raised the alarm about in one of his final interviews. Here’s how it works. Somebody who knows how to hack into phones calls 911, ostensibly from your phone, and tells the police they just killed somebody. Within minutes, the local SWAT team shows up at your house, guns drawn, helicopters swirling overhead. And while this tactic is clearly criminal and should be prosecuted aggressively, the goal is equally reprehensible – namely to scare people who’ve dared to speak, write, or otherwise support a cause that the Swatters don’t like.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell Opposed Efforts To Make Disclosure Easier

McConnell “Has In The Past Held Up” Effort To Require Electronic Filing For Senate Candidates, “Using It As A Bargaining Chip In Debates On Other Matters.” In Jun 2018, Roll Call reported: “A bipartisan majority of senators supported the change Monday, passing the appropriations bill in an 86-5 vote. And 18 senators, mostly Democrats, this year voluntarily filed online disclosures with the FEC, even though they are still required to tender the actual paper version to the secretary of the Senate. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a well-known opponent of campaign finance regulations, has in the past held up the change, using it as a bargaining chip in debates on other matters, said McGehee and others who have worked on the issue.” [Roll Call, [6/27/18](#)]

McConnell Celebrated Big Corporate Spending In Politics

TOP HITS

McConnell supports corporate money in political campaigns. He called a bill that would eliminate corporate soft money—essentially, the practice of allowing corporations to spend unlimited amounts to influence elections—a “travesty” and a “joke.”

McConnell defended the role of corporate money in politics—including singling out oil company executives, hedge fund managers, and millionaires and billionaires. McConnell said that campaign finance reform efforts incorrectly assumed that “the collision of private interests with politics is somehow inherently corrupting.” He also said that the goal of such efforts were to seal Congress “from anyone engaged in the private economy.”

McConnell even said that if campaign finance reform efforts were successful, “private interests would end up with minimal influence on the direction of public policy.”

McConnell also rejected the idea that unlimited corporate spending has somehow corrupted the political process.

McConnell saved his choicest praise for the billionaire Koch Brothers, telling them “I don’t know where we’d be without you.”

McConnell Wanted Corporations To Be Able To Spend Unlimited Amounts To Influence Elections

McConnell Called A Bill That Would Eliminate Corporate Soft Money A “Travesty” And A “Joke.” In 1994, McConnell wrote an article for the Heritage Foundation on S. 3 and H.R. 3, two bills dealing with campaign finance reform and public financing. He stated: “Well, essentially, the bill as it’s crafted would eliminate about a third of the money that the Republican National Committee gets. It would eliminate corporate soft money entirely. [...] It’s a travesty. It’s a joke. And yet, we’re about to do it.” [Heritage Foundation Lectures, “Why We Are Stopping Campaign Finance Reform,” [10/6/94](#)]

McConnell Defended The Role Of Corporate Money In Politics

McConnell: “The Great Assumption” Behind Democratic Campaign Finance Reform Efforts Is “That The Collision Of Private Interests With Politics Is Somehow Inherently Corrupting”—A “Radical” Notion. In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “But there’s another element to these efforts that’s less widely understood, but that I believe is essential to understanding why it is that liberals have been working so hard to regulate political speech over the past four decades. It involves the great assumption behind all of their campaign finance efforts: that the collision of private interests with politics is somehow inherently corrupting. This is the great untested premise behind all these efforts to regulate political speech. And few people stop to think of just how radical it is. Because whether it’s the public financing of campaigns, or the attempt to impose limits on the political speech of any business or group that doesn’t happen to own a newspaper or a news studio, what all these efforts have in common is a deep suspicion of the private sphere.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell: Goal Of Campaign Finance Reform Efforts Is To Seal Congress “From Anyone Engaged In The Private Economy.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “All these efforts are for the purpose of limiting the ability of those engaged in private enterprises – or certain disfavored private groups or associations – to influence the direction of our country by participating in the electoral process.

The goal is to hermetically seal off Congress from anyone engaged in the private economy or in certain kinds of advocacy, for that matter, outside the public sector.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell: If Democrats Had Their Way On Campaign Finance Reform, “Private Interests Would End Up With Minimal Influence On The Direction Of Public Policy, And The Odds Of People Running Toward Public Sector Solutions Would Increase Dramatically.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “With private interests pushed to the sidelines, the only voices lawmakers could be expected to respond to would be the self-appointed tribunes of the public interest. Private interests would end up with minimal influence on the direction of public policy, and the odds of people running toward public sector solutions would increase dramatically.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell Didn’t Think Corporate Spending In Politics Was A Problem

McConnell: In States Where It Is Legal, There Is No Evidence That Unlimited Corporate Spending Has Corrupted The Political Process. In April 2012, McConnell submitted an amicus curiae in *American Tradition Partnership et al. v. Bullock*, which stated that Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision did not supersede Montana’s own ban on corporate expenditures. The amicus curiae stated: “Such conclusions should occasion no surprise. At the time *Citizens United* was decided, 26 states imposed no restrictions on the amount of independent expenditures by for-profit corporations. *Citizens United*, 180 S. Ct. 908. There was not then any basis for concluding that corporate spending in those states (including states rarely associated with scandalous behavior, such as Virginia, Washington, and Utah) had ‘corrupted the political process,’ and the United States made no claim to that effect. *Id.* at 909. The same is true today.” [*American Tradition Partnership, Inc., et al. v. Bullock et al.*, Brief Amicus Curiae of Senator Mitch McConnell in Support of Petitioners, [4/26/12](#)]

McConnell: Filings From Super PACs Supporting The 2012 Republican Presidential Candidates Have “Evidenced Minimal Corporate Involvement In The 2012 Election Cycle.” In April 2012, McConnell submitted an amicus curiae in *American Tradition Partnership et al. v. Bullock*, which stated that Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision did not supersede Montana’s own ban on corporate expenditures. The amicus curiae stated: “What is new, however, is that there are now facts that bear on the concerns expressed by critics of the ruling. A review of FEC records for independent expenditure-only committees — i.e. the so-called Super PACs — supporting the eight leading Republican Presidential candidates has evidenced minimal corporate involvement in the 2012 election cycle.” [*American Tradition Partnership, Inc., et al. v. Bullock et al.*, Brief Amicus Curiae of Senator Mitch McConnell in Support of Petitioners, [4/26/12](#)]

McConnell Defended Wall Street, Oil Industry, And Billionaire Influence In Politics

McConnell: “There Aren’t Exactly A Lot Of Folks Running To The Ramparts To Defend Oil Company Executives And Hedge Fund Managers,” But If We Assume The First Amendment Doesn’t Apply To Them, “We’re All In Trouble.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “Now, it’s important to remember that one of the things that makes effective the harassment and intimidation tactics I’ve described is their selectivity. There aren’t exactly a lot of folks running to the ramparts to defend oil company executives and hedge fund managers. But we all need to understand something: the minute we allow ourselves to be convinced that some people stand outside the protections of the First Amendment, we’re all in trouble.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell: “It’s A Mistake To View The Attacks We’ve Seen On ‘Millionaires And Billionaires’ A Outside Our Concern.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “These rights don’t exist to protect what’s popular. They exist precisely to protect what isn’t. That’s why it’s a mistake to view the recent HHS mandate as merely a ‘Catholic’ issue. And that’s why it’s a mistake to view the attacks we’ve seen on ‘millionaires and billionaires’ as outside our concern. Because it always starts somewhere; and the moment we stop caring about who’s being targeted is the moment we’re all at risk.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell Praised The Koch Brothers For Their Flood Of Big Money Into Politics

McConnell Lavished Praise On The Koch Brothers

McConnell: Koch Brothers Are Known Not For The “The Tens Of Thousands Of People They Employ” Or For “Building Up One Of The Most Successful Private Corporations On The Planet,” But For “Their Forceful And Unapologetic Promotion And Defense Of Capitalism.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “Charles and David Koch have become household names, not for the tens of thousands of people they employ, not for their generosity to charity, and not for building up one of the most successful private corporations on the planet; but because of their forceful and unapologetic promotion and defense of capitalism.” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell: Koch Brothers And Employees “Have Had Their Lives Threatened” And “Been Harassed By Left-Wing Groups.” In June 2012, in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, McConnell said: “The results have been predictable. The Koch brothers, along with Koch employees, have had their lives threatened, received hundreds of obscenity-laced hate messages, and been harassed by left-wing groups. One e-mail carried a typical message. It read: ‘Choose your expiration date.’” [Office of Sen. Mitch McConnell, [6/15/12](#)]

McConnell To Koch Brothers: “I Don’t Know Where We’d Be Without You.” In August 2014, the American Prospect reported: “He paid particular tribute to industrialists Charles and David Koch, the country’s most prolific political spenders: ‘I don’t know where we’d be without you,’ he told them.” [American Prospect, [8/28/14](#)]

McConnell Celebrated Court Ruling That Handed Our Democracy Over To Corporations And Special Interests

TOP HITS

Contrary to nearly everybody, McConnell thought that the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision was actually a good thing for America, saying that it “took an important step in the direction of restoring the First Amendment rights of political groups.”

Talking to a group of conservative millionaire and billionaire donors, McConnell said that *Citizens United* “allowed all of you to participate in the process in a variety of different ways.”

McConnell did not think that *Citizens United* had a detrimental effect on our political system, stating that there was nothing to suggest that it had enabled corruption.

McConnell even said that “all *Citizens United* did was to level the playing field for corporate speech.”

McConnell also fought to preserve *Citizens United* in the courts, including filing an amicus curiae against a Montana case that was in “direct contravention” of *Citizens United* and defending the destructive *Buckley v. Valeo* decision.

McConnell Thought *Citizens United* Was A Good Thing Wasn't Having Any Detrimental Effect On Our Democracy

McConnell Supported *Citizens United* Decision; Said That It “Took An Important Step In The Direction Of Restoring The First Amendment Rights Of Political Groups. In January 2010, the Atlantic reported: “Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) likes the decision. He said: ‘For too long, some in this country have been deprived of full participation in the political process. With today’s monumental decision, the Supreme Court took an important step in the direction of restoring the First Amendment rights of these groups by ruling that the Constitution protects their right to express themselves about political candidates and issues up until Election Day.’” [The Atlantic, [1/21/10](#)]

McConnell: “The Supreme Court Allowed All Of You To Participate In The Process In A Variety Of Different Ways.” In August 2014, reported on McConnell’s remarks to a group of conservative millionaire and billionaire donors. McConnell was quoted as saying: “The Supreme Court allowed all of you to participate in the process in a variety of different ways. You can give to the candidate of your choice. You can give to Americans for Prosperity, or something else, a variety of different ways to push back against the party of government.” [The Nation, [8/26/14](#)]

McConnell’s “Crusade Against Campaign Finance Reform” Culminated In *Citizens United*, And McConnell “Followed Up By Blocking Legislation To Disclose The Identity Of Large Donors.” In June 2018, ProPublica reported: “His crusade against campaign finance reform culminated in the Supreme Court’s 2010 *Citizens United* ruling eliminating limits on corporate spending on elections, which McConnell followed up by blocking legislation to disclose the identity of large donors.” [ProPublica, [6/28/18](#)]

McConnell Argued That Since *Citizens United*, Corporate Donations Had Been Minimal And The Decision Created A More Robust Political Environment. In April 2012, McConnell submitted an amicus curiae in *American Tradition Partnership et al. v. Bullock*, which stated that Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision did not supersede Montana’s own ban on corporate expenditures. The amicus curiae stated: “Corporate donations to the so-called Super PACs created after *Citizens United* have been minimal. Individual donations, already constitutionally protected under *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976), have been substantial and have led to more

political debate over a lengthier period of time during which more voters had the opportunity to participate in the choice of a presidential candidate.” [*American Tradition Partnership, Inc., et al. v. Bullock et al.*, Brief Amicus Curiae of Senator Mitch McConnell in Support of Petitioners, [4/26/12](#)]

McConnell: Nothing In The Following Years “Has Occurred To Warrant Reconsideration Of *Citizens United* [...] And There Is No Basis For Concluding That Any Quid Pro Quo Corruption [...] Has Occurred As A Result Of The Ruling.” In April 2012, McConnell submitted an amicus curiae in *American Tradition Partnership et al. v. Bullock*, which stated that Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision did not supersede Montana’s own ban on corporate expenditures. The amicus curiae stated: “Over two years have passed since the *Citizens United* ruling. One national election has been held and a vigorously fought primary campaign has been waged in a large number of states around the nation to choose a Republican candidate to run against President Obama this year. In that time period, nothing has occurred to warrant reconsideration of *Citizens United*. The First Amendment barrier to such legislation has not diminished. And there is no basis for concluding that any quid pro quo corruption, the only kind that this Court has found relevant, has occurred as a result of the ruling.” [*American Tradition Partnership, Inc., et al. v. Bullock et al.*, Brief Amicus Curiae of Senator Mitch McConnell in Support of Petitioners, [4/26/12](#)]

