

Democratic Party spent \$44 million to promote pro-Trump fascists in Republican primaries

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The Democratic Party has spent tens of millions of dollars this election cycle to promote far-right candidates endorsed by Donald Trump in Republican primary elections.

According to the campaign finance tracker Open Secrets, Democratic Party -aligned political action committees (PACs), political groups and nonprofits have spent at least \$44 million on political ads designed to boost Trump-endorsed promoters of the ex-president's "stolen election" lie and fascist politics in primary contests across the country for the US House and Senate, as well as for top positions in state governments.

In a number of cases, the Democratic Party has spent significantly more on ads for these candidates than the candidates themselves. Typically, the ads present the candidates as "too close to Trump," an ostensible criticism that is actually intended to make them more attractive to Republican primary voters.

The cynical calculation behind this strategy is that in the targeted states, Trump clones will be easier to beat in the November general election than less extreme Republican primary contestants.

Much of the money has come from PACs like the House Majority PAC, which has close ties to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Its distribution for Republican primary Congressional races has been sanctioned and coordinated by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Many of the Republican candidates aided by the Democratic ads have long histories of extreme far-right views, while their more traditional Republican rivals have included the few incumbents who either voted to impeach Trump or supported investigations into the January 6, 2021 insurrection.

Among the Republicans boosted by the Democratic ads are known coup plotters, including a number of candidates who were present at the January 6 coup attempt.

Illinois

One of the far-right candidates aided by Democratic ad money is Illinois State Senator Darren Bailey. Bailey has raised around \$12 million for his campaign for Illinois governor. But his victory in the Republican primary was secured by the \$35 million spent on campaign ads paid for by the incumbent Democratic Governor J.B. Pritzker and the Democratic Governors Association.

This vast sum is believed to be the most ever spent to intervene in another party's primary and has helped put the Illinois gubernatorial election on track to become the most expensive non-presidential election in US history.

The ads attacked Bailey's more moderate opponent Richard Irvin,

mayor of Aurora, Illinois, and promoted Bailey. Irvin had been leading in the polls up until May but fell to just 18.6 percent of the vote, while Bailey secured the nomination with 55.2 percent.

Bailey is a textbook Trump Republican. Beginning his political career in 2018, he rose to notoriety by proposing a bill that would allow the rural parts of the state to break away from Chicago.

He adopted an aggressive stance against any attempts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. In April 2020, he sued Governor Pritzker over his stay-at-home order, and in May he was sanctioned by the State Senate for refusing to wear a mask during sessions. His campaign has been centered on "a complete return to normalcy" and working to "fully reopen our economy and schools."

He has repeatedly refused to acknowledge the victory of Joe Biden in the 2020 election, which earned him Trump's endorsement, and is staunchly anti-abortion, saying in a Facebook video in 2017 that "the attempted extermination of the Jews of World War II doesn't even compare on a shadow of the life that has been lost with abortion since its legalization."

Pennsylvania

In the race for Pennsylvania governor, Democratic Attorney General and gubernatorial candidate Josh Shapiro spent \$840,000 on TV ads aimed at boosting Republican candidate Doug Mastriano in the primaries, double the amount Mastriano spent on ads for his own campaign.

Mastriano won the primary with 43 percent of the vote and a 23 percent lead over the second-place finisher.

Shapiro's ads called Mastriano one of "Trump's strongest supporters." This is accurate, given that Mastriano bused Trump supporters to the US Capitol for the January 6 coup attempt and was videoed pushing past police barricades to join the crowd attacking Congress.

A retired army colonel who served in the Military Intelligence Corps and NATO Land Headquarters, Mastriano entered politics in 2018 running for Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District. On the campaign trail he argued that same sex marriage should be made illegal, and recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program should be deported.

After being elected as a state senator in 2019, Mastriano made opposition to COVID-19 mitigation measures a centerpiece of his platform. Most significant is his support for Trump's false claims of election fraud and his attempts to overturn the 2020 election. At his request, the Republican Party's Majority Policy Committee of the Pennsylvania Senate held a public meeting on November 25, 2020 on

the unsubstantiated claims of fraud. Trump's legal team was present, and the president joined by telephone to urge action by the State Senate to reverse the election results. On November 27, Mastriano and three other state senators announced they would submit a bill that would allow the state legislature to ignore the popular vote and appoint its own slate of delegates to the Electoral College Convention.

At Trump's rally last week in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, Mastriano invoked the fascist QAnon slogan of "the Storm," the bloody day of reckoning when the "godless" will be arrested and the military will take power.

