



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 13, 2014

## Karl Rove Groups' Attacks on Tea Party Backfire

Donations to political strategist Karl Rove's Crossroads groups decreased by 98 percent last year, declining to a combined total of \$6.1 million, down from \$325 million in 2012. This, despite the fact that Rove added a third group in 2013.



Politico reported, "Rove added a third group to the network in 2013, forming the Conservative Victory Project to counterbalance the influence of Tea Party and conservative grassroots forces in GOP primaries."

Rove also co-founded and serves as an adviser to American Crossroads, and is the principal advisor of Crossroads Grassroots Policy Strategies, also known as Crossroads GPS.

A report from *Breitbart News* noted: "Rove's organization has been so tarnished among the conservative base that candidates fear donors will not contribute to any group associated with him."

American Crossroads, a Super PAC, is a tax-exempt organization under Section 527 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. There are no upper limits on contributions to 527s and no restrictions on who may contribute, but 527s must publicly disclose their donors.

Crossroads GPS is a 501(c)(4) group. Such organizations are tax-exempt, but donations to them are not tax deductible and the identities of donors do not have to be disclosed. It was formed, said Carl Forti, the group's political director, because "some donors didn't want to be disclosed" and were "more comfortable" giving to an entity that keeps donors' names confidential.

The Conservative Victory Project has been described as a "political initiative." An article about the group published in the *New York Times* February 2, 2013 said that the group's intended purpose was "to recruit seasoned candidates and protect Senate incumbents from challenges by far-right conservatives and Tea Party enthusiasts who Republican leaders worry could complicate the party's efforts to win control of the Senate."

"In effect," noted the *Times* writer, "the establishment is taking steps to fight back against Tea Party groups and other conservative organizations that have wielded significant influence in backing candidates who ultimately lost seats to Democrats in the general election."

Steven J. Law, the president of American Crossroads, was quoted by the *Times* as stating, "It is a delicate and sensitive undertaking. Our approach will be to institutionalize the Buckley rule: Support the most conservative candidate who can win."

The *Times*, generally regarded as a liberal newspaper, noted that "by imposing the rule of the conservative leader William F. Buckley, the group could run afoul of Ronald Reagan's '11th Commandment' to not speak ill of a fellow Republican."

In a February 2 article for the conservative BizPac Review website, Michael Dorstewitz admonished Karl Rove to remember that "the Republican Party's true strength is its conservative base."



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Dorstewitz believes that a key reason why the Rove organizations have suffered such a precipitous drop in donations is that their donors became aware that “Republican candidates generally win elections only when they act Republican and not ‘Republican light.’ ”

But the Rove-supported candidates in 2012, in contrast, “were plain-vanilla, establishment Republicans,” asserts Dorstewitz. Which is why Rove has nothing to show for the hundreds of millions of dollars he spent to back their losing candidacies. “Rarely in the history of mankind have so many resources been squandered so spectacularly,” noted Mike Flynn, a writer for Breitbart.

Flynn also provided statistics, garnered from the latest FEC reports, that are encouraging for true constitutionalist conservatives, as opposed to the establishment-backed “Republican light” variety. While, as noted, Rove’s three groups collected just \$6.1 million last year, just one group, the Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund, of which Flynn is political director, raised \$6.4 million.

Flynn notes, “The four largest conservative SuperPACs raised \$20 million. GOP establishment SuperPACs raised just over \$7 million. Donors haven’t stopped giving. They have just stopped giving to the Republican party.”

As for why Karl Rove and other establishment Republicans are so intent on pushing “Republican light” candidates instead of those who are more conservative about adhering to the Constitution, it is necessary to look at Rove’s background in political campaign strategy over the years.

On September 6, 1973, George H.W. Bush, then chairman of the Republican National Committee, chose Rove to be chairman of the College Republicans. He would continue to have an association with the Bush family over the years — advising George W. during his unsuccessful Texas congressional campaign in 1978; working on George H.W.’s 1980 presidential campaign, with Bush as Ronald Reagan’s vice-presidential nominee; and handling direct mail for the 1984 Reagan-Bush campaign.

In 1984, Rove helped Phil Gramm, who had become a Republican in 1983, defeat Ron Paul in the Republican House primary. Gramm was to become co-chair of John McCain’s 2008 presidential campaign and McCain’s most senior economic advisor. Rove served as an advisor to McCain and donated \$2,300 to that campaign.

In 1993, Rove was an adviser to George W. Bush in his successful campaign for governor of Texas, and was an advisor for Bush’s 1998 reelection campaign, as well. In 1999, Rove sold his direct-mail business, Karl Rove & Co., to become the chief strategist for Bush’s presidential campaign. After Bush’s election in 2000, Rove became the new president’s senior advisor, and after Bush’s 2004 reelection he became deputy chief of staff to the president. In a November 2004 speech, Bush thanked Rove, calling him “the architect” of his victory over John Kerry.

After leaving the White House staff, Rove has been a contributor to *Newsweek*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and Fox News.

While Dorstewitz describes the type of candidates that Rove favors as “Republican light,” there is a more accurate term for them: *neoconservative*.

The neoconservative (neocon) philosophy is not merely a “new, improved” brand of conservatism, but — on the contrary — a warmed-over remnant of the New Deal politics that began in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The fight for control over the Republican Party goes back as far as 1952, when more liberal elements within the GOP drafted the former Democrat Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower to run for the presidential



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nomination against the favored candidate, Sen. Robert Taft. Because of the leadership of constitutional conservatives that Taft had demonstrated, he had been given the nickname “Mr. Republican.” Although not then known by that name, the neoconservative forces in the GOP won out and Eisenhower was chosen as the nominee in 1952.

Neoconservatism grew in influence during the 1950s, promoted by figures such as the former Trotskyite Irving Kristol (called the “godfather” of neoconservatism); Kristol’s son, William, who became editor of *Commentary* magazine; and William F. Buckley, Jr., founder of *National Review*.

Buckley’s decision to depart from the genuine conservative views of his father, William F. Buckley, Sr., was strongly influenced by his mentor and Yale professor, Wilmore Kendall. Kendall served in the OSS during World War II, and stayed on when the spy agency became the CIA in 1947. Kendall was responsible for recruiting Buckley into the CIA, and many suspected that when the pair founded *National Review* the journal reflected the agency’s influence and was created primarily to help neoconservatives wrest control of the conservative movement away from its faithful defenders.

Influenced by Buckley’s *National Review* and other neocon-dominated print and broadcast media outlets, neoconservatism has helped shape the political philosophy of most establishment Republicans in recent years, including both presidents Bush, Senator John McCain, former Vice President Dick Cheney, and most recent White House national security and foreign policy advisors.

Rove is but another neoconservative who is following the example of his predecessors that have been trying to purge the Republican party of genuine, Taft-like conservatives since 1952.

*Photo of Karl Rove: AP Images*



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