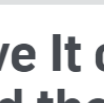


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Believe It or Not: Who are the groups behind the ads?

As part of our ongoing Decision 2018 coverage, we have compiled background information on every group currently advertising on our airwaves to give you better context for the information you're seeing.

What is a candidate committee?

This is the traditional way for politicians to pay for a campaign. The candidate controls the funds, and you can recognize their on-air advertising because it includes the tagline, "I'm [candidate], and I approve this message." No individual or political action committee can contribute more than \$5,400 to a candidate committee in any election cycle - up to \$2,700 for the primary and up to \$2,700 for the general election. Contributions from corporations, labor unions and foreign nationals are banned.

What is a PAC?

Traditional political action committees, or PACs, are the way that businesses get around the donation restrictions put on candidate committees. **According to the Center for Public Integrity**, a nonprofit, nonpartisan investigative news organization based in Washington, D.C., "Employees of a particular company can make contributions of up to \$5,000 to the PAC. And the PAC, often controlled by a corporate lobbyist, can make contributions to candidates of \$5,000. There are other non-business PACs, too."

PACs that have advertised on WTHR this election cycle as of Nov. 1, 2018:

National Association of Realtors PAC

POLITICAL LEANING: Non-partisan**DIRECTOR:** Lauren Facemire**YEAR FOUNDED:** 1969**CLASSIFICATION:** PAC**MISSION:** protect and promote the real estate industry

BACKGROUND: The National Association of Realtors' PAC is politically active at all levels of government - federal, state and local. Billing itself as "the most bipartisan major PAC in the country," they'd spent \$1.3 million supporting candidates of each party nationwide as of mid-October, **according to the Center for Responsive Politics**. They base their decisions on candidates' support of real estate issues.

ADS ON WTHR: The NAR's PAC has run one ad on WTHR so far, supporting Sen. Joe Donnelly.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

NRA Political Victory Fund

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**CHAIRMAN:** Chris Cox**YEAR FOUNDED:** 1976**CLASSIFICATION:** PAC**MISSION:** challenge gun-control candidates and support gun-rights candidates

BACKGROUND: The National Rifle Association is considered one of the most influential lobbying groups in Washington today. As the NRA's political and lobbying arm, NRA-PVF ranks politicians and political candidates based on voting records, public statements and their responses to their questionnaire regarding gun control vs. gun rights. Ronald Reagan was the first presidential candidate the NRA ever endorsed.

ADS ON WTHR: NRA-PVF has run one ad on WTHR so far, criticizing Sen. Joe Donnelly's vote against Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

What is a Super PAC?

Super PACs have been allowed ever since the Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court that extended First Amendment free speech rights to nonprofit corporations, for-profit corporations, labor unions and other associations. Technically known as independent expenditure-only committees, Super PACs don't have to follow some of the limitations placed on traditional PACs. For example, a Super PAC can raise an unlimited amount of money from any source and spend as much as it wants to overtly campaign for or against a candidate. However, a Super PAC is not allowed to contribute directly to a candidate or political party, or to coordinate with a candidate's campaign.

Super PACs are required to report their donors to the Federal Election Commission on a monthly or semiannual basis in years without a federal election, and monthly in years with federal elections. However, they are allowed to accept donations from "dark money" nonprofits, which are not required to report their donors.

As of Nov. 1, more than 2,200 groups organized as super PACs have reported **total receipts of more than \$1.3 billion** and total independent expenditures of more than \$775 million in the 2018 cycle, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

Super PACs that have advertised on WTHR this election cycle:

America First Action

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**PRESIDENT:** Brian O. Walsh**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2017**CLASSIFICATION:** Super PAC**MISSION:** support President Donald Trump's agenda and pro-Trump candidates

BACKGROUND: America First Action has ties with **America First Policies**, a pro-Trump 501(c)(4) organization. In fact, Brian O. Walsh serves as president of both, **according to his bio**. Former White House press secretary Sean Spicer joined as a spokesperson and senior advisor in June 2018.

