

# Meet Obama's Top Fundraisers

Fundraising takes center stage as November 2012 election nears

By Helen Silvis  
Of The Skanner News

President Obama visited Oregon Tuesday, on a fundraising trip to build his campaign war chest. A \$500 donation won't buy you face time with the president, but it will open the door to Oregon Convention Center. Premium seating at the event cost donors \$1,000. About 25 people forked out \$30,000, to have lunch with the leader of the free world.

With the November election fast approaching, the battle to raise funds is intensifying. And the three states on the West Coast are some of the president's most reliable sources of support. So far, Obama has raised close to \$1.9 million from Oregon donors during the 2012 election cycle, according to the Center for Responsible Politics. Mitt Romney, the likely Republican nominee, has raised just \$837,000 in Oregon, although Republican Party presidential candidates together racked up \$1.5 million in donations.

### Campaign Moneyball

Nationally, presidential campaign contri-

butions are fairly evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. Both parties received around \$300 million in candidate contributions. The split favored Obama until recently, however, because as the sole Democrat in the race, his campaign pocketed the entire sum. Romney, still battling for the nomination, received \$153 million.



Wendell Pierce

Look at House and Senate races across the country, and the picture looks very different. Republicans have far outraised Democrats in Congressional campaigns. Republican Senate candidates raised \$232 million in campaign contributions compared to \$200 million for Democrats. In House races,

Republicans have raised \$445 million, compared to \$325 million for Democrats.

### The Wild Card

What's different in the 2012 election cycle is the influence of SuperPACs. Independent political action committees, they are allowed to raise and spend as much as they like, on whatever they choose. So far,

according to the center for Responsive Politics, SuperPACs have raised more than \$157 million, with the vast majority (\$131 million) going to the presidential race.

The Supreme Court affirmed the rights of corporations and unions to spend unlimited amounts in its Citizens United decision of January 2010. Those millions can't all come from the Koch brothers and the Teamsters. But PACs do not have to disclose the source of their donations, making it harder to identify the contributors. According to The Center for Responsive Politics, Conservative SuperPACs have raised \$124 million: Liberal PACs just \$27 million.

### Where Does All the Money Go?

So what's happening to all that cash? Campaign expenses and administration use up about two thirds of the cash raised. Travel, polling, food, rent and consultant fees are among the biggest ticket items. The bulk of the rest is spent on advertising, principally in swing states, where political strategists believe that getting their message out to voters could sway the results. So, which states are in play this November? Polling suggests that Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada,

North Carolina, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia may be up for grabs.

### Bundling for Victory

Bundlers are a campaign's best friends. These top supporters solicit funds from their well heeled friends, and deliver it to the candidate in one large bundle. In 2008, both Obama and his opponent John McCain agreed to disclose the names of their supporters who bundled more than \$50,000. The Obama campaign has continued to disclose its bundlers. The Romney campaign has resisted calls to release the names of its bundlers.



Terry Bean

### Obama's Top Supporters

So who is Obama's top Oregon bundler? That's Terry Bean, CEO of the Portland-based development firm, Bean Investments. Bean has raised more than \$209,000 for the president's campaign.

See MONEY on page 8

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