Who is Funding Whom: Resources for the Undecided Voter

It is no secret that a myriad of special interest groups tries to influence our thoughts and manipulate our emotions through any given election cycle. Their goal, of course, is to entice the listeners, viewers or readers to the support their candidates of choice. Often times some special interest groups will use shock and purposely misleading information as a means of gaining voters. What should the average voter know about these groups and their endorsed candidates before heading to the polls?

For starters, one should know that PACs and SuperPACs are (political action committees and super political action committees) usually represent an industry or a particular cause. Examples may be a nurses’ association or a wildlife preservation group. These groups raise funds to help candidates who have indicated support for their causes win elections. There are limits to how much they can donate directly to a candidate. For example, a PAC may only donate $5000.00 each election directly to a candidate’s campaign fund. SuperPACs cannot donate directly to campaign funds. However SuperPACs can and do take on the task of directly of creating advertisements and running campaign messages supporting one candidate or demeaning his opponent. There are no limits to Super PAC spending.

Bottom line: Before you cast your vote based on the claims of one of these groups, you should understand what the group stands for. To help you, the following are a list of the largest PACs and SuperPACs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Fahr LLC</th>
<th>Type: “Shell” wealth holding company</th>
<th>Concern: environment</th>
<th>Budget: $66,860,491</th>
<th>Endorsement: Contributed only to democrat or liberal candidate. Contributed to Hillary Clinton’s campaign.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Renaissance Technologies</td>
<td>Type: Individual Super PAC</td>
<td>Concern: Contributes more to conservative than liberal causes.</td>
<td>Budget: $50,368,646</td>
<td>Endorsement: Supported both Ted Cruz and Carly Fiorina in the primaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name: Majority Cmte Pack</td>
<td>Type: Super PAC</td>
<td>Concern: Strictly contributes to Republican House and Senate candidates, including David McKinley</td>
<td>Budget: $3,663,850</td>
<td>Endorsement: Supports Republican candidates and committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name: Service Employees International Union</td>
<td>Type: Individual Super PAC</td>
<td>Concern: A division of AFL-CIO, this organization represents its members interests.</td>
<td>Budget: $238,434,058</td>
<td>Endorsement:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name: Priorities USA/Priorities USA Action</td>
<td>Type: Super PAC</td>
<td>Concern: Formed to support President Obama’s reelection bid, this Super PAC now supports Hillary Clinton.</td>
<td>Budget: $131,802,856</td>
<td>Endorsement: Clinton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name: American Federation of Teachers</td>
<td>Type: PAC</td>
<td>Concern: Represents teachers, school employees and allied workers.</td>
<td>Budget: $80,844,543</td>
<td>Endorsement: Top recipient is Hillary Clinton</td>
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</table>
Top 20 PAC Contributors to Candidates, 2015-2016

Click on each link to find the group’s agenda.

National Assn of Realtors
National Beer Wholesalers Assn
AT&T Inc
Honeywell International
National Auto Dealers Assn
Intl Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
American Bankers Assn
Lockheed Martin
Credit Union National Assn
National Assn of Insurance & Financial Advisors

Blue Cross/Blue Shield
Machinists/Aerospace Workers Union
Northrop Grumman
Operating Engineers Union
Majority Committee PAC
United Parcel Service
Comcast Corp
Home Depot
Union Pacific Corp
Air Line Pilots Assn

West Virginia Endorsements

With all the drama concerning the national election, it is easy to forget we have important races for state and local government. The following links will take you to WV specific political action groups.

West Virginia Business & Industry Council
West Virginians Against Government Waste
West Virginians for Life, Incorporated
West Virginians Against Government Waste
International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 175
West Virginia Citizen’s Defense League
West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council

West Virginians for Life, Incorporated
West Virginia Coal Association
West Virginia Farm Bureau
West Virginia Education Association
West Virginia Sierra Club
West Virginia AFL-CIO

The sites used to compile this information are listed below. Both VoteSmart.org and OpenSecrets.org deserve the serious voter’s time. VoteSmart.org features a Political Courage Test which measures a candidate’s ability to state his true positions on issues rather than sidestepping the issues. For those who value straight talk, this page is a must.

Sources:
OpenSecrets.org
The Washington Post
VoteSmart.org