ADS ON WTHR: AIA has run one ad on WTHR so far, criticizing Sen. Joe Donnelly's business practices.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

Senate Leadership Fund

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**PRESIDENT & CEO:** Steven Law, Sen. Mitch McConnell's chief of staff from 1991 to 1997**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2015**CLASSIFICATION:** Super PAC**MISSION:** support a Republican majority in the U.S. Senate

BACKGROUND: An offshoot of Karl Rove's American Crossroads "empire," Senate Leadership Fund works alongside its affiliate, One Nation, to defend Republican-held Senate seats. As such, One Nation is one of its largest donors along with Las Vegas-based billionaire Sheldon Adelson, hedge fund manager Paul Singer and private equity manager Stephen Schwarzman.

ADS ON WTHR: They have run five ads on WTHR criticizing Sen. Joe Donnelly, four for his family's business outsourcing jobs to Mexico and the other for missing Senate Aging Committee meetings.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

Senate Majority PAC

POLITICAL LEANING: Left-wing**PRIMARY INDIANA DONORS:** Deborah Simon and Cindy Simon Skodt**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2011**CLASSIFICATION:** Super PAC**MISSION:** electing Democrats to the U.S. Senate

BACKGROUND: Senate Majority PAC (SMP) was formed in response to 2010's Citizen United decision. SMP credits that decision and the resulting spending blitz by conservative organizations for the wave of Republican victories in the 2010 midterm election, so they formed in 2011 hoping to balance the scales of outside political spending. As of early June, SMP had **spent \$15.7 million** this election cycle - \$3 million of that supporting Sen. Joe Donnelly in Indiana and nearly \$600,000 attacking Republican challenger Mike Braun.

ADS ON WTHR: SMP of Indiana has aired 14 ads on WTHR so far this cycle. The first two ran during the primary, attacking President Trump's tax reform law and defending Sen. Joe Donnelly's choice to vote against it. **13 Investigates dug into the first ad and its claims**. The third and fourth ads started airing early in the general election season. Both attack Mike Braun's business history. The fifth ad ran in response to a Senate Leadership Fund ad that also ran on WTHR criticizing Sen. Joe Donnelly for his family's business outsourcing jobs to Mexico. The sixth ad started running at the same time, claiming Mike Braun's business outsourced jobs. The next seven ads all attacked Mike Braun's business practices, and the final ad attacked his stance on health care policy.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

With Honor Fund

POLITICAL LEANING: Non-partisan**CO-FOUNDER AND LEADER:** Rye Barcott**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2017**CLASSIFICATION:** Super PAC**MISSION:** electing veterans who pledge to reach across the aisle once in office to help de-polarize government

BACKGROUND: The Center for Responsive Politics found that With Honor had a near perfect 50-50 split between Republicans and Democrats in the primaries. In Indiana, they targeted the 4th Congressional District in the primaries, spending \$366,000 opposing Steve Braun and another \$18,000 supporting Diego Morales. Both men lost the race for the GOP nomination to Jim Baird. With Honor has spent \$4.1 million so far this election cycle, as of July 31 - \$2 million supporting Democrats or opposing Republicans, plus \$2.1 million supporting Republicans or opposing Democrats. The press release announcing the group's founding said they plan to spend \$30 million this election cycle.

ADS ON WTHR: The With Honor Fund has run one ad on WTHR so far this election cycle, attacking Steve Braun during his bid for the GOP nomination in **Indiana's 4th Congressional District** - the seat Todd Rokita gave up to run for Senate. Braun narrowly lost that primary to Jim Baird.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

What is a 501(c)?

Some nonprofit entities also get involved in political advertisements. "501(c)" refers to the lines in the tax code that established the various forms of nonprofit organizations. Each variety has to abide by different rules.

