



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on April 4, 2021

AOC Sends Vulnerable House Democrats a Surprise \$5,000 Campaign Boost

A number of Democrats of the U.S. House of Representatives received an unexpected \$5,000 sum from Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) to aid in their reelection campaigns, although the news prompted some of these lawmakers to return the cash to avoid losing support from moderate and conservative voters in their districts.

Ocasio-Cortez [wired her colleagues the cash](#) as part of an effort to maintain the slim Democrat majority in the House. But the move bypassed the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, with which she has had public disagreements.



AP Images

Some of the recipients of the money sought clarification on the matter from DCCC Chair Representative Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.) and his staffers. Apparently, it was DCCC aides who provided the lawmakers' wire transfer information to Ocasio-Cortez's team without first seeking approval from senior officials.

At least three Democrats have thus far stated that they are refusing the money: Representatives Conor Lamb of Pennsylvania, Carolyn Bourdeaux of Georgia, and Elissa Slotkin of Michigan.

"We appreciate Rep. Ocasio-Cortez's ongoing commitment to a Democratic majority. Due to a miscommunication, some transfers were made in error, but that has been addressed," said Chris Hayden, a spokesman for DCCC.

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Some individuals familiar with the matter characterized the incident as an unforced error by the DCCC in which staffers failed to anticipate the damage that association with Ocasio-Cortez could have on the prospects of Democrats in swing districts.

Politico [noted](#):

Normally, swing-district Democrats are scrounging for every last dollar to help them secure their reelections, particularly in a first quarter that has been tougher than usual for candidates across the board. But the Ocasio-Cortez donation, these Democrats said, was unsolicited and came without warning. Many of their campaigns did not receive a heads-up from the DCCC about the donation until after it hit members' accounts — a move that surprised senior aides and campaign consultants.

"The GOP has spent four years saying the frontliners are all socialists. Now they've got the receipts to prove it. Anyone telling themselves this won't be in campaign ads is in denial," said one Democratic consultant who works for swing-seat members.



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The intended total of the donations was \$160,000. Ocasio-Cortez has refused to pay member dues to DCCC, citing its allegedly unfair treatment of progressives.

The New York lawmaker has proven to be a prolific fundraiser with a campaign apparatus that may be helpful to Democrats as they seek to hold on to their tenuous majority in Congress in 2022. Currently, Democrats lead the GOP by only 11 seats in the chamber. In the Senate, Democrats are in an even tougher position: The party makeup is at a tie in which Democrats only have a voting majority thanks to the tie-breaking voting of Vice President Kamala Harris.

While the contributions from Ocasio-Cortez could give a boost to openly progressive Democrats, others, such as Slotkin and Representative Jared Golden of Maine could be imperiled if they are seen as embracing socialism. And despite vows to return the money from some of these representatives, the donations will already appear on their Federal Election Commission records, leaving the Democrats open to Republican attack ads.

A study from the Center for Effective Lawmaking [rated](#) Ocasio-Cortez one of the least-effective members of Congress. Although she introduced 21 bills that the center described as “substantive,” none received action on committees or floor votes or became law.

“She introduced a lot of bills, but she was not successful at having them receive any sort of action in committee or beyond committee and if they can’t get through committee they cannot pass the House,” Alan Wiseman, a co-director of the center, said.

“It’s clear that she was trying to get her legislative agenda moving and engage with the lawmaking process,” he added “But she wasn’t as successful as some other members were — even among [other] freshmen — at getting people to pay attention to her legislation.”

But that doesn’t mean those bills won’t eventually become law or that Ocasio-Cortez should be disregarded as a danger to limited government and constitutionalism.

While she is not the most adept at working within the current shape of the Democrat Party to turn her agenda into policy, she has succeeded in becoming a major influencer and progressive rallying voice. As the party continues to move further to the left thanks to the efforts of Ocasio-Cortez and her backers, her ideas will become the mainstream within her caucus and she will have no problem getting her party to send her bills to the floor.



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