McConnell Praised *Citizens United* For Leveling The Playing Field “For Corporate Speech”

McConnell: “All *Citizens United* Did Was To Level The Playing Field For Corporate Speech.” In August 2014, the Nation reported on McConnell’s remarks to a group of conservative millionaire and billionaire donors. McConnell was quoted as saying: “So all *Citizens United* did was to level the playing field for corporate speech... We now have, I think, the most free and open system we’ve had in modern times.” [The Nation, [8/26/14](#)]

McConnell Fought To Preserve *Citizens United* In The Courts

McConnell Filed Amicus Curiae Against A Montana Case That Was “In Direct Contravention” Of *Citizens United*. In April 2012, McConnell submitted an amicus curiae in *American Tradition Partnership et al. v. Bullock*, which stated that Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision did not supersede Montana’s own ban on corporate expenditures. The amicus curiae stated: “The ruling of the Montana Supreme Court is in direct contravention of this Court’s ruling in *Citizens United*.” [*American Tradition Partnership, Inc., et al. v. Bullock et al.*, Brief Amicus Curiae of Senator Mitch McConnell in Support of Petitioners, [4/26/12](#)]

Buckley v. Valeo

McConnell: “You Can’t Constitutionally Quantify And Ration Speech, So The Court Struck Down The Congressional Campaign Financing Plan.” In 1994, McConnell wrote an article for the Heritage Foundation, stating: “Let me start by reminding everyone that this whole issue is about the First Amendment. The Supreme Court in the *Buckley v. Valeo* case held that campaign spending is speech. That decision was 9-0. Even Thurgood Marshall agreed that spending is speech. And the Court ruled that it is constitutionally impermissible to dole out the ability to speak in equal but limited amounts to candidates. You just can’t say under the Constitution, ‘Candidate A you speak this much. Candidate B you speak that much; don’t speak too much.’ You can’t constitutionally quantify and ration speech, so the Court struck down the congressional campaign financing plan, including spending limits, because it was mandatory for all candidates.” [Heritage Foundation Lectures, “Why We Are Stopping Campaign Finance Reform,” [10/6/94](#)]

McConnell Fought Voraciously Against McCain-Feingold, One Of The Most Landmark Campaign Finance Reform Bills

TOP HITS

McConnell gained notoriety for his vehement opposition to the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act, a.k.a. McCain-Feingold. Despite the bill's obvious benefits – banning unlimited soft money contributions to parties, attempting to curtail phony “issue ads,” requiring enhanced disclosure of contributions – McConnell repeatedly voted against the bill.

McConnell positioned himself at the forefront against McCain-Feingold, including fighting all the way to the Supreme Court. *McConnell v. FEC* challenged the constitutionality of McCain-Feingold—but the bill survived.

McConnell even called the passage of McCain-Feingold “the worst day of my political life.”

McCain-Feingold Was A Landmark Campaign Finance Bill That Banned Unlimited Soft Money, Curtailed Phony “Issue Ads,” And Required Enhanced Disclosure Of Contributions

McCain-Feingold Banned Unlimited “Soft Money” Contributions To Political Parties

McCain-Feingold Banned Parties And Candidates From Raising Or Spending Unlimited “Soft Money.”

According to Public Citizen: “The bill contains a tough prohibition on the unlimited contributions from corporations, labor unions, and wealthy individuals that now flow to the political parties. Under the provision, national parties cannot raise or spend soft money; federal candidates cannot solicit soft money; state parties cannot spend soft money on activities that might effect federal elections. The parties collected over \$262 million in soft money in the 1996 election cycle. In the first six months of this year, they have already raised more than \$34 million.” [Public Citizen, accessed [2/15/19](#)]

- **Soft Money Was “Unlimited And Unregulated Large Contributions To Party Committees.”** In May 2017, Roll Call reported: “The ban stems from the 2002 McCain-Feingold law, which prohibited unlimited and unregulated large contributions to party committees known as soft money.” [Roll Call, [5/22/17](#)]

McCain-Feingold Attempted To Curtail Phony “Issue Ads” That Operated Outside Campaign Finance Law

McCain-Feingold Broadened The Definition Of “Express Advocacy” To Classify More Campaign Ads As Independent Expenditures. According to Public Citizen: “This provision is designed to broaden the definition of ‘express advocacy’ in order to classify more campaign ads as independent expenditures, which must be paid for with money subject to the contribution limitations of federal law. [Public Citizen, accessed [2/15/19](#)]

Provision Was Meant To “Curtail The Use Of Phony ‘Issue Ads,’ Paid For By Corporate And Union Money.” According to Public Citizen: “The provision would curtail the use of phony ‘issue ads,’ paid for by corporate and union money. It is estimated that the political parties and outside groups spent over \$150 million in the 1996 election on phony ‘issue ads.’ Many of these ads would be considered independent expenditures under the new provision. Voting records and voting guides are expressly exempt from the changes to the definition of express advocacy.” [Public Citizen, accessed [2/15/19](#)]

McCain-Feingold Required Enhanced Disclosure Of Contributions

McCain-Feingold Required Enhanced Disclosure Of Contributions And Increased Penalties For Violating Election Law. According to Public Citizen: “The bill will: (1) require electronic filing of campaign reports and disclosure of those reports on the Internet within 24 hours; (2) allow the FEC to carry out random audits; and (3) prohibit campaigns from depositing large contributions (over \$200) unless they have disclosed the required contributor information; and (4) triple the penalties for knowing violation of the election laws.” [Public Citizen, accessed [2/15/19](#)]

McCain-Feingold Banned Foreign Nationals From Making Campaign Contributions

McCain-Feingold Prohibited Foreign Nationals From Making Any Campaign Contributions Or Expenditures. According to Public Citizen: “The bill prohibits foreign nationals from making any contributions or expenditures in federal, state, or local elections.” [Public Citizen, accessed [2/15/19](#)]

Despite The Bill’s Obvious Benefits, McConnell Repeatedly Voted Against It

McConnell Voted Against Cloture On The Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act. In 2002, McConnell voted against: “Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the bill that would ban ‘soft money’ donations to national political parties but allow up to \$10,000 in soft-money donations to state and local parties for voter registration and get-out-the-vote activity. The bill would prevent issue ads from targeting specific candidates within 60 days of a general election or 30 days of a primary. The bill also would increase the individual contribution limit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per election for House and Senate candidates, both of which would be indexed for inflation.” The cloture motion was agreed to, 68-32. [CQ; H.R. 2356, Vote #53, [3/20/02](#)]

McConnell Voted Against Passage Of The Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act. In 2002, McConnell voted against: “Passage of the bill that would ban ‘soft money’ donations to national political parties but allow up to \$10,000 in soft-money donations to state and local parties for voter registration and get-out-the-vote activity. The bill would prevent issue ads from targeting specific candidates within 60 days of a general election or 30 days of a primary. The bill also would increase the individual contribution limit from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per election for House and Senate candidates, both of which would be indexed for inflation.” The bill passed by a vote of 60-40, and was thus cleared for the president. [CQ; H.R. 2356, Vote #54, [3/20/02](#)]

McConnell Voted Against Senate Passage Of The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, Which Would Ban Soft Money Donations To Political Parties, Prohibit Corporate And Union Funds From Being Spent On Issue Ads, And Require Disclosure Of Individuals Who Pay For Issue Ads Within Two Months On An Election. In 2001, McConnell voted against: “Passage of the bill that would ban soft money donations to political parties, prohibit corporate and union general treasury funds from being spent on issue ads, and require disclosure of individuals who pay for issue ads that run within 60 days of a general election or 30 days of a primary. It also would prevent certain issue ads from targeting specific candidates within the 60-day and 30-day periods. The bill, as amended, would increase the individual contribution limit per candidate to \$2,000 per election, the individual limit to national parties to \$25,000 per year and the individual aggregate limit to \$37,500 per year.” The bill passed, 59-41. [CQ; S. 27, Vote #64, [4/2/01](#)]

- **McConnell Voted Against Expressing The Sense Of The Senate To Deliver The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act To The House.** In 2001, McConnell voted against a: “McCain, R-Ariz., amendment to the Jeffords, R-Vt., substitute amendment. The McCain amendment would express the sense of the Senate that legislation to overhaul campaign finance laws as passed by the Senate should be engrossed and delivered to the House without delay. The Jeffords substitute would reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act for seven years and add language to modify the annual testing provisions in the bill, add a 'Straight A's' demonstration program and allow parents of children in underperforming schools to use federal funds for private tutoring." The measure was adopted by a vote of 61-36. [CQ; S. Amdt. 477 to S.Amdt. 358 to S. 1, Vote #104, [5/15/01](#)]

McConnell Voted To Provide That If One Provision Of The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act Was Determined To be Unconstitutional, The Entire Bill Would Be Made Invalid. In 2001, McConnell voted against a: "Dodd, D-Conn., motion to table (kill) the Frist, R-Tenn., amendment that would provide that if one of several specific provisions in the underlying bill, mainly the ban on soft money, disclosure requirements for issue-group advertising, and hard money limits, is found unconstitutional, then the other provisions specified would also be invalid." The motion was agreed to by a vote of 57-43. [CQ; S. 27, Vote #59, [3/29/01](#)]

McConnell Voted Against McCain-Feingold. In 1999, McConnell voted against the McCain-Feingold bipartisan campaign finance reform bill that would ban unregulated soft money. McConnell voted against the: "Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Reid, D-Nev., amendment to the Daschle, D-S.D., substitute amendment. The Reid amendment would prohibit national party committees from collecting "soft money" donations, which currently are unlimited and unregulated, and would prohibit unions from using the dues of non-union workers for political purposes without the worker's consent. It includes the previously adopted McCain, R-Ariz., amendment on disclosure requirements." The cloture motion was rejected 53-47. [CQ; S. 1593, Vote #331, [10/19/99](#)]

McConnell Voted Against Cloture On McCain-Feingold. In 1999, McConnell voted against campaign finance reform legislation that included a ban on soft money. McConnell voted against the: "Motion to invoke cloture (thus limiting debate) on the Daschle, D-S.D., substitute amendment, which would insert text similar to the campaign finance bill (HR 417) passed by the House on Sept. 14. The amendment would ban all contributions of 'soft money,' or money used for party-building activities as opposed to supporting a specific candidate, and impose restrictions on issue advocacy communications. It also would raise individual aggregate contribution limits and the amount that may be given to state political parties." The cloture motion was rejected 52-48. [CQ; S. 1593, Vote #330, [10/19/99](#)]

McConnell Positioned Himself At The Forefront Against McCain-Feingold, Including Fighting All The Way To The Supreme Court

McConnell "Spearheaded The Opposition And Launched A Filibuster." In July 2013, the Huffington Post reported: "McConnell recognized early the importance of protecting his turf. There has been no greater Senate foe of campaign finance reform. When Feingold and McCain proposed a bill to ban soft money outright in 1996, McConnell spearheaded the opposition and launched a filibuster — at the time a relatively extreme response reserved only for dramatic legislation." [Huffington Post, [7/11/13](#)]

McConnell Led The Opposition To McCain-Feingold, Called It "Unconstitutional." In August 2018, NPR reported: "By today's standards on Capitol Hill, the Senate's March 2001 showdown over McCain-Feingold looked quaint: It consumed 11 days of floor time. Forty amendments were considered. Which isn't to say it was polite. Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell, leading the opposition, said, 'I hope senators will uphold the oaths they've taken and oppose this unconstitutional bill.'" [NPR, [8/26/18](#)]

McConnell Went All The Way To The Supreme Court To Challenge The Constitutionality Of McCain-Feingold

McConnell vs. FEC Was A Consolidation Of Several Lawsuits Challenging The Constitutionality Of McCain-Feingold. According to the Campaign Legal Center: "The lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002 - eleven suits brought by more than 80 plaintiffs - were consolidated as *McConnell v. FEC*. The defendants in the case were the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Election Commission; the Act's principal congressional sponsors - Senators McCain, Feingold, Snowe and Jeffords

and Congressmen Meehan and Shays -were intervenor-defendants. The Legal Center's attorneys were among the counsel to the congressional sponsors.” [Campaign Legal Center, *McConnell v. FEC*, [7/17/15](#)]

McCain-Feingold “Survived A Well-Funded Legal Challenge” From McConnell And Outside Groups Like The NRA. In August 2018, Roll Call reported: “The bipartisan campaign finance overhaul survived a well-funded legal challenge in 2003 from now-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and outside interests including the National Rifle Association — only to suffer subsequent and major rollbacks in court and at the Federal Election Commission.” [Roll Call, [8/25/18](#)]

McConnell Called The Passage Of McCain-Feingold “The Worst Day Of My Political Life”

McConnell: “The Worst Day Of My Political Life” Was When McCain-Feingold Was Signed. In August 2014, reported on McConnell’s remarks to a group of conservative millionaire and billionaire donors. McConnell was quoted as saying: “The worst day of my political life was when President George W. Bush signed McCain-Feingold into law in the early part of his first administration.” [The Nation, [8/26/14](#)]

McConnell Made It Impossible For The FEC To Effectively Enforce Campaign Finance Laws

TOP HITS

The Federal Election Commission exists to enforce campaign finance laws and ensure candidates are operating on the same playing field. But McConnell has made it impossible for the FEC to do its job effectively.

