



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on September 30, 2023

GOP Megadonors Pray Youngkin Will Be Their Anti-Trump Savior

As Donald Trump maintains a commanding lead in the Republican presidential primary, members of the establishment are hoping for a Hail Mary to ensure someone other than Trump claims the party's nomination.

For some, that Hail Mary is Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

According to a report by [The National Pulse](#), GOP megadonors have an upcoming meeting at the Cavalier Hotel in Virginia Beach, and some of the attendees want to convince Youngkin to enter the primary contest as a last-minute anti-Trump candidate.

Thomas Peterffy, the billionaire businessman known for pouring large sums into Republican candidates and causes, said the Virginia governor "appears to be leaving the door open. And if Republicans win in Virginia, maybe we can talk him into it. He obviously wants to see what emerges, what the state of play is."

The billionaire donor's remark refers to whether Youngkin and state Republicans successfully hold off Democrats' attempt to flip the House of Delegates in the November elections.

Peterffy added that "[t]he money would be there" should Youngkin choose to enter the race.

Youngkin himself has not publicly said whether or not he's throwing his hat in the ring. As recently as Thursday, he was asked on Fox News if he would "rule it out" — referring to a presidential bid. Youngkin changed the subject rather than answer directly.

In line with Peterffy's observation that Youngkin wants to leave the door open, the Virginia governor was seen dining with major Republican donors in the Hamptons over the summer, and those in attendance say he was pressed there to run for president.

The fact that megadonors are calling for yet another candidate to enter the race spells bad news for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who, although prior to his candidacy was widely seen as the most viable Trump alternative, has languished in the polls.

As [NBC News](#) reports:

Will Rogers, a former chair of the Polk County GOP in Des Moines, Iowa, said he feels such a fight is destined in part because the Florida governor's performance has failed to lock down some of the voters who once perceived him as the greatest threat to Trump.



AP Images
Glenn Youngkin



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“They just don’t see DeSantis going anywhere,” he said. “And so they’re just kind of like — they’ve almost resolved themselves that he will not be beating Donald Trump and they’re moving on to ‘who’s next that I can really get behind.’”

Motivated by what they consider a good performance at the most recent GOP debate, a few donors are honing in on Nikki Haley, according to a [Politico](#) report:

Haley experienced a modest surge since her first debate performance in Milwaukee, after spending months lingering in the low-single digits following her February launch. Billionaire Ronald Lauder is among the deep-pocketed Republicans who are now considering putting money behind Haley, POLITICO reported this week, after considering DeSantis and Scott earlier in the race.

... “There isn’t a mainstream megadonor now not looking at Nikki,” said one major donor to Haley granted anonymity to discuss the dynamics of the race. “They may not all be on board yet. But they are giving her a serious look and are starting to engage in one way or the other.”

The outlet also notes that Haley was one of the Republican candidates present at a February retreat organized by Club for Growth, to which Trump was not invited. Club for Growth and Americans for Prosperity are two of the top conservative donor groups in the country, and they have both vowed to support a candidate other than Trump in the primary — although neither group has gotten behind a single candidate yet. Their activities thus far have been limited to running ads calling on voters to move on from Trump.

But other major donors have virtually thrown in the towel when it comes to finding a realistic Trump alternative, and are consequently [pulling out](#) their fundraising dollars.

A look at Federal Election Commission filings related to Republican super PACs reveals that through the end of June, only 66 individual donors made contributions of \$250,000 or more. That’s a 24-percent decline from the same period in 2016, when 87 donors had given \$250,000 or more to the super PACs of one of the candidates.

While this depletion of big-donor money is proving detrimental to the candidacies of many of the GOP contenders, it is having no ill effect on front-runner Donald Trump. While he has received few major donations this year, the 45th president has hauled in major money from small-dollar donations. Through the end of June, Trump’s joint fundraising committee raised \$23.7 million from donors giving less than \$200, which is more than twice the grassroots contributions to all the other Republican candidates combined.

While Haley may be having her “moment,” will it really avail her anything if she remains 50 percent behind Trump? At the end of the day, winning second place is simply being the first to lose.



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