

Sucking Up To Corrupt Dark Money

Though Dems have long criticized anonymous money in politics, this latest election cycle saw a wave of it flow into and fill up Democratic Party coffers.

According to an [analysis](#) by the Center for Responsive Politics for CNN, more than \$320 million in "dark money" boosted Democrats in races for the White House and congressional seats, more than double what Republicans saw.

At the top of the list, the analysis showed, was Joe Biden. He took in nearly \$132 million in such anonymous funding for his bid to unseat President Donald Trump. Trump, who is appealing vote counts showing a Biden win, received just \$22 million in dark money.

Biden's aides declined comment on the record, CNN said, but pointed to his letting reporters listen in on fundraising events as evidence of his support for transparency.

They also note that the former vice president, a supporter of public financing for federal candidates, has proposed sweeping changes to address the role of money in politics and curb the outsize influence of dark money while backing more small-donor, grassroots funding for candidates.

The analysis defined dark money as donations and other spending by nonprofits that don't disclose sources, and money from limited liability corporations functioning as shell corporations.

With such funding, the mysterious sourcing of cash obscures the agenda of the donors. Dems have railed against it for years.

"This is a rotten system, but as long as it exists, both parties are going to use it," said Fred Wertheimer, who runs a watchdog group, Democracy 21, and according to the cable news network is part of a coalition of more than 170 groups urging the incoming president to tackle issues that include campaign finance transparency. "The test for us is: What are you prepared to do about the system?" Wertheimer was quoted as saying.

The analysis looked at dark money giving to super PACs, and any money nonprofits spend directly on an election or defeat of a specific person seeking office. One Nation, a nonprofit with anonymous funding associated with Mitch McConnell, the Republican Senate majority leader, is the largest nameless donor in federal races so far, giving more than \$60 million to an aligned super PAC working to help the GOP keep its Senate hold.

On the flip side, three liberal groups, led by a group known as the Sixteen Thirty Fund, account for a third of the dark money donations aiding Dems. In all, the analysis pointed to \$52 million flowing from the Sixteen Thirty Fund to other groups active in the 2020 elections.

One small sum, about \$300,000, went to The Lincoln Project, which has generated ads, postings and more sharply critical of Trump.

For all the qualms over dark money, the system remains in place, indeed, even as candidates, parties and other groups ramp up their spending on all-important Senate runoff elections in Georgia. The Jan. 5 votes will ultimately determine who controls the Senate chamber.