- **501(c)(4), a.k.a. Social Welfare Organizations** - This is the classification used by so-called "dark money" nonprofits. Like a Super PAC, 501(c)(4) groups can collect any amount of money from anyone and any organization they want. Unlike Super PACs, these groups don't have to disclose who their donors are. Officially, the IRS requires such groups **"be operated exclusively to promote social welfare"** as opposed to being a political operation, but the Center for Public Integrity has found this rule "is rarely if ever enforced."
- **501(c)(6), a.k.a. Business Leagues** - This classification is used for groups like chambers of commerce, real estate boards, trade associations and other similar groups. Business leagues are allowed to engage in political activity so long as that **isn't their primary activity**.
- **501(c)(3), a.k.a. Charities** - These are the groups that will come to mind if you think of a nonprofit - charities, hospitals, universities and educational groups. Such organizations are not allowed to spend any money on behalf of any candidate, though they are allowed to perform minor lobbying work.

501(c) organizations that have advertised on WTHR this election cycle:

45Committee

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**PRIMARY DONORS:** Todd Ricketts and Sheldon Adelson**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2015**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization

MISSION: advocating for "policies that strengthen national security, ensure quality education, and fix what was broken in energy, immigration, health care, and more."

BACKGROUND: 45Committee is the advocacy arm of Future45. Because Future45 is a Super PAC and therefore must disclose its donors, most of the group's political advertising is run through 45Committee which does not have to disclose its donors. The organization has been run by the Ricketts family - owners of the Chicago Cubs - for most of its existence. It spent more than \$21 million in the 2016 election cycle, according to the Center for Responsive Politics: \$18 million against Hillary Clinton and \$3 million in support of Donald Trump.

ADS ON WTHR: They have run one ad on WTHR asking Hoosiers to contact Sen. Joe Donnelly and ask him to confirm Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

America First Policies

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing

FOUNDERS: six of President Donald Trump's former campaign aides, including Nick Ayers, Vice President Mike Pence's chief of staff, and Marty Obst, who managed Pence's gubernatorial reelection campaign in Indiana

YEAR FOUNDED: 2017**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization**MISSION:** promote President Donald Trump's policy agenda

BACKGROUND: America First Policies has ties with **America First Action**, a pro-Trump super PAC (As of November 1, they had the same president, **Brian O. Walsh**). They told POLITICO they **planned to spend nearly \$1.2 million** in an August month-long blitz targeting red-state Democrats like Sen. Joe Donnelly to support Brett Kavanaugh for Supreme Court Justice.

ADS ON WTHR: They have run one ad on WTHR so far this election cycle, pressuring Sen. Donnelly to approve Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

Americans for Prosperity

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**FOUNDERS:** Koch brothers**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2004**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization**MISSION:** general conservative and libertarian causes

BACKGROUND: Americans for Prosperity spent \$13.3 million in the 2016 election cycle, according to the non-partisan **Center for Responsive Politics** - all of which was spent opposing nine left wing/Democratic candidates. Eight of those nine candidates lost their races. AFP's website claims **70,000 active members in Indiana**.

ADS ON WTHR: AFP has aired two spots on WTHR so far this election cycle, both targeting Sen. Joe Donnelly for not supporting President Trump's tax reform law.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

Demand Justice

POLITICAL LEANING: Left-wing

LEADER: Brian Fallon, former spokesman for Hillary Clinton Justice Department employee and Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., staffer

YEAR FOUNDED: 2018**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization**MISSION:** promote liberal judicial nominees

BACKGROUND: Demand Justice just launched this year after seeing how successful conservative groups were in rallying conservatives behind Donald Trump so he could fill a Supreme Court vacancy left open after President Obama's nominee, Merrick Garland, was stalled in the Senate, **according to the New York Times**. The Times reports Demand Justice isn't even going to try to change conservatives' opinions, but focus on rallying progressives in the same way conservatives did in 2016. Their first media campaign launched in May 2018 **targeting Thomas Farr**, President Donald Trump's nominee for the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

ADS ON WTHR: Demand Justice has run two ads on WTHR so far this election cycle, advocating against Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

Judicial Crisis Network

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**LEADER:** Carrie Severino, former law clerk for supreme court justice Clarence Thomas**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2005**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization**MISSION:** promote conservative judicial nominees

BACKGROUND: The Judicial Crisis Network was first formed to promote judicial nominees of then-President George W. Bush. It's primary donor since that time has been the Wellspring Committee, another 501(c)(4) that doesn't disclose its donors. They gave more than \$15 million between 2012 and 2015, **according to MapLight**, a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to revealing the influence of money in politics. No word yet how much Judicial Crisis Network plans to spend supporting Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court, but they **spent \$10 million** supporting Neil Gorsuch's nomination.