McConnell handpicked an FEC Commissioner – Don McGahn – that made the FEC much more partisan. McGahn whipped Republicans “into a solid voting bloc that nearly always opposed additional regulation, oversight or even investigation.” This led to the FEC becoming a “completely broken agency, incapable of enforcing any election laws.”

McConnell has consistently placed members on the commission with “little appetite for enforcement”—his way of demonstrating his longtime opposition to the agency. McConnell also demanded that FEC commissioners be voted on as a package, grinding the agency to a standstill.

In recent years, the FEC has barely been able to function. They had millions of pages of backlog waiting to be analyzed for campaign finance violations. As of December 2013, they had nearly 270 unresolved enforcement cases. And for years, the FEC had numerous vacancies for vital positions, including general counsel and chief financial officer. The number of deadlocked votes has reached a new high, and enforcement actions have reached a new low. But that’s just eh way McConnell likes it.

McConnell also personally lobbied for pro-*Citizens United*, anti-campaign finance reform activist Bradley Smith to be an FEC commissioner.

McConnell’s Decisions Led To A Partisan, Constantly Deadlocked, Ineffective FEC

Columnist: Problems With The FEC “Can Be Traced To Mitch McConnell.” In October 2014, Dana Milbank wrote for the Washington Post: “Offenders have used such split decisions to justify continuing their activities. The number of proposed audits and rules has similarly dried up. ‘There’s no enforcement of anything of significance,’ Holman said. ‘Every group that goes before the FEC understands that this agency is going to deadlock on any enforcement actions, which means they will not get penalized.’ The problem can be traced to Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican leader who decides which Republicans get named to the commission.”

Columnist: McConnell “Has Made Sure” FEC Commissioners “Are Uniformly Hostile To Campaign-Finance Restrictions.” In October 2014, Dana Milbank wrote for the Washington Post: “He has made sure they are uniformly hostile to campaign-finance restrictions, including requiring donor disclosure of big money nonprofits, which have proliferated in campaigns since *Citizens United*.” [Washington Post, 10/12/14]

McConnell “Handpicked” An FEC Commissioner That Made The Agency Much More Partisan

McConnell “Handpicked” Don McGahn For FEC Commissioner; Once There, McGahn Whipped Republicans “Into A Solid Voting Bloc That Nearly Always Opposed Additional Regulation, Oversight, Or Even Investigation.” In September 2018, Quartz reported: “McGahn was handpicked by then Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell for the FEC, recalls Ann M. Ravel, who served on the commission from 2013 to 2017. Once there, he quickly whipped Republicans into a solid voting bloc that nearly always opposed additional regulation, oversight, or even investigation.” [Quartz, [9/1/18](#)]

- **This Led To The FEC Becoming “A Completely Broken Agency, Incapable Of Enforcing Any Election Laws.”** In September 2018, Quartz reported: “Because the FEC needs four of six commissioner votes to take any action, the net result was a completely broken agency, incapable of enforcing any election laws. ‘His entire tenure at the FEC was to decimate the ability of the commission to fulfill its job,’ Ravel said. Adav Noti, the FEC’s former associate general counsel, said McGahn may have been the most influential FEC commissioner of the century.” [Quartz, [9/1/18](#)]

McConnell Has Consistently Placed Members On The Commission With “Little Appetite For Enforcement”

Former FEC Chair: McConnell “Has Been Responsible For Selecting McGahn” And Other Commissioners “As Part Of His Longtime Opposition To The Work Of That Agency.” In March 2018, former Republican FEC chair Trevor Potter wrote in the Hill: “Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has been responsible for selecting McGahn and other anti-regulation Republican commissioners as part of his longtime opposition to the work of that agency.” [The Hill, [3/6/18](#)]

McConnell “Has Placed Members On The Commission With Little Appetite For Enforcement.” In January 2016, Vox reported: “Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, a fierce opponent of campaign finance reform, has placed members on the commission with little appetite for enforcement.” [Vox, [1/26/16](#)]

McConnell Demanded That FEC Commissioners Be Voted On As A Package, Grinding The Agency To A Standstill

In 2008, FEC “Literally Couldn’t Function” Because McConnell Demanded Commissioner Nominees Be Voted On As A Package. In December 2013, the Atlantic reported: But election reformers’ celebrations would prove fleeting, thanks in large part to McConnell. By the presidential election year 2008, the FEC literally couldn’t function—only two commissioners remained on the job as McConnell demanded that the Senate vote on pending nominees as a package, not individually as Democrats wanted.” [The Atlantic, [12/17/13](#)]

Today, The FEC Can Barely Function And McConnell Doesn’t Care

FEC “Has Reached A Paralyzing All-Time Low In Its Ability To Reach Consensus.” In December 2013, the Atlantic reported: “The commission over the past year has reached a paralyzing all-time low in its ability to reach consensus, stalling action on dozens of rulemaking, audit and enforcement matters, some of which are years old.” [The Atlantic, [12/17/13](#)]

FEC Had Millions Of Pages Of Backlog Waiting To Be Analyzed For Campaign Finance Violations. In December 2013, the Atlantic reported: “Analysts charged with scouring disclosure reports to ensure candidates and political committees are complying with laws have a nearly quarter-million-page backlog.” [The Atlantic, [12/17/13](#)]

As Of December 2013, The FEC Had Nearly 270 Unresolved Enforcement Cases. In December 2013, the Atlantic reported: “Commissioners themselves are grappling with nearly 270 unresolved enforcement cases.” [The Atlantic, [12/17/13](#)]

FEC Had Numerous Vacancies For Vital Positions, Including General Counsel And Chief Financial Officer. In December 2013, the Atlantic reported: “Among top FEC jobs currently unfilled or filled on an ‘acting’ basis: general counsel, associate general counsel for policy, associate general counsel for litigation, chief financial officer and accounting director. The staff director doubles as IT director.” [The Atlantic, [12/17/13](#)]

The Number Of Deadlocked Votes On The FEC “Has Reached A New High, While Enforcement Actions Have Reached An All-Time Low.” In January 2016, Vox reported: “Republican commissioners have stated that

they are content with a demoralized and dormant agency, since they prefer inactivity to what they see as tyranny. The number of deadlocked votes has reached a new high, while enforcement actions have reached an all-time low.” [Vox, [1/26/16](#)]

Fixing The FEC Wasn’t “Anywhere Near The Top Of The To-Do List” For McConnell And “Republicans In General Have Indicated Little Interest In Seeing The Agency Be More Functional.” In June 2016, the Center for Responsive Politics reported: “Or, as Weintraub’s fellow commissioner, Ann Ravel, has said previously, Congress could overhaul the whole agency. Bills are pending in Congress that would do that, but they aren’t anywhere near the top of the to-do list for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) or House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.); Republicans in general have indicated little interest in seeing the agency be more functional. Consider the fact that five of the six commissioners, who must be nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, are serving despite their terms having expired; there is nobody to take their place.” [Center for Responsive Politics, [6/17/16](#)]

Former FEC Commissioner: McConnell “Keeps A Close Eye On The Commission – Particularly The Members He Expects To Do His Bidding.” In February 2017, former FEC commissioner Ann Ravel wrote in the New York Times: “Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, who has bragged about his opposition to campaign finance laws, keeps a close eye on the commission — particularly the members he expects to do his bidding. One of them, Lee Goodman, said in 2015: ‘Congress set this place up to gridlock. This agency is functioning as Congress intended.’” [New York Times, op-ed, [2/20/17](#)]

McConnell Lobbied For Pro-Citizens United Bradley Smith To Be An FEC Commissioner

McConnell Lobbied For Bradley Smith To Be An FEC Commissioner. In 2010, the New York Times reported: “It was Thanksgiving break of 1998 at Capital University Law School in Ohio, and Senator Mitch McConnell was on the phone for Prof. Bradley Smith. Mr. McConnell’s aides had already approached the conservative law professor about a spot on the Federal Election Commission, but Mr. Smith was hesitant. Now the senator himself was calling, and he was not going to be turned down. ‘Here was Senator McConnell lobbying me to take the job,’ Mr. Smith recounted with a laugh. ‘He was saying that we’re getting hammered by the left as lackeys for big money, and we needed someone who could begin to make the intellectual case for deregulation in Washington.’” [New York Times, [10/15/10](#)]

- **Smith: “Citizens United Gives Freedom Of Speech Back To The People.”** [Reuters, op-ed, [1/16/15](#)]
- **Smith “Citizens United Correctly Holds That More Political Speech – More Voices, More Information – Is A Good Thing.”** In January 2015, Smith wrote in Reuters: “Though many people complain about political spending, *Citizens United* correctly holds that more political speech — more voices, more information — is a good thing.” [Reuters, op-ed, [1/16/15](#)]
- **Smith: “Citizens United Is Having Positive Effects On U.S. Elections.”** In January 2015, Smith wrote in Reuters: “It’s not merely that dire predictions about *Citizens United* have not come true. It is that *Citizens United* is having positive effects on U.S. elections.” [Reuters, op-ed, [1/16/15](#)]

McConnell Is Beholden To The Billionaires And Corporations That Have Funded His Rise To Power

TOP HITS

McConnell is the embodiment of the way big money in politics has corrupted our democracy. A former NRSC chair, McConnell is famous for being a relentless fundraiser. One former Republican aide said McConnell was “completely dogged in his pursuit of money. That’s his great love, above everything else.”

McConnell rewarded big donors with private dinners and briefings with powerful lawmakers. In one case, McConnell treated the CEO of Delta Airlines to breakfast in the Senate dining room, and a week later received \$10,000 from the CEO and his wife.

McConnell maintained a close insider network that helped him remain on top as Senate Majority Leader. One of McConnell’s biggest allies were lobbyists, many of whom were former staffers that maintained their loyalty and access to McConnell.

McConnell also relied on a network of shadowy groups to prop up his political operation. His former chief of staff was head of American Crossroads and its dark money affiliate, Crossroads GPS—both of which poured millions of dollars into helping Republicans in Senate races. Another pro-McConnell dark money group, Kentucky Opportunity Coalition, was staffed by several McConnell alumni and funded by millions of dollars from just a handful of anonymous benefactors.

But the jewel in the crown of McConnell’s fundraising behemoth was Senate Leadership Fund, a super PAC funded by millions of dollars with of dark money and by the country’s biggest billionaires. In 2018 alone, SLF raised a whopping \$130 million. They’ve taken money from Koch Industries, private prison company GEO Group, and a company controlled by a shady billionaire with ties to Russian oligarchs. In 2018 alone, SLF accepted over \$1.5 million from mysterious shell companies with connections to multi-level marketing firms and oil and gas interests.