Michigan

Peter Meijer, the incumbent Republican from Michigan's 3rd Congressional District, was beaten by the pro-Trump John Gibbs after Democratic campaign financiers spent \$425,000 to help him win the nomination.

Gibbs is much like other pro-Trump Republicans. He denies that Biden won the 2020 election, claiming it was "mathematically impossible."

Once again, the Democrats spent more supporting a Republican candidate than the candidate raised on his own. Meijer was one of the few Republicans who voted to impeach Donald Trump over his attempted coup.

Maryland

In Maryland, the Democratic Governors Association spent \$1 million on TV ads to boost Dan Cox, another far-right candidate who denies Biden's election victory and paid to bus insurrectionists to the rally ahead of the January 6 assault on the Capitol building.

Cox won the Republican primary with 52 percent of the vote, defeating his more moderate competitor Kelly Schulz.

California

In some states, the Democrats' effort to elect far-right pro-Trump Republicans in the primaries did not succeed. In California, the Democrats spent \$110,000 to promote Chris Mathys, a rabid anticommunist, whose campaign website is covered with pledges to do "everything in my power to defeat Congressman David Valadao, who voted to impeach President Donald Trump!" He declared, "Together we will be the generation that defeats socialism and stops their assault on our religious beliefs."

Valadao is another of the few congressional Republicans who opposed Trump's coup attempt. Despite the intervention of the Democrats against him, Valadao won with 25 percent of the vote to Mathys' 23 percent.

Colorado

Colorado, the home of fascists like Lauren Boebert, saw a massive influx of federal campaign money from the Democratic Party. An estimated \$7 million was spent on Republican primaries by the Democrats, roughly \$4 million more than the candidates raised themselves.

Three far-right candidates were promoted, but none of them won. The losses may be explained by Colorado's open primary system, where voters do not need to be registered with a particular political party to cast a vote for a primary candidate. Because of this, the Democratic strategy may have backfired and encouraged more liberal and unaffiliated voters to vote for the "moderate" Republicans with the goal of preventing the far-right candidates from winning.

The Democrats ran ads designed to promote Ron Hanks, Greg Lopez and Lori Saine. Hanks is the most notable among them for his well documented history as a loyal Trump servant and far-right quack. Elected to the Colorado House of Representatives in 2020, he quickly

backed Trump's false claims of voter fraud. In June of 2021, he attended the Arizona vote audit, along with Mastriano.

In July 2021, he attended a conference hosted by fascist MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, where leaked information from Colorado voting machines was displayed, and conspiracy theories of voter machine fraud were discussed.

The information is believed to have been leaked by Republican Mesa County election official Tina Peters, who was indicted on seven felony charges of tampering with election material and fraud. Hanks called her a "gold star mom and public servant" and claimed that there was no evidence she did anything wrong.

Democratic Party funding to promote these candidates is further proof that this party of Wall Street and war has no answer to the threat of fascism. Presented with a fascist demagogue in Trump and a conspiratorial ring of coup plotters in the Republican Party, the response of the Democratic Party is to promote the fascist candidates, not oppose them. The Democratic Party has long abandoned any commitment to the defense of democratic rights.

When the US Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade*, the Democrats launched a campaign to raise funds, claiming that only a victory for the Democrats in the mid-terms would save abortion rights. This is where that money has gone--to anti-abortion fanatics. Millions of dollars have been funneled into promoting and normalizing fascist candidates who will now have a national stage to spew their filth.

The Democratic Party has no reforms to offer, only war, inflation, low wages, brutal exploitation and ever greater social inequality. Those workers disgusted by the hypocrisy and lies of the Democrats and their allies in the hated trade union apparatus and therefore vulnerable to the anti-establishment pretensions of Trump are essentially ceded by the Democrats to the fascist billionaire.

On the basis of racial and identity politics, the Democrats seek on the one hand to divide the working class and on the other to shore up support within privileged layers of the middle class for their policies of war. Their electoral strategy remains focused on winning "mainstream" Republicans, independents and well-off voters in the suburbs.

The working class as a whole is entirely disenfranchised by the two-party system of American capitalism. But the working class in the US is once again entering into massive class battles as part of a global resurgence of the class struggle driven by the collapse of living standards.

The fight against fascism falls to the working class. It is the only social force capable of defeating fascism by putting an end to its source in the crisis-ridden and historically outmoded capitalist profit system.



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