ADS ON WTHR: JCN has run one ad on WTHR so far this election cycle, supporting President Trump's nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

Majority Forward

POLITICAL LEANING: Left-wing

FOUNDER: Rebecca Lambe, chief political strategist and campaign manager for former Sen. Harry Reid

YEAR FOUNDED: 2015**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization**MISSION:** support voter registration and voter turnout

BACKGROUND: While their stated purpose is to increase voter registration and turnout, Majority Forward is affiliated with the left-wing Super PAC "Senate Majority PAC," whose mission is to get Democratic elected to the U.S. Senate. **In the 2016 election cycle**, all of Majority Forward's expenditures - roughly \$10 million - were to either support Democrats or oppose Republicans, and **NBC News reported** in February that Majority Forward and Senate Majority PAC share **office space**, staff members and **even a president** - **J.B. Poersch, former managing director** at SKDKnickerbocker and executive director at the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

ADS ON WTHR: Majority Forward has run two ads on WTHR so far this election cycle, attacking Mike Braun's business record.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

NumbersUSA

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**FOUNDER:** Roy Beck**YEAR FOUNDED:** 1997

CLASSIFICATION: NumbersUSA has two branches: NumbersUSA Action, which is a 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization that focuses on lobbying and, according to their website, does not directly contribute to any campaigns; and the NumbersUSA Education & Research Foundation, which is a 501(c)(3) charity that focuses on legislative analysis and educational materials.

MISSION: **limiting immigration**, specifically "chain migration," the visa lottery and employment-based visas

BACKGROUND: Critics describe NumbersUSA as decidedly anti-immigrant, but they describe themselves as "pro-immigration...with numerical limits." As stated on their website, "The most important factor in federal immigration policy is the numbers - the annual level of immigration. Annual immigration should be set at a level that allows the stabilization of U.S. population and long-term sustainability of the American quality of life."

ADS ON WTHR: NumbersUSA has aired one ad on WTHR so far this election cycle, opposing "chain migration."

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

One Nation

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**FOUNDER:** Karl Rove**YEAR FOUNDED:** 2015**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(4) / social welfare organization**MISSION:** right-wing economic causes, including the national debt and government regulations

BACKGROUND: The organization was originally founded in 2010 as the Alliance for America's Future, but was only active for that one election cycle before going quiet. Operatives from another group, Crossroads GPS, then **took over in 2015**, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. They raised more than \$10 million that first year, with more than 60 percent of that money coming from four anonymous donors.

ADS ON WTHR: One Nation has run five ads on WTHR so far this election cycle. The first two attacked Sen. Joe Donnelly for his vote against President Trump's tax reform law. The third, fourth and fifth focused on the position on immigration reform.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

POLITICAL LEANING: Right-wing**PRESIDENT & CEO:** Thomas J. Donohue**YEAR FOUNDED:** 1912**CLASSIFICATION:** 501(c)(6) / business league**MISSION:** represent the interests of more than 3 million U.S. businesses and local chambers of commerce

BACKGROUND: President William Howard Taft and Charles Nagel, U.S. Secretary of Commerce and Labor (1909 - 1913), originally created the Chamber as a **balance to the labor movement** of the early 20th Century. Today, while not affiliated with any political party, they almost exclusively support Republican and conservative Democratic candidates.

ADS ON WTHR: The Chamber has run one ad on WTHR so far this election cycle, calling on Hoosiers to pressure Sen. Joe Donnelly to make President Donald Trump's tax cuts permanent.

Last updated Nov. 1, 2018[« Back to Decision 2018](#)