McConnell Was Known As “Completely Dogged In His Pursuit Of Money”

McConnell Had A Reputation For Being An Relentless Fundraiser, With One Republican Saying He Was “Completely Dogged In His Pursuit Of Money” And “That’s His Great Love, Above Everything Else”

As Head Of The NRSC, McConnell “Capitalized On The Explosion Of ‘Soft Money.’” In July 2013, the Huffington Post reported: “McConnell’s ability to raise cash for candidates kept him from being laughed out of Senate leadership. As head of the NRSC, he had capitalized on the explosion of ‘soft money’ — unlimited spending by political parties on so-called party-building activities, which often included controversial advertising critical to campaigns. In 1998, McConnell raised more than \$37 million in soft money, according to data from the Center for Responsive Politics, besting the NRSC’s previous high-water mark by 30 percent — unheard of in an election year with no presidential contest — and eclipsing the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee’s 1998 haul.” [Huffington Post, [7/11/13](#)]

McConnell Has Raised Nearly \$220 Million Over His Senate Career. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “McConnell’s rise to the top of Congress is testament to the power of money in modern politics. He has raised nearly \$220 million over his Senate career; he spent the majority not on his own campaigns but on those of his GOP colleagues, who have rewarded him with power.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

Former Republican Aide: McConnell Is “Completely Dogged In His Pursuit Of Money. That’s His Great Love, Above Everything Else.” In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “‘He’s completely dogged in his pursuit of money. That’s his great love, above everything else,’ said Marshall Whitman, who watched McConnell as an aide to Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and as a Christian Coalition lobbyist.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell Was “A Leader In The Field Of Tapping The Wealthy For Campaign Cash.” In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “A leader in the field of tapping the wealthy for campaign cash, McConnell also led the opposition against efforts to rein in such donations through campaign-finance reform -- a fight that has taken him to the U.S. Supreme Court and put him toe-to-toe against another emerging Republican leader, presidential hopeful McCain.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell “Built Senate Loyalties By Redirecting Millions Of Dollars He Raised Through His Own PAC; Senate Republican Aid Said McConnell’s Fundraising “Is Like A Corporation, A Booming, Full-Time Business.” In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “But Republicans stuck with McConnell. He built Senate loyalties by redirecting millions of dollars he raised through his own PAC, dispensing \$5,000 and \$10,000 at a time. He pledged this year to send \$1 million of his funds to pay for other senators’ races. ‘His fundraising is like a corporation, a booming, full-time business,’ said Whitman, the former Republican Senate aide.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell Rewarded Big Donors With Unmatched Access

McConnell Rewarded Big Donors With Private Dinners And Access To Powerful Lawmakers

McConnell Rewarded Big Donors With Private Dinners And Briefings With Powerful Lawmakers. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “McConnell’s invitations to the wealthy to become lifetime members of the ‘Senate Republican Inner Circle’ (\$15,000 for life or \$2,000 a year) guarantee private dinners and valuable briefings with ‘the men who are shaping the Senate agenda,’ including himself, caucus leaders and committee chairmen. ‘Americans are big on rewards these days. Financial rewards in the stock market -- cash rewards on your credit cards -- luxurious rewards in the travel industry,’ McConnell wrote in one invitation. ‘But a special group of Americans is experiencing one of the greatest reward programs ever, because they took the initiative to become a Life Member of the Inner Circle.’” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

- **Members Of His “Inner Circle”—\$2,000 A Year—Were Guaranteed Private Dinners “And Valuable Briefings With ‘The Men Who Are Shaping The Senate Agenda.’”** In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “McConnell’s invitations to the wealthy to become lifetime members of the ‘Senate Republican Inner Circle’ (\$15,000 for life or \$2,000 a year) guarantee private dinners and valuable briefings with ‘the men who are shaping the Senate agenda,’ including himself, caucus leaders and committee chairmen.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]
- **McConnell’s Rewards Were “Greatly Anticipated By Corporate Leaders Who Want A Say In Senate Decisions.”** In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “Those rewards are greatly anticipated by corporate leaders who want a say in Senate decisions. After the Inner Circle welcomed Geoffrey Bible, chief executive at Philip Morris, he sent a copy of the announcement to his aides. ‘So now I’m in,’ Bible wrote in the margin. ‘See if we can make the most of it.’” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

HEADLINE: “Mitch McConnell Treats Executive To Breakfast In Capitol; Big Donation Follows.” [National Journal, 8/20/14]

- **A Week After McConnell Took CEO Of Delta Airlines To Breakfast In The Senate Dining Room, He And His Wife Gave \$10,000 To McConnell.** In August 2014, the National Journal reported: “Only one week after Sen. Mitch McConnell took the CEO of Delta Air Lines to breakfast in the exclusive Senate Dining Room last month, the airline executive and his wife wrote \$10,000 worth of checks to help fund McConnell's political operation. The donations, which were reported to the Federal Election Commission on Wednesday, made Rick and Susan Anderson the largest contributors to McConnell's Bluegrass Committee in July. Delta Air Lines' PAC contributed another \$2,500 within days of the breakfast.” [National Journal, 8/20/14]
- **CRP Director: “This Is The Kind Of Rare Access Most Of Us Will Never Experience.”** In August 2014, the National Journal reported: “Still, Sheila Krumholz, executive director of the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks campaign money, noted of the meal, ‘This is the kind of rare access that most of us will never experience.’ ‘Who makes a good enough breakfast companion for a sitting senator in a highly competitive reelection campaign to take time out of their busy day?’ Krumholz said. ‘It never hurts if the person can follow up with a donation, and all the better if it can be a sizable one.’” [National Journal, 8/20/14]

McConnell Appointed One Of His Big Donors To A Government Commission

Prominent Kentucky Businessman Gave McConnell Over \$10,000 Four Days After McConnell Appointed Him To A Government Commission. In September 2014, the Hill reported: “A prominent Kentucky businessman contributed \$10,200 to Sen. Mitch McConnell’s campaign four days after the Republican leader appointed him to a government commission tasked with tackling hunger.” [The Hill, [9/10/14](#)]

McConnell Maintained A Close Insider Network That Helped Him And His Candidates, Often Through Mysterious Conduits

McConnell’s First Campaign Manager And Former Chief Of Staff Set Up A Pro-McConnell Super PAC For The 2014 Election. In November 2014, Politico reported: “Even long-ago aides like Law, who hasn’t worked for McConnell in more than 20 years, has remained part of the extended political team. He helped set up and served on a pro-McConnell super PAC that was key to hitting McConnell’s primary tea party challenger and trying to define Grimes. [...] Law ran McConnell’s first reelection campaign in 1990 and later served for six years as his chief of staff.” [Politico, [11/17/14](#)]

McConnell Palled Around With Lobbyists, Including Many Who Had Previously Worked For Him

Many McConnell Alumni Became Lobbyists, And “Retained Their Access To His Office And Staff In A Mutually Beneficial Way.” In November 2014, Politico reported: “A number of those closest to McConnell are alumni turned lobbyists, and they too have retained their access to his office and staff in a mutually beneficial way, advancing his interests at the same time they gather intel for clients who pay their firms millions of dollars.” [Politico, [11/17/14](#)]

Three Of McConnell’s Former Chiefs Of Staff Became Lobbyists. In November 2014, Politico reported: “Three former chiefs of staff who now lobby — Kyle Simmons of the Simmons Russell Group, Billy Piper, whose clients include the American Television Alliance and Metlife Group, and Hunter Bates, a lobbyist who splits time between Washington and Kentucky — were on a weekly call helping with campaign strategy.” [Politico, [11/17/14](#)]

McConnell Relied “On Former Aides Who Have Gone To K Street For Their Expertise And Experience On The Hill.” In November 2014, Politico reported: “The Kentucky Republican and his staff also often rely on former aides who have gone to K Street for their expertise and experience on the Hill.” [Politico, [11/17/14](#)]

McConnell Defended His Lobbyist Ties; Said He Was “Grateful” For Their Help In His Reelection Campaign. In November 2014, Politico reported: “For McConnell’s part, he’s defended his ties. On the eve of the election in Kentucky, POLITICO asked McConnell about the optics of lobbyists descending on the Bluegrass State. He had no qualms about it. ‘I’m just grateful for the help,’ he said.” [Politico, [11/17/14](#)]

Major League Baseball Lobbyist Donated To Cindy Hyde-Smith As A Favor After He Was Unable To Attend A McConnell Fundraiser. In November 2018, Fox News reported: “Major League Baseball has wrapped itself into a political controversy after requesting Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith’s campaign to return thousands in donations stemming from her ‘public hanging’ comments. The donation to Hyde-Smith’s campaign came after a lobbyist who works for MLB couldn’t attend a mid-November fundraiser for Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., Yahoo Sports reported Monday, citing sources. The league was reportedly asked to donate to Hyde-Smith, R-Miss., instead.” [Fox News, [11/27/18](#)]

McConnell’s Former Chief Of Staff Headed Up American Crossroads And Its Dark Money Affiliate, Which Also Poured Money Into Helping McConnell Remain Majority Leader

Steven Law, McConnell’s Former Chief Of Staff, Ran American Crossroads And Crossroads GPS. In November 2018, the Center for Responsive Politics reported: “One Nation, a conservative 501(c)(4) ‘dark money’ nonprofit masterminded by Karl Rove, raised nearly \$17 million last year, according to the most recent IRS tax filings released Friday. Meanwhile, Crossroads GPS — formerly a dominant group in conservative circles and also run by Rove — raised just \$75,000 last year, all but confirming its demise less than a year after the IRS granted it tax-exempt status. The two dark money groups — along with the conservative American Crossroads and Senate Leadership Fund (SLF) — share the same Washington, D.C. office and employees. Each organization is run by Steven Law, a former chief of staff to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who remains closely aligned with the groups.” [Center for Responsive Politics, [11/16/18](#)]

Law And McConnell Were A “Powerful Combined Force In Washington.” In October 2012, the Washington Post reported: “After more than a decade working side by side, the two men rarely talk these days. But Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Steven Law, his trusted former aide, remain a powerful combined force in Washington.” [Washington Post, [10/30/12](#)]

McConnell Was “Taking The Lead” In Preventing Regulators “From Cracking Down On Law’s Group, Which Has Thrived Under Rules Allowing Its Donors To Remain Secret.” In October 2012, the Washington Post reported: “Now, McConnell, 70, is taking the lead in preventing Democrats and government regulators from cracking down on Law’s group, which has thrived under rules allowing its donors to remain secret.” [Washington Post, [10/30/12](#)]

McConnell’s Senate Leadership Fund Was The Second-Largest Donor To American Crossroads In 2018. In November 2018, the Center for Responsive Politics reported: “SLF — which spent nearly \$94 million to support Republican Senate candidates, mostly through attack ads — is the second-largest donor to American Crossroads in 2018, giving more than \$690,000.” [Center for Responsive Politics, [11/16/18](#)]

2012: American Crossroads/Crossroads GPS Spent Over \$51 Million Helping Republicans In Senate Races. During the 2012 cycle, American Crossroads and Crossroads GPS spent \$51,663,679 either attacking Democratic candidates or helping Republican candidates in Senate races across the country. [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [2/27/19](#)]

Pro-McConnell Dark Money Group, Bankrolled By Mega-Donors, Included Several McConnell Alumni

Kentucky Opportunity Coalition, A Pro-McConnell Dark Money Group, “Counts Several McConnell Alumni Among Its Team.” In October 2014, the Nation reported: “Another pro-McConnell outside group, the Kentucky Opportunity Coalition, a nonprofit that doesn’t disclose its donors, counts several McConnell alumni among its team, including its spokesman, J. Scott Jennings, a consultant to McConnell’s two previous re-election campaigns. Jennings’s group has aired ads that feature video released by McConnell’s campaign.” [The Nation, [10/21/14](#)]

Kentucky Opportunity Coalition Raised More Than \$21 Million During The 2014 Cycle, With Most Of The Money Coming “From Just A Handful Of Wealthy—And Anonymous—Donors.” In November 2015, the Center for Public Integrity reported: “The Kentucky Opportunity Coalition raised more than \$21 million during 2013 and 2014, including \$15 million last year alone, according to documents the group filed this week with the Internal Revenue Service. Most of the money came from just a handful of wealthy — and anonymous — donors.” [Center for Public Integrity, [11/20/15](#)]

While The KOC “Was A Major Player” In The Kentucky Senate Race, “Voters Had Little Idea Who Was Behind The Group,” Except For Its P.O. Box In Louisville. In November 2015, the Center for Public Integrity reported: “While the Kentucky Opportunity Coalition was a major player in Kentucky’s U.S. Senate contest, voters had little idea who was behind the group, which listed its physical address as a post office box in Louisville, Kentucky.” [Center for Public Integrity, [11/20/15](#)]

In 2014, Three Unknown Donors “Accounted For More Than 60% Of The \$15 Million” KOC Raised. In November 2015, the Center for Public Integrity reported: “It must, however, list the amounts given by big donors. In 2014 alone, three unknown megadonors alone accounted for more than 60 percent of the \$15 million the Kentucky Opportunity Coalition raised. The largest donor contributed \$5 million. Another gave about \$3.4 million. A third gave \$1 million.” [Center for Public Integrity, [11/20/15](#)]

McConnell Spearheaded Senate Leadership Fund, Which Was Funded By Dark Money, Billionaires, And Opaque, Mysterious Entities

Senate Leadership Fund Was A Super PAC Aligned With McConnell. In October 2018, Politico reported: “The super PAC aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell raised \$37.6 million in September, according to fundraising totals provided to POLITICO, a gargantuan sum that Republicans will need in the coming weeks as they seek to protect their Senate majority.” [Politico, [10/18/18](#)]

McConnell Did A “Huge Amount” Of Travel, Meetings And Phone Calls For SLF. In April 2018, Politico reported: “STEVEN LAW, who heads SLF and One Nation, said that the groups have already gotten another \$12.1 million in “hard pledges” for the second quarter of this year. SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH MCCONNELL, who is closely tied to SLF, has done a ‘huge amount’ of travel, meetings and phone calls, according to Law.” [Politico, [4/19/18](#)]

In 2018, SLF Raised \$130 Million And Spent \$127 Million. [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [3/4/19](#)]

SLF Received Millions Of Dollars From A Dark Money Group “Masterminded By Karl Rove”

