

South Carolina Democratic candidate Jaime Harrison raises record \$57 million in third quarter

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Democrat Jaime Harrison has shattered the record for fundraising in a single quarter after raising \$57 million in his challenge for Lindsey Graham's South Carolina Senate seat. The previous record was set by Beto O'Rourke, who raised \$38.1 million between July and September of 2018, when he was running in Texas against Republican Ted Cruz.

South Carolina, however, is a much smaller state, with only 5.2 million people, compared to 29 million in Texas. On a per capita basis, Harrison's campaign haul, at \$11 for every man, woman and child in his state, is 10 times what O'Rourke raised two years ago.

Harrison's fundraising has also been fueled by popular hostility to Graham's role as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which puts him front and center in the confirmation of ultraright Judge Amy Coney Barrett, nominated by Trump to replace liberal Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the U.S. Supreme Court. Ginsburg died last month after a protracted battle with pancreatic cancer.

Besides his incredible fundraising, Harrison has spent an obscene amount on political advertisements. Compared to Graham's \$19 million, he has spent \$52 million on TV and digital ads. This vast financing was made possible by 1.5 million donations received between July and September 30, averaging \$37.

The money boom for Harrison began when he began to close the gap with Graham in the polls and attract media attention as a credible challenger against the three-term Republican. The influx of funds has allowed him to pull into a tie in the most recent polls and to dominate the airwaves in the state.

As a part of a broader trend across the country, Democratic Senate candidates have been outraising

their Republican counterparts. Democratic candidates in Arizona and Montana have both raised over \$60 million this year, with Republicans raising between \$40 and \$50 million. In Iowa and North Carolina, Democrats have raised \$87 million and \$116 million respectively, compared to the Republican fundraising of \$66 million and \$87 million.

The most immediate cause of this influx of cash was the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Following her death, the Democratic Party fundraising site ActBlue reported \$150 million worth of donations to Democratic candidates between just September 18 and 21.

The most telling aspect of Harrison's promotion by the Democratic Party establishment has been the whitewashing of his long career as a lobbyist for large corporations. Vox and the Huffington Post scrutinized his career when he ran for Democratic National Committee chair in 2017, but they have remained largely silent this campaign season. Media coverage has typically focused on Harrison's time as the director of floor operations to South Carolina Senator Jim Clyburn, as well as his time working as executive director of the House Democratic Caucus and the vice chair of the South Carolina Democratic Party.

But this is only a part of Harrison's career. Between 2006 and 2016, he worked as a lobbyist for the Podesta Group, a major lobbying firm headed by Tony Podesta, whose brother John was Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman. The Podesta Group became defunct in 2017 after the Department of Justice began investigating it in connection with its work with former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort in Ukraine.

While working at the Podesta Group, Harrison

represented some of the largest corporations in the US. His resume includes Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Berkshire Hathaway, the American Association for Clean Coal Electricity, Walmart, Boeing, General Motors, Lockheed Martin, Google, Nestle, British Petroleum and many more. Following this stint, Harrison has been able to amass assets worth \$3.45 million, according to his Senate Financial Disclosure.

Harrison defends his work as a lobbyist, saying that he needed to take care of his family and pay off his \$160,000 student loan debt, a plea for sympathy that rings false, given that he graduated with a Yale law degree which paved his way to the offices of Congressman Jim Clyburn.

He has also attempted to whitewash his clients as a lobbyist. When he represented the coal industry, he stated that he was only seeking “incentives for clean coal technology” and to find “something for people who invested money in a corporation that’s going to be shuttered [due to new environmental regulations].” In reality, he sought to ensure that the coal industry’s investors would be reimbursed for as long as possible in an industry that is slowly dying.

Harrison also worked for several tobacco corporations, lobbying to oppose federal regulations that would require stricter warnings of the dangers of tobacco use. Again, he justified this cynically, using the age-old excuse that regulations would harm “smaller mom-and-pop-type operations,” despite 85 percent of all tobacco being produced by three corporations.

If Harrison wins the South Carolina Senate seat this November, he will likely be hailed by the Democratic Party and its pseudoleft appendages as the hero who defeated Lindsey Graham and as a beacon of diversity on Capitol Hill.

The working class should not forget his class position, though. Harrison is a career-long servant of the ruling class, which has profited immensely from defending some of the most reprehensible industries on the planet. A politician who has been paid for by the fossil fuel companies, tobacco producers and arms manufacturers cannot possibly represent the interests of the working class.

Harrison’s campaign website says it clearly: “He’ll work with anybody, regardless of party,” and he has “dedicated his life to creating opportunity for others.” This is certainly true. Harrison has worked with both

parties to create opportunities for the ruling class. In that, he perfectly embodies the class role of the Democratic Party.



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