



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 15, 2011

Democrats Receive 89 Percent of Donations Made by Four Top Political Donors

The top all-time political donor is ActBlue, which [calls itself](#) “the online clearinghouse for Democratic action,” and claims to have raised nearly \$200 million since its founding in 2004 in order to “support thousands of Democratic candidates across the nation.” This far exceeds the amount shown in the study because the numbers in the study are based on figures obtained from the Federal Election Committee, which don’t include small donors giving less than \$200. ActBlue is the largest funnel of funds supporting Democrats nationwide and as a result is “[a major fundraising tool for Democrats](#), particularly favored by the netroots and left-leaning bloggers.”



Right behind ActBlue is the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) which represents 1.4 million members in the public service and healthcare sector. According to [OpenSecrets.org](#), AFSCME’s “biggest priorities are raising the minimum wage, battling efforts to privatize public sector jobs and fighting efforts to substitute vacation time for overtime pay for millions of workers.... AFSCME actively opposed ... partial privatization of Social Security [and] during the 2008 presidential election, it strongly supported Barack Obama.” Of its \$45 million raised, 94 percent went to support Democrats, while just 1 percent supported Republicans.

At fifth place (behind AT&T and the National Association of Realtors, who supported both Democrats and Republicans equally), the National Education Association raised \$36 million and gave \$29 million of it to Democrats. The NEA has 3.2 million members and a staff of 550, 25 of whom are full-time lobbyists promoting the NEA’s agenda of supporting additional government funding for education while opposing school vouchers.

In sixth place is the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), representing 1.5 million workers in the healthcare industry, janitors, security guards, home-care workers, building-service workers, and probation and parole officers. It also lobbies for higher wages and, in addition to raising \$36 million (\$27 million of which went to support Democrats and only \$720,000 to Republicans), it spent an additional \$15.8 million on “[independent expenditures](#)” that “overtly advocated for or against political candidates, with Democrats benefiting from almost all of them,” according to OpenSecrets.

In light of recent “exposés” and other hit pieces on Koch Industries [here](#) and [here](#), one might expect to find them high on the list of donors, but instead they occupy position #87, with a total of less than \$10 million, 88 percent going to support Republicans and 11 percent to Democrats. But it is high enough to attract the attention of #2 (contributing \$45 million), the AFSCME, who [wrote to its members](#) in “Not Your Cup of Tea,” noting:



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Perhaps the most influential — and certainly the wealthiest — tea party financiers are billionaire brothers David and Charles Koch. Although they are not well-known names to most Americans, within the established conservative movement they are rock stars....

The hard right has hijacked the public's rage over an economic catastrophe caused by the excesses and corruption of Wall Street and Big Business. These shadow financiers have directed that rage away from themselves and aimed it toward government and dedicated public service workers who provide the essential services that make our country run.

It is expensive to purchase influence these days, especially for the Democrats who, at present, seem to have most of the money, but steadily diminishing influence in the future direction of the country. While political contributions can track who is paying for what, the real battle isn't being fought on billboards and TV ads, but in the minds of those who have grown increasingly disgusted with and alarmed at the direction of the country. That's why [efforts](#) by Koch Industries to fund the Cato Institute (David Koch is a board member), Citizens for a Sound Economy (now known as Freedomworks), the Federalist Society, and Americans for Prosperity, along with major investments in the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Reason Foundation, and the Atlas Institute are having such a major outsized influence in the freedom fight.



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