During The 2018 Cycle, SLF Received \$18.5 Million From One Nation. In January 2019, the Center for Responsive Politics reported: “Similarly, conservative dark money group One Nation gave more than \$18.5 million to the neighboring Senate Leadership Fund, with which it shares an office and president.” [Center for Responsive Politics, [1/3/19](#)]

During The 2016 Cycle, SLF Received \$11 Million From One Nation. According to the Campaign Legal Center: “For example, although the Senate Leadership Fund super PAC was required to disclose the \$11 million it

received from One Nation in 2016, the actual sources of One Nation’s money—and by extension, Senate Leadership Fund’s money--remains hidden from the public.” [Campaign Legal Center, accessed [2/19/19](#)]

One Nation Was A “Dark Money’ Nonprofit Masterminded By Karl Rove.” In November 2018, the Center for Responsive Politics reported: “One Nation, a conservative 501(c)(4) ‘dark money’ nonprofit masterminded by Karl Rove, raised nearly \$17 million last year, according to the most recent IRS tax filings released Friday.” [Center for Responsive Politics, [11/16/18](#)]

SLF Has Taken Millions From The Country’s Biggest Billionaires

In 2018, SLF Received \$50 Million From Sheldon Adelson And His Wife. From July to September 2018, Sheldon Adelson and his wife, Miriam, contributed a total of \$50 million to the Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

In 2018, SLF Received \$8 Million From Stephen Schwarzman, Chairman Of The Blackstone Group. Between June and October 2018, Blackstone Group chairman Stephen Schwarzman contributed \$8 million to the Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

- **Schwarzman Had A Net Worth Of \$13 Billion.** According to the Guardian, Stephen Schwarzman and his wife, Christine, had a net worth of \$13 billion. [The Guardian, [11/2/18](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$2 Million From Paul Singer. Between August 2017 and October 2018, Paul Singer, founder and CEO of Elliott Management Group, contributed a total of \$2 million to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

In 2018, SLF Received \$4 Million From Bernard Marcus. Between April 2017 and February 2018, Bernard Marcus, chairman of the Marcus Foundation, contributed a total of \$4 million to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

- **Marcus Was A Major Republican Donor With A Net Worth Of \$5.1 Billion.** According to the Guardian: “The couple has given \$4m to the conservative Senate Leadership Fund Pac this cycle, along with several other significant donations to Republican Pacs, candidate and party committees.” Marcus’ net worth was listed as \$5.1 billion. [The Guardian, [11/2/18](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$4 Million From Charles Schwab And His Wife. In October 2018, Charles Schwab of the Charles Schwab Corporation and his wife, Helen, contributed a total of \$4 million to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

- **Schwab, A “Highly Recognized Figure,” Had A Net Worth Of \$8.8 Billion.** According to the Guardian: “Charles Schwab is a financier and highly recognized figure, due to the investment brokerage he founded with his name. He retired as CEO of the company in 2008.” Schwab’s net worth was listed as \$8.8 billion. [The Guardian, [11/2/18](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$1 Million From Ronald Cameron. From March through August, 2018, Ronald Cameron, chairman of the Mountaire Corporation, contributed a total of \$1 million to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

- **Cameron Owned The 7th Largest Poultry Company In The Country And A Major Donor To The Koch Brothers Network.** According to the Guardian: “Ronald Cameron lives in Arkansas and owns and runs the seventh-largest poultry company in the country, Mountaire Farms, which was founded by his grandfather. In the 2014 midterm cycle, Mountaire was the largest corporate donor to the Koch brothers’ Super Pac, Freedom Partners Action Fund, and he was a big supporter of Mike Huckabee in the 2016 primaries. This cycle, he and his wife have given heavily – at least \$3m – to another Koch brothers Pac,

Americans for Prosperity Action. They also gave \$1m to the conservative Congressional Leadership Fund.” [The Guardian, [11/2/18](#)]

SLF Has Taken Money From Shady Sources

SLF Accepted \$1.1 Million From Koch Industries

In 2018, SLF Received \$1.1 Million From Koch Industries. From September 2017 through August 2018, Koch Industries contributed \$1,100,000 to the Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

SLF Accepted \$1 Million From A Company Controlled By A Shady Billionaire With Ties To Russian Oligarchs

In 2017, SLF Received \$1 Million From AI Altep Holdings. In October 2018, AI-Altep Holdings contributed \$1 million to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [3/30/17](#)]

AI Altep Holdings Was Controlled By Leonard “Len” Blavatnik. According to an SEC Form 4 filing from AI International Chemicals S.A.R.L.: “The securities reported are held directly by Altep 2010 L.P. (“Altep 2010”) and may be deemed to be indirectly beneficially owned by AI Altep Holdings, Inc. (formerly known as Access Industries, Inc.) and Mr. Blavatnik because AI Altep Holdings, Inc. is the general partner of Altep 2010 and Mr. Blavatnik controls AI Altep Holdings, Inc.” “Mr. Blavatnik” referred to Leonard “Len” Blavatnik. [SEC, AI International Chemicals S.A.R.L. Form 4, [6/4/15](#)]

Ukraine-Born Billionaire Blavatnik Was “Reportedly On The Fringe Of The Mueller Probe Thanks To Generous GOP Giving And Links To Oligarchs With Ties To Putin.” In October 2018, the Hollywood Reporter reported: The Ukraine-born billionaire owner of Warner Music is not only a backer of films who has looked at buying a Hollywood studio, he’s also reportedly on the fringe of the Mueller probe thanks to generous GOP giving and links to oligarchs with ties to Putin.” [Hollywood Reporter, [10/10/18](#)]

Quartz Described Blavatnik As An “Oligarch” Who “Made His Fortune In Russia.” In January 2019, Quartz reported: “For most of his life, billionaire Len Blavatnik put few of his vast resources into US politics. That changed in 2015. Since then, the oligarch, a US citizen who was born and raised in the former Soviet Union and made his fortune in Russia, has donated more than \$6 million to Republicans, according to Federal Election Commission data cited by the Dallas Morning News, plus \$1 million to Donald Trump’s inaugural committee, and several hundred thousand dollars to Democrats, including relatively small sums to senators Kamala Harris and Ron Wyden, FEC filings show.” [Quartz, [1/22/19](#)]

At The Time Blavatnik Was Stepping Up His GOP Donations, One Of His Companies Was Involved In Russia-Owned Businesses And He Was In Business With “Two Other Oligarchs Now Sanctioned By The U.S. Government.” In January 2019, Quartz reported: “Quartz’s reporting shows that, during at least part of the time Blavatnik was stepping up his GOP donations, one of his many companies was partnered with a firm that was reportedly part-owned by a then-official in the Russian government. He also was in business with two other oligarchs now sanctioned by the US government. (Blavatnik’s contributions are legal—he became a naturalized US citizen in 1984.)” [Quartz, [1/22/19](#)]

Mueller Reportedly Was Looking Into The Timing Of Contributions To Trump By Blavatnik. In January 2019, Quartz reported: “In September 2017, an unnamed Republican campaign aide who had been interviewed by Mueller’s investigators told ABC News the probe was looking at the timing of contributions to Trump’s political funds by Blavatnik and two other US businessmen with Russian ties.” [Quartz, [1/22/19](#)]

SLF Accepted \$150,000 From GEO Group, The Private Prison Operator That Makes Millions On The Backs Of Immigrant Children And Mistreated Inmates

In 2018, SLF Received \$150,000 From GEO Group And An Affiliated Company. In April 2017, GEO Group contributed \$100,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. In September 2018, GEO Acquisition II, which was located at the same address, contributed \$50,000. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19]

GEO Group Was The Nation's Second Largest For-Profit Prison Operator. In March 2011, NPR reported: "Within the \$3 billion private prison industry, GEO Group is the nation's second largest for-profit prison operator." [NPR, [5/25/11](#)]

Washington Post: Private Prison Company GEO Group Was "Thriving In The Trump Era" By "Escalating Its Spending On Traditional Tactics Such As Lobbying And Campaign Donations." "GEO Group's achievements over the past year show how a company that has long relied heavily on doing business with the government — and whose business model was under threat — is thriving in the Trump era. Even as the president has targeted lobbyists and Washington special interests with his vow to 'drain the swamp,' GEO Group has regained its footing while escalating its spending on traditional tactics such as lobbying and campaign donations. The Doral event represents a potential avenue of influence that is unique to Trump: the chance for a corporation to engage in a private business transaction with the president." [Washington Post, [10/25/17](#)]

In Texas, GEO Group Lobbied For A Bill "That Could Lead To Immigrant Children Being Indefinitely Detained In Its Lucrative Centers." In March 2017, Newsweek reported: "Within the Texas legislature, a controversial bill is pending. A private prisons company called the GEO Group has allegedly asked Republicans to submit a law that could lead to immigrant children being indefinitely detained in its lucrative centers." [Newsweek, [5/11/17](#)]

HEADLINE: "Private Prison Company GEO Group Gave Generously To Trump And Now Has Lucrative Contract." [Newsweek, [5/11/17](#)]

GEO Group Secured Trump's First Contract For An Immigration Detention Center In A Deal Worth Tens Of Millions A Year And Saw Its Stock Price Triple After Sessions Reversed A Obama Decision To Phase Out Private Prisons. "GEO Group, meanwhile, has had newfound success in Trump's Washington. The company secured the administration's first contract for an immigration detention center, a deal worth tens of millions a year. And its stock price has tripled since hitting a low last year when the Obama administration sought to phase out the use of private prisons — a decision that Sessions reversed." [Washington Post, [10/25/17](#)]

GEO Group Has Been "Plagued By Health And Safety Issues For Years, With Prisoner And Staff Complaints And Wrongful-Death Lawsuits Piling Up." In August 2017, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported: "The company's problems didn't end there, though. GEO and other leading for-profit prison corporations have been plagued by health and safety issues for years, with prisoner and staff complaints and wrongful-death lawsuits piling up like mounds of unopened jail mail." [Philadelphia Inquirer, [8/18/17](#)]

SLF Has Accepted Over \$1.5 Million From Mysterious Shell Companies

In 2018, SLF Received \$400,000 From AP2 Melaleuca. On May 16, 2018, AP2 Melaleuca, based in Idaho Falls, ID, contributed \$400,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [5/16/18](#)]

- **AP2 Melaleuca Was Located At The Same Address As Melaleuca Inc, An "Online Wellness Retailer" That Sold Various Consumer Products.** The address listed for AP2 Melaleuca, 4609 W. 65th South in Idaho Falls, ID, was the same address as Melaleuca, Inc. Melaleuca described itself as "one of the largest

catalog and online wellness retailers in North America” and “the largest online wellness shopping club in North America.” They sold products related to nutrition, personal care, home cleaning, and cosmetics. [Melaleuca, accessed [2/19/19](#)]

- **Melaleuca’s Business Model Was That In Order To Buy Products, You Had To Input Your Phone Number, Whereupon Other Melaleuca Members Would Call You To Encourage You To Sign Up As A Member.** In June 2017, Steve Razinski wrote on I’ve Tried That: “When you reach the Melaleuca website, you can shop for products and even place them into your shopping cart. Prices are not advertised on the storefronts, nor are they displayed when your items are in your shopping cart. Once you attempt to checkout, the site forces you to create an online account, which involves providing your phone number and email. Why would you need to provide your phone number in order to create a shopping account? Because this information is eventually used by other Melaleuca members to contact you and encourage you to sign up with the company as a member.” [I’ve Tried That, blog, [6/7/17](#)]
- **Signing Up As A Member Is An Additional \$35, And The Member That Signed You Up Earned A Commission For Doing So.** In June 2017, Steve Razinski wrote on I’ve Tried That: “So, why is Melaleuca so interested in having you become a member? Because the company operates as a multilevel marketing or MLM business. Except that, in the case Melaleuca, it is always called a ‘referral-based’ business. [...] However, the current cost of signup is \$35. In order to complete signup, the prospective member must work with a current member and sign up under him/her. As a result, that current member, who is now referred to as a Product Advocate, earns a commission every time his/her new downline member makes a product purchase. The standard commission is 7%, which adds up quickly if the Product Advocate recruits a few more members under him/her. Whether you are a member or Product Advocate, however, you must accumulate a set number of product points each month in order to remain in active status and collect commissions. Currently, the point level is 50, which translates to about \$80 of product. So, for every month you wish to remain with Melaleuca, you must place a product order of around \$80.” [I’ve Tried That, blog, [6/7/17](#)]
- **Despite This, Melaleuca Insisted They Were Not A Multi-Level Marketing Company.** In January 2013, CNBC reported: “Direct-seller Melaleuca, for example, which insists it is not a multi-level marketing firm, says ‘all commissions and bonuses are based on sales to end consumers.’ Melaleuca says that every month 62.2 percent of sales come from customers who are not and have never been distributors.” [CNBC, [1/9/13](#)]
- **Melaleuca’s Founder, Frank VanderSloot, Was A Billionaire And GOP Mega-Donor.** In June 2017, Forbes reported: “Idaho’s wealthiest person, with an estimated net worth of \$1.9 billion: Frank VanderSloot, the 68-year-old founder and CEO of Melaleuca, which bills itself as ‘the wellness company.’ [...] The other sizable investment VanderSloot has made with his Melaleuca spoils: politics. He is a major donor to Republicans. A national finance co-chair for friend Mitt Romney’s 2008 and 2012 presidential runs, he has been credited with donating and bundling more than \$60 million for the latter campaign.” [Forbes, [6/21/17](#)]

In 2017, SLF Received \$500,000 From BK 2 Holdings. On May 4, 2017, BK 2 Holdings, based in Princeton, NJ, contributed \$500,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [5/4/17](#)]

- **BK 2 Holdings Shared An Address With A Financial Firm, Caxton Associates.** BK 2’s address, 731 Alexander Road, Building 2 in Princeton, NJ, was the same address as Caxton Associates LP, a New York-based trading and investment firm that also had offices in London and Sydney. [Caxton Associates, accessed [2/19/19](#)]
- **There Was No BK 2 Holdings Registered In The State Of New Jersey.** According to the New Jersey Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services, there was no company titled “BK 2 Holdings” or “BK2 Holdings” registered in the state of New Jersey. There was a BK2 Associates, LLC, registered in North

Haledon, but that was over 66 miles from Princeton and not registered until July 2018. [New Jersey Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services, accessed [2/19/19](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$50,000 From H.J.K. LLC. On May 22, 2018, H.J.K. LLC, based in New York NY, contributed \$50,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [5/22/18](#)]

- **H.J.K. LLC Was Located Care Of H.J. Kalikow & Co.** H.J.K. LLC was registered with the New York Department of State in 1994; its address was listed as H.J.K. LLC, c/o H.J. Kalikow & Co, LLC, 101 Park Ave, 25th Floor, New York, New York. [New York Department of State, Division of Corporations, accessed [2/19/19](#)]
- **Real Estate Developer Peter Kalikow, Former Publisher Of The New York Post, Used H.J.K. LLC As An Entity Through Which To Donate Money To Republicans.** In February 2016, Talking Points Memo reported: “A super PAC supporting Republican Ohio Gov. John Kasich also benefited from New York real estate developer Peter S. Kalikow, the former publisher of the New York Post. He gave \$125,000 through HJK LLC, a company registered to Kalikow’s firm HJ Kalikow and Co. Spokesman Martin McLaughlin said HJK is just one way Kalikow chooses to make donations. ‘It’s not a mystery that Peter Kalikow supports Republican candidates,’ he said.” [Talking Points Memo, [2/3/16](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$15,000 From Hammer-1 LP. On October 11, 2018, Hammer-1 LP, based in Wichita Falls, TX, contributed \$15,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [10/11/18](#)]

- **Hollis R. Sullivan Was The Registered Agent For Hammer-1 LP.** According to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Hollis R. Sullivan was listed as the registered agent for Hammer-1 LP. [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, accessed [2/19/19](#)]
- **Hollis Sullivan Was The Founder Of Veritas Energy And Had Over 30 Years Of Experience In The Oil & Gas Industry.** According to the website of Veritas Energy: “Hollis Sullivan formed Veritas Energy, LLC in 2011 as an energy company with a clear focus on values and good business practices. He brings over 30 years of tried and true experience in the oil and gas industry. Hollis got his start in the oil and gas business with Cobra Oil & Gas in the late 1970s. Hollis then joined his father’s company, S&H Oil Company, where he worked for over 11 years. In 1990, Hollis founded Hollis R. Sullivan, Inc. as a small oil and gas company based in Wichita Falls, Texas.” [Veritas Energy, accessed [2/19/19](#)]
- **One Of Hollis Sullivan’s Other Companies “Sold Millions Of Dollars’ Worth Of Barnett [Shale] Properties To XTO Energy.”** In October 2011, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported: “Hollis Sullivan's company, Hollis R. Sullivan Inc., in 2008 sold millions of dollars' worth of Barnett properties to XTO Energy.” [Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 10/24/11]

In 2018, SLF Received \$50,000 From KSMK Ventures LLC. On October 15, 2018, KSMK Ventures LLC, based in Peabody, MA, contributed \$50,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [10/15/18](#)]

- **“It Is Not Obvious On Its Face What KSMK Is,” But Its Address Was The Headquarters Of Christian Book Distributors.** In October 2012, the New York Times reported: “An entity called KSMK Venture II L.L.C., which listed an address in Peabody, Mass., contributed \$200,000 to Restore Our Future on Sept. 11, bringing its total contributions to the super PAC to \$250,000. It is not obvious on its face what KSMK is, but its address is the headquarters of Christian Book Distributors, a Goliath in the world of Christian book and music sales.” [New York Times, [10/19/12](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$400,000 From National Vista Inc. On October 17, 2018, National Vista Inc., based in Boise, ID, contributed \$400,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [10/17/18](#)]

- **Funders Behind National Vista “Did A Good Job Concealing Their Identities” By Using The Address Of Their Registered Agent For All Filings.** In January 2019, the Center for Responsive Politics reported:

“The funders behind National Vista did a good job concealing their identities, using the address of the company’s registered agent Morris Bower & Haws for all of its filings, including its FEC filing. The law firm, located in a suburban office building with other law firms, a financial services firm and a teak furniture store, did not respond to a request for comment.” [Center for Responsive Politics, [1/29/19](#)]

- **“The Only Link To National Vista On The Internet Is An Obscure Document” Linking Major Cleaning Products To Lung Damage.** In January 2019, the Center for Responsive Politics reported: “The opaque quality of a registered agent address makes the real source of the dark money very difficult to track. However, National Vista did something of note besides bankrolling a super PAC. The only link to National Vista on the internet is an obscure document that highlights a widely cited study linking national brand cleaning products — such as Clorox and Lysol — to lung damage.” [Center for Responsive Politics, [1/29/19](#)]
- **National Vista Document Mirrored Language Used By Melaleuca, Which Was Similarly Based In Idaho.** In January 2019, the Center for Responsive Politics reported: “The document is copyrighted ‘2018 National Vista, Inc.’ Some of the wording in it exactly mirrors that used in a press release released in February by Melaleuca, an Idaho-based company that sells its own cleaning products along with an arsenal of health-related products. (Melaleuca is a genus of trees from which tea tree oil is derived.)” [Center for Responsive Politics, [1/29/19](#)]
- **Melaleuca’s Business Model Was That In Order To Buy Products, You Had To Input Your Phone Number, Whereupon Other Melaleuca Members Would Call You To Encourage You To Sign Up As A Member.** In June 2017, Steve Razinski wrote on I’ve Tried That: “When you reach the Melaleuca website, you can shop for products and even place them into your shopping cart. Prices are not advertised on the storefronts, nor are they displayed when your items are in your shopping cart. Once you attempt to checkout, the site forces you to create an online account, which involves providing your phone number and email. Why would you need to provide your phone number in order to create a shopping account? Because this information is eventually used by other Melaleuca members to contact you and encourage you to sign up with the company as a member.” [I’ve Tried That, blog, [6/7/17](#)]
- **Melaleuca’s Founder, Frank VanderSloot, Was A Billionaire And GOP Mega-Donor.** In June 2017, Forbes reported: “Idaho’s wealthiest person, with an estimated net worth of \$1.9 billion: Frank VanderSloot, the 68-year-old founder and CEO of Melaleuca, which bills itself as ‘the wellness company.’ [...] The other sizable investment VanderSloot has made with his Melaleuca spoils: politics. He is a major donor to Republicans. A national finance co-chair for friend Mitt Romney’s 2008 and 2012 presidential runs, he has been credited with donating and bundling more than \$60 million for the latter campaign.” [Forbes, [6/21/17](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$100,000 From Navab Operating LLC. On October 16, 2018, Navab Operating LLC, based in New York, NY, contributed \$10,000 to Senate Leadership Fund. [FEC, [10/16/18](#)]

- **Only Evidence Of Navab Operating LLC Was A Business Filing In Delaware; Navab Operating LLC Did Not Have Any New York Filings.** The only apparent information available on Navab Operating LLC was a corporate filing in Delaware, showing that it had been incorporated on December 18, 2013. The registered agent was the Corporation Trust Company of Wilmington, DE. Despite listing an address in New York in its contribution, there were no filings for Navab Operating in New York. [Delaware Department of State, Division of Corporations, accessed [2/19/19](#); New York Department of State, Division of Corporations, accessed 2/19/19]

McConnell Did Big Legislative Favors For His Big Donors

TOP HITS

Our system of democracy is failing because Mitch McConnell is serving his donors and special interests. He has wholly embraced the destructive “pay-to-play” politics that has corrupted our politics and browbeating industries into giving him and his allies money in exchange for representation in the Senate.

McConnell has used taxpayer-funded earmarks as rewards for big donors and lobbyists, receiving \$120,000 from the lobbying clients of his former campaign manager while recommending millions in earmarks for those clients.

Over the years, McConnell took nearly \$6 million from the financial industry, and has been their number one ally in Congress. He supported a bankruptcy law backed by big banks and the bailout for major financial firms, calling its passage “one of the finest moments in the history of the Senate.” When Congress was considering legislation to hold big banks accountable, McConnell didn’t turn to the American people for their thoughts—he flew up to New York for fundraisers with hedge fund investors and private equity executives, assuring them that he and his party would have their back.

McConnell is famous for his relationship to the tobacco industry, having received more money from the industry than almost any other member of Congress—as well as gifts like fancy food and concert and football tickets. Tobacco companies guided McConnell behind the scenes, providing him with talking points and writing legislation for him to introduce. McConnell even questioned the science of efforts to curb indoor smoking. In 1998, McConnell helped kill a proposal to curb youth smoking and within months, he had raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from tobacco companies.

McConnell helped block a bill to ban gambling on youth sports, ensuring that only Nevada would be able to continue allowing it, and told other Republicans to oppose it too—lest they lose out on money from the Nevada gambling industry. He went on to further “please his Las Vegas donors” by helping preserve the federal tax deduction for gambling losses. Coincidentally, McConnell has received over \$250,000 from the gambling industry and in 2018, SLF received a whopping \$50 million from casino magnate Sheldon Adelson and his wife.

McConnell Embodies The Destructive “Pay-To-Play” Politics That’s Ruining Our Democracy

McConnell “Pushes The Government” To Help His Donors, Including “Cigarette Makers, Las Vegas Casinos, The Pharmaceutical Industry, Credit Card Lenders, Coal Mine Owners And Others.” In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “A six-month examination of McConnell's career, based on thousands of documents and scores of interviews, shows the nexus between his actions and his donors' agendas. He pushes the government to help cigarette makers, Las Vegas casinos, the pharmaceutical industry, credit card lenders, coal mine owners and others.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

After Receiving \$75,000 From Automakers, McConnell Blocked A Bill That Would Require Automakers To Report Serious Defects To The Government Or Risk Prosecution. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “Also in 2000, responding to fatal crashes involving Ford Explorers with Firestone tires, McCain pushed a safety bill to require automakers to report serious defects to the government or risk prosecution. [...] However, what really happened -- according to congressional records and interviews -- is that the Senate killed McCain's bill by blocking the vote. In its place, the Senate adopted a weaker House bill sponsored by Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., and supported by the auto industry. McCain reluctantly accepted it as a compromise. Critics said Upton's bill did not require automakers to analyze their data for evidence of defects, and it allowed government secrecy to keep the public from learning of safety problems. McConnell took more than \$75,000 from automakers

in the five previous years, according to the Washington-based Center for Responsive Politics. Ford Motor Co.'s Washington advocacy team, which spent more than \$8 million lobbying in 2000, was led by Janet Mullins Grissom, who was McConnell's first Senate campaign manager and chief of staff." [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell Received Thousands Of Dollars From The Head Of A Security Firm And Cosponsored Legislation That Would Allow Them To Access The FBI Fingerprint Database. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: "Guardsmark founder Ira Lipman and his employees have given more than \$66,000 to McConnell's campaigns. McConnell has described Lipman as a friend whom he calls to arrange Tennessee fund-raisers. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, demand for private security boomed. Lipman thought it would be useful for his employees to have access to the FBI fingerprint database, then available only to law-enforcement agencies. McConnell co-sponsored the necessary legislation." [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell's Opposition To Campaign Finance Reform Was "Evidence Of The Senator's Fealty To The Coal Industry And Other Corporate Monoliths That Have An Outsize Voice In Washington Thanks To Their Financial Support Of Republicans." In October 2014, the Washington Post reviewed a biography of McConnell. In their review, they stated: "MacGillis provides an impressive study of McConnell's fierce opposition to campaign finance reform, the animating policy issue of his long career. It's a topic MacGillis taps for evidence of the senator's fealty to the coal industry and other corporate monoliths that have an outsize voice in Washington thanks to their financial support of Republicans." [Washington Post, review, 10/19/14]

McConnell Browbeat Industries Into Giving Him And His Allies Money In Exchange For Representation In The Senate

Former McConnell Opponent: McConnell Went To My Supporters And "Told Them If They Wanted Any Kind Of Representation In The Senate From This Day Forward, They Had Better Pony Up To Him." In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: "Within days of his surprise victory, McConnell launched fund-raising for his 1990 re-election, tapping the very Huddleston donors he had criticized. PACs alone gave him more than \$41,000 before he took office. 'There was a lot of atoning to do,' lobbyist Benjamin Cooper told the Herald-Leader during a McConnell fund-raiser, a month after the 1984 election. In a recent interview, Huddleston said he heard complaints. 'It got back to me pretty quickly,' Huddleston said. 'Mitch went to the people who had supported me and told them that if they wanted any kind of representation in the Senate from this day forward, they had better pony up to him, starting now. Open your checkbooks.'" [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell Received \$120,000 From The Lobbying Clients Of His Former Campaign Manager While Recommending Millions In Government Funding For Those Clients

HEADLINE: "Lobbyist's Close Ties To Senator Pays Off For Them Both – And Clients." [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/23/06](#)]

- **McConnell Received \$120,000 From Lobbying Clients Of His Former Campaign Manager, Hunter Bates.** In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: "The farmers ended up with the perfect lobbyist to present their case: Gordon Hunter Bates, McConnell's recently departed chief of staff and campaign manager, just getting his start in the private sector. They signed up as clients of the brand-new Bates Capitol Group, a small firm Bates opened after he was disqualified from the 2003 race for Kentucky lieutenant governor because he had been living in Virginia. [...] Overall, Bates, who is 38, reports that he has charged about \$2.4 million in fees to clients helped by McConnell -- more than half of the fees he reports for his first three years as a Washington lobbyist. Those clients have given McConnell about \$120,000 in campaign contributions. Most did not give to McConnell until they hired Bates. They declined to say whether Bates, who asks people to give to McConnell, solicited their own donations." [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/23/06](#)]

- **McConnell Had Recommended About \$45 Million In Federal Funds For His Former Manager’s Clients.** In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “From his seat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, McConnell has recommended about \$45 million in federal funds for four of Bates’ clients, interviews and public records show. The senator has filed or rewritten bills for three other clients, loosening pension contribution rules and making it harder to sue businesses.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/23/06](#)]

Many Of Bates’ Clients Both “Received Earmarks Thanks To Sen. McConnell” And “Have Made Substantial Contributions To Sen. McConnell’s Campaigns.” In December 2008, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington published their list of 2008 “Most Embarrassing Re-Elected Members of Congress.” Of McConnell, they wrote: “Gordon Hunter Bates served as Sen. McConnell’s chief legal counsel and later chief of staff from 1997 to 2002. After a 2003 lawsuit ended his bid for Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky, he opened a lobbying firm, Bates Capitol Group LLC (Bates Capitol). Bates Capitol clients include: E-Cavern, Voice for Humanity, Appriss Inc. and Boardpoint LLC, all of which have received earmarks thanks to Sen. McConnell. In addition, the senator rewrote legislation to help another Bates Group client, UPS Inc. All of these companies have made substantial contributions to Sen. McConnell’s campaigns.” [Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, CREW’s 2008 Most Embarrassing Re-Elected Members of Congress, [12/8/08](#)]

McConnell Has Long Been An Ally Of Wall Street, Which Has Given Him Nearly \$6 Million

McConnell Has Received Nearly \$6 Million From The Financial Industry

McConnell Has Received Nearly \$6 Million From The Financial Industry. Since 1989, McConnell has received a total of \$5,969,323 from the securities & investment industry (\$4,605,309) and commercial banking industry (\$1,364,014). [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

McConnell Has Consistently Advocated On Wall Street’s Behalf In The Senate

McConnell Supported A Bankruptcy Law “Backed By The New York Banks That Support Him.” In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “Critics, including anti-poverty groups and labor unions, complain that McConnell has come to represent his affluent donors at the expense of Kentucky, the relatively poor state he is supposed to represent. They point, for example, to his support last year for a tough bankruptcy law, backed by New York banks that support him.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell “Led The Push To Steer The Spigot Of Federal Dollars Into The Vaults Of The Biggest Speculators On Wall Street.” In April 2010, the Nation reported: “In 2008, when it mattered to oppose bank bailouts, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, led the push to steer the spigot of federal dollars into the vaults of the biggest speculators on Wall Street.” [The Nation, [4/19/10](#)]

- **McConnell Called Passage Of The Big Bank Bailout “One Of The Finest Moments In The History Of The Senate.”** The January/February 2011 issue of the Atlantic reported: “A good recent illustration is the Troubled Asset Relief Program (aka ‘the bailout’), which kept the economy from collapse, was supported by both party leaderships and was signed into law by President Bush in October 2008. McConnell called TARP’s passage ‘one of the finest moments in the history of the Senate.’” [The Atlantic, [January/February 2011](#)]

McConnell Publicly Blasted Dodd-Frank After Having Meetings And Fundraisers With Wall Street Executives. In April 2010, McClatchy reported: “Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell this week threw a

rhetorical stick of dynamite into what had been a collegial debate about overhauling the nation's financial regulations, triggering criticism and confusion about what the usually careful Kentucky senator was doing. McConnell says that he was reacting strongly to concerns from Kentucky bankers, as well as to a Democratic effort to shut Republicans out of the process. However, critics say it was no coincidence that his blasts came after he met with Wall Street executives, and that his comments mirrored advice from Republican strategist Frank Luntz on how best to defeat the Democrats' legislation. [...] Critics alleged that there was a connection between a trip that McConnell and Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, the chairman of the Republican Senate campaign committee, took to New York City last week for meetings and fundraisers with Wall Street executives.” [McClatchy, [4/16/10](#)]

- **McConnell Solicited Money From Hedge Fund Investors And Private Equity Executives.** In April 2010, McClatchy reported: “In one instance, the two met with hedge fund investors for about an hour, urged listeners to understand the GOP position on financial overhaul — and asked them to consider donating money. The senators also raised money at KKR, a major private equity firm.” [McClatchy, [4/16/10](#)]
- **During The Trip, McConnell Explained How Financial Executives “Might Help Prevent Some Of [Dodd-Frank’s] Least Market-Friendly Aspects From Becoming Law By Electing More Republicans.”** In April 2010, Fox Business reported: “As a financial reform bill starts to take shape in Washington, two key lawmakers came to New York City last week to explain what it means for Wall Street, and how financial executives might help prevent some of its least market-friendly aspects from becoming law by electing more Republicans, FOX Business Network has learned.” [Fox Business, [4/12/10](#)]

McConnell Was One Of The Tobacco Industry’s Favorite Members Of Congress

McConnell Has Received More Money From The Tobacco Industry Than Nearly Any Other Member Of Congress

McConnell Has Received Over \$640,000 From The Tobacco Industry. Since 1990, McConnell has received a total of \$640,075 from PACs and employees of the tobacco industry. [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

- **Altria Group Was One Of McConnell’s Top Donors, Giving Him Over \$161,000.** Since 1989, McConnell has received \$161,150 from employees and PACs of Altria Group, making them his 10th biggest donor. [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

McConnell Was The Second Biggest Recipient Of Tobacco Money In All Of Congress. From 1990 through 2018, McConnell was the second biggest recipient of money from the tobacco industry in both the House and Senate, having received \$640,075. Only Richard Burr of North Carolina had received more, having received \$695,185. [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

McConnell Pushed Pro-Tobacco Legislation That Was Rewarded By His Big Donors

Tobacco Companies “Guided McConnell Behind The Scenes,” Providing Him With Talking Points He Later Used To Criticize Anti-Smoking Rules. In October 2014, the Nation reported: “The close working relationship between McConnell and tobacco firms is spelled out in detail as a result of litigation that forced the disclosure of thousands of company documents. E-mails and letters show that representatives of tobacco firms R.J. Reynolds and Philip Morris guided McConnell behind the scenes, providing the senator with talking points that he later used to criticize the FDA for proposing anti-smoking rules.” [The Nation, [10/21/14](#)]

McConnell Had A “Close Working Relationship Behind The Scenes” With The Tobacco Industry And Wrote Legislation At Their Direction. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “They instructed him on smoking-related legislation. He offered to amend bills on the Senate floor at their direction. During the 1990s, when he attacked the Food and Drug Administration for its anti-smoking efforts, he followed talking points they fed him. Their attorneys helped draft a bill he filed to protect their companies from lawsuits, as well as his correspondence to the White House to oppose federal smoking-prevention programs.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

- **In 1998, McConnell Helped Kill A Proposal To Curb Youth Smoking; Within Months, McConnell Raised Hundreds Of Thousands Of Dollars From Tobacco Companies.** In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “In 1998, McConnell helped to kill a proposal to curb youth smoking. About four months later, he called lobbyists at R.J. Reynolds Co. and asked for \$200,000 in corporate “soft money” that he could pass to Republican senators in elections. In an e-mail exchange, the lobbyists settled on ‘doing an additional 100,000 to him immediately and then seeing what we have left at end of next week.’ The \$200,000 was more than their company could swallow at once. ‘Are you feeling a choking sensation?’ Tommy Payne, vice president of external relations, asked John Fish, senior director of federal government affairs, in the final e-mail. Three months later, rival Philip Morris Cos. sent McConnell \$150,000 to distribute to GOP Senate campaigns and \$100,000 for his pet non-profit program, the McConnell Center for Political Leadership at the University of Louisville, according to industry and college documents.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

In 2003 And 2004, McConnell Cosponsored A Proposal To End Federal Tobacco Quotas, A Proposal Described As A “Sweetheart Deal For Philip Morris,” Which Was Owned By Altria. In June 2010, the Center for Public Integrity reported: “In 2003 and 2004, McConnell co-sponsored a proposal to end federal tobacco quotas and offer a buyout for “quota holders, tobacco producers, and tobacco-dependent communities.” A report by Boston University public health professor Dr. Michael Siegel blasted the measure as a ‘sweetheart deal for Philip Morris.’ Though the final version excluded some Altria-backed provisions, a company spokesman praised the remainder of the bill. Altria, through a spokeswoman, declined to comment for this story.” [Center for Public Integrity, [6/8/10](#)]

McConnell Questioned The Science Behind Efforts To Curb Indoor Smoking. In October 2014, the Nation reported: “But earlier in his career, when McConnell played a pivotal role on behalf of the tobacco industry against increasing government regulation and taxes, the Republican leader believed he had enough scientific knowledge to question public-health officials. ‘There clearly is insufficient science or logic to justify this extreme action,’ McConnell said in 1993, at the time enraged that the government had proposed a ban on smoking in federal buildings. Starting in the 1980s when he joined the US Senate, McConnell sent multiple letters to regulators to question the science behind efforts to curb indoor smoking. In 1995, citing a CRS report, McConnell joined with three other senators to call into question the claim that indoor cigarette smoking causes ‘increased cancer risk.’” [The Nation, [10/21/14](#)]

McConnell “Threatened To Derail Negotiations On The Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Deal In Support Of Tobacco.” In July 2017, the Guardian reported: “The Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, who has had a high-profile role in developing health reform proposals, has long cast votes that favor tobacco interests. McConnell once threatened to derail negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal in support of tobacco. McConnell is from Kentucky, one of the top tobacco-growing states in the country. In January, his former chief of staff was hired by Altria.” [The Guardian, [7/13/17](#)]

Tobacco Industry Also Rewarded McConnell And His Staff With Physical Gifts Like A “Beautiful Ham” And Tickets To Performances And Football Games

McConnell Received A “Beautiful Ham” From The Tobacco Institute; Asked Them To Let Them Know “If I May Ever Be Of Assistance To You.” In December 1988, McConnell sent a letter to Ralph Vinovich, the vice

president for legislative affairs at the Tobacco Institute. McConnell wrote: “Thank you so much for sending me the beautiful ham. I know I am going to enjoy it. It was so thoughtful of you to remember me during the holiday season, and I appreciate your kindness. Please let me know if I may ever be of assistance to you.” [University of California San Francisco, Truth Tobacco Industry Documents, letter from Mitch McConnell to Ralph Vinovich, [12/16/88](#)]

The Tobacco Institute Also Gifted McConnell And His Staff With Candy, Fruit, And Tickets To Concerts, Theater Performances And Football Games. In October 2014, the Nation reported: “Other letters thank tobacco reps for their gifts of ‘delicious pecan candies,’ ‘luscious citrus fruit,’ Ringo Starr tickets and other tickets to various theater performances and football games.” [The Nation, [10/21/14](#)]

McConnell Has Received Massive Amounts Of Money From The Gambling Industry And Has Done Their Bidding In Congress

McConnell Has Received Over \$250,000 From Gambling Interests And His Super PAC SLF Has Received Millions From Casino Magnate Sheldon Adelson

McConnell Has Received Over \$250,000 From The Gaming/Casino Industry. Since 1990, McConnell has received a total of \$250,340 from the casino and gambling industries. [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

In 2018, SLF Received \$50 Million From Casino Magnate Sheldon Adelson And His Wife. From July to September 2018, Sheldon Adelson and his wife, Miriam, contributed a total of \$50 million to the Senate Leadership Fund. Adelson was the CEO of Las Vegas Sands. [FEC, accessed 2/15/19; Washington Post, [9/28/16](#)]

McConnell Helped The Gambling Industry By Allowing Betting On Youth Sports And Preserving The Federal Tax Deduction For Gambling Losses

McConnell Helped Block A Bill To Ban Gambling On Youth Sports, Legal Only In Nevada; Told Other Republican Senators That It Would Hurt Their Fundraising From Gambling Industry In Nevada. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “In 2000, McCain pushed a bill to outlaw gambling on college sports, which is legal only in Nevada. [...] Doris Dixon, who lobbied the Senate for the bill, said McConnell was part of the effort to keep it from getting a floor vote. Dixon was then director of federal relations for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. She said McConnell and his aides refused even to meet with her side. ‘Sen. McConnell was instrumental in blocking it from going forward,’ Dixon said. ‘He was talking to other Republican senators about the problems it would pose for him as chairman of their fund-raising committee, which was taking money from Nevada.’” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell “Had Pleased His Las Vegas Donors Earlier” By Helping Preserve The Federal Tax Deduction For Gambling Losses. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “McConnell had pleased his Las Vegas donors earlier by persuading Sen. Dan Coats, R-Ind., to withdraw an amendment that would have ended the federal tax deduction for gambling losses. The deduction costs the government millions. Coats wanted it replaced with a deduction for Americans who support scholarship programs for poor children. But the gambling industry said the deduction was crucial for its biggest bettors.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, [10/15/06](#)]

McConnell Has Taken Hundreds Of Thousands Of Dollars From The Pharmaceutical Industry And Promoted Their Interests In Congress

McConnell Has Taken Over \$712,000 From The Pharmaceutical Industry

McConnell Has Received Over \$712,000 From The Pharmaceutical Industry. Over his career, McConnell has received \$712,127 in campaign contributions from the pharmaceutical industry. [Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

McConnell Has Consistently Opposed Allowing Medicare To Negotiate For Cheaper Drug Prices

McConnell Helped Defeat A Plan To Allow Medicare To Negotiate For Cheaper Drug Prices. In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “The pharmaceutical industry needed a friendly senator in 1999, and it was willing to talk money. Senate Democrats were pushing universal prescription drug coverage for senior citizens -- including a provision to let Medicare negotiate for cheaper prices. Drug companies wanted to stop them. [...] When the Democratic drug plan came up for a vote in 2000, McConnell and other Republican senators defeated it, 53 to 44.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, 10/15/06]

As Senate Majority Whip, McConnell Worked To Block Efforts To Allow Price Controls On Prescription Drugs. In October 2015, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “You can, and they did, countered Dave Lemmon, spokesman for Families USA, a non-profit group in Washington that advocates affordable health care. In 2003, Lemmon said, when Republicans passed their own Medicare drug bill, it met the pharmaceutical industry's wishes. There were no price controls. Although other federal agencies are expected to negotiate for cheaper drug prices, the 2003 law forbids Medicare from doing so. As Senate majority whip, McConnell joined other Senate Republican leaders who ‘fought tooth-and-nail, along with PhRMA’ to block last-minute efforts to allow price controls, Lemmon said.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, 10/15/06]

As Senate Minority Leader, McConnell Voted To Block A Measure That Would Allow Medicare To Negotiate Lower Drug Prices. In April 2007, McConnell voted against a bill that would have allowed – not required – Medicare to negotiate with drug companies. The proposal would have stricken language in the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act that prohibits the HHS Secretary from participating in price negotiations for the drug benefit. [S. 3, Vote #132, [4/18/07](#); Los Angeles Times, 4/19/07; New York Times, 4/19/07]

- **McConnell Celebrated Vote To Block Price Negotiation; Said It Would Help Seniors.** In April 2007, the Hill reported: “Senate Republicans Wednesday blocked legislation that would allow the government to negotiate drug prices for the Medicare prescription drug benefit. Democrats fell four votes short of the required 60 to invoke cloture. [...] Republicans hailed the vote as a victory for seniors. ‘Today the Senate protected healthcare access for tens of millions of seniors as well as price negotiations to ensure they pay the least amount of money for the prescription drugs they need,’ Senate Minority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) (R-Ky.) said.” [The Hill, [4/18/07](#)]

In Once Instance, After McConnell Helped Block A Price Negotiation Bill, The Drug Industry Gave Millions To The NRSC—Which McConnell Chaired At The Time

After McConnell And Republicans Voted Against Allowing Medicare To Negotiate For Cheaper Drug Prices, The Pharmaceutical Industry Donated \$3.3 Million To The NRSC. In In October 2006, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported: “When the Democratic drug plan came up for a vote in 2000, McConnell and other Republican senators defeated it, 53 to 44. The pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry dug deep and gave the NRSC \$3.3 million for the 2000 elections, twice what it gave the Senate Democrats' committee, according to an analysis by the Center for Responsive Politics. PhRMA alone gave the NRSC \$125,250, three times what it gave the NRSC in 1998.” [Lexington Herald-Leader, 10/15/06]

- **McConnell Was Chair Of The NRSC That Year.** McConnell was chair of the NRSC from 1997 through 2001. [U.S. Senate, Senatorial Campaign Committee Chairs, accessed [4/16/19](#)]

The First Quarter Of 2019 Showed Just How Much The Drug Industry—including Companies Who Have Been Excoriated For Hiking Insulin Prices—Appreciated McConnell

In The First Quarter Of 2019, McConnell Took Over \$90,000 From The Pharmaceutical Industry. From January through March 2019, McConnell received \$90,150 from the pharmaceutical industry, including from several company executives, industry groups, and the PACs of companies such as Abbott Labs, AbbVie, Allergan, Amgen, Celgene, Emergent Biosolutions, Gilead Sciences, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Mylan, Novartis and Sanofi. [FEC, accessed 4/23/19]

Ten Eli Lilly Executives Donated \$40,400 To McConnell Within One Month Of Each Other, With McConnell Receiving The Most On The Same Day. Between March 4 and March 31, 2019, ten executives of Eli Lilly & Co. contributed a total of \$40,000. Fourteen contributions, amounting to \$34,800 were received by the campaign on March 31. [FEC, accessed 4/23/19]

NAME	EMPLOYER	OCCUPATION	DATE	AMOUNT
REID, WILLIAM	ELI LILLY & COMPANY	CORPORATE AFFAIRS	3/4/19 0:00	250
LECHLEITER, JOHN MR.	ELI LILLY & CO.	COO	3/13/19 0:00	2800
LECHLEITER, JOHN MR.	ELI LILLY & CO.	COO	3/13/19 0:00	2800
CONTERNO, ENRIQUE	ELI LILLY	VICE PRESIDENT	3/31/19 0:00	2800
CONTERNO, ENRIQUE	ELI LILLY	VICE PRESIDENT	3/31/19 0:00	2800
HARRINGTON, MICHAEL	ELI LILLY	ATTORNEY	3/31/19 0:00	2800
HARRINGTON, MICHAEL	ELI LILLY	ATTORNEY	3/31/19 0:00	2800
SMILEY, JOSHUA	ELI LILLY	FINANCE	3/31/19 0:00	2800
SMILEY, JOSHUA	ELI LILLY	FINANCE	3/31/19 0:00	2800
ZULUETA, ALFONSO	ELI LILLY	VICE PRESIDENT	3/31/19 0:00	2800
ZULUETA, ALFONSO	ELI LILLY	VICE PRESIDENT	3/31/19 0:00	2200
PUSEY, LEIGH ANN	ELI LILLY & CO	SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT	3/31/19 0:00	2200
PUSEY, LEIGH ANN	ELI LILLY & CO	SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT	3/31/19 0:00	2800
SHAH, AARTI	ELI LILLY & CO	MANAGEMENT	3/31/19 0:00	1000
FRY, STEPHEN	ELI LILLY & COMPANY	SVP-HUMAN RESOURCES & DIVERSITY	3/31/19 0:00	2200
FRY, STEPHEN	ELI LILLY & COMPANY	SVP-HUMAN RESOURCES & DIVERSITY	3/31/19 0:00	2800
WHITE, ANNE	ELI LILLY & COMPANY	LEADERSHIP	3/31/19 0:00	2000

[FEC, accessed 4/25/19]

- **The Price Of Eli Lilly’s Insulin Rose 585% Between 2001 And 2015.** In March 2019, Reuters reported: “The price of Lilly’s Humalog rose from \$35 to \$234 per dose between 2001 and 2015, a 585 percent increase, the senators, Republican Chuck Grassley and Democrat Ron Wyden, had said.” [Reuters, [3/4/19](#)]
- **Minnesota Sued Eli Lilly For “Deceptive And Misleading” Price Increases For Insulin.** In October 2018, the Hill reported: “The Minnesota attorney general on Tuesday filed a lawsuit against three major pharmaceutical companies for ‘deceptive and misleading’ price increases for insulin to treat diabetes. ‘Insulin is a life-or-death drug for people with diabetes,’ Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson (D) said in a statement. ‘Many people can’t afford the price hikes but can’t afford to stop taking the medication either.’ The lawsuit was filed against the country’s three major makers of insulin: Sanofi-Aventis, Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly and Co.” [The Hill, [10/16/18](#)]

McConnell Received \$2,500 From Sanofi In The First Quarter Of 2019. On March 31, 2019, McConnell received \$2,500 from Sanofi U.S. Services Inc. Employees PAC. [FEC, [3/31/19](#)]

- **Sanofi Made “One Of The Highest Priced Brands Of Insulin.”** In February 2019, NPR reported: “‘We want these rebates, which lower net prices, to benefit patients,’ said Olivier Brandicourt, CEO of Sanofi, which makes Lantus, one of the highest priced brands of insulin, whose list price has risen from \$244 to \$431 since 2013, according to the committee.” [NPR, [2/26/19](#)]
- **The Price Of Sanofi’s Product Rose From \$244 To \$431 Since 2013.** In February 2019, NPR reported: “‘We want these rebates, which lower net prices, to benefit patients,’ said Olivier Brandicourt, CEO of Sanofi, which makes Lantus, one of the highest priced brands of insulin, whose list price has risen from \$244 to \$431 since 2013, according to the committee.” [NPR, [2/26/19](#)]
- **Sanofi Raised Insulin Prices In 2019 “Despite Political Pressure.”** In January 2019, the Financial Times reported: “European drugmakers Sanofi and Novo Nordisk have raised prices of insulin in the US, despite political pressure as diabetics protest and lobby lawmakers over the rising cost of the essential medicine. Sanofi increased the price of its three main insulin brands by between 4.4 per cent and 5.2 per cent last week, while Novo Nordisk increased the price of its insulin products by just under 5 per cent on Tuesday.” [Financial Times, [1/10/19](#)]

Campaign Finance

Corporate PAC Donations

McConnell Has Taken Nearly \$8 Million From Corporate PACs. Since 2007, McConnell has received \$7,885,064 from corporate PACs. [Maplight, Corporate PAC Contribution Search, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

Top Donors

McConnell Top Donors - Career			
Contributor	Total	Individuals	PACs
Blackstone Group	\$319,600	\$273,600	\$46,000
Kindred Healthcare	\$252,150	\$212,150	\$40,000
Humana Inc.	\$215,852	\$181,977	\$33,875
Brown-Forman Corp	\$184,250	\$135,750	\$48,500
Goldman Sachs	\$183,025	\$155,525	\$27,500
Citigroup Inc.	\$175,350	\$139,850	\$35,500
Peabody Energy	\$173,500	\$136,400	\$37,100
JPMorgan Chase & Co	\$168,050	\$135,050	\$33,000
Elliott Management	\$166,500	\$166,500	\$0
Altria Group	\$161,150	\$111,150	\$50,000

[Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]

Top Industries

McConnell Top Industries - Career	
Industry	Total
Securities & Investment	\$4,605,309
Lawyers/Law Firms	\$2,752,983
Retired	\$2,728,999
Health Professionals	\$2,604,825
Real Estate	\$2,378,971
Insurance	\$2,326,282
Oil & Gas	\$2,180,024
Lobbyists	\$1,790,985
Pro-Israel	\$1,57,321
Commercial Banks	\$1,364,014

[Center for Responsive Politics, accessed [5/7/19](#)]