



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on February 12, 2013

Karl Rove's Effort to Keep GOP Leaning Left

Former presidential advisor Karl Rove established the "Conservative Victory Project" this month as a means of becoming the gatekeeper to Republican nominations in the intra-party battle between constitutionalists and neo-conservatives. Specifically, Rove would target elimination of Tea Party and other small government constitutionalists in GOP primaries because of alleged fears that the constitutionalists lose general elections.



"There is a broad concern about having blown a significant number of races because the wrong candidates were selected," Steven J. Law, the president of American Crossroads, [told](#) the *New York Times* for February 2. "We don't view ourselves as being in the incumbent protection business, but we want to pick the most conservative candidate who can win." Specifically, the establishment, anti-Tea Party wing of the GOP points to the defeat of Tea Party favorites Richard Mourdock and Todd Akin in the November election in their U.S. Senate races in Ohio and Missouri. Akin and Mourdock had made unpopular statements against abortion in the case of rape during the campaign, statements that were credited by the liberal press for their general election failures.

Of course, Rovian establishment candidates won most GOP nominations in major races in 2012 before being thrashed in the November general election. Rove claimed to be neutral in the Republican presidential primary in 2012, but he attacked all the non-Romney candidates as unelectable. As *Slate*, the on-line magazine, [put it](#) in 2011: "Karl Rove has already begun his independent, well-funded campaign to return a Republican to the White House. Any Republican will do, honestly, but he would strongly prefer a somewhat competent and 'electable' one, thank you very much. So he's attacking all the non-Mitt Romney candidates." In the end, Rove's favorite, Mitt Romney, proved all too unelectable.

Rove's new project has drawn criticism from many conservative quarters, even from Washington conservatives. The move even inspired the Twitter hashtag, [#crushrove](#), in opposition to this GOP establishment last gasp. "This is a continuation of the establishment's effort to avoid blame for their horrible performance in the 2012 elections," Senate Conservatives Fund Executive Director Matt Hoskins [told the press](#) after Rove's announcement. "They blew a ton of races up and down the ticket because they recruited moderate Republicans who didn't stand for anything. Now they want to use this new PAC to trick donors into giving them more money so they can lose more races." The Senate Conservatives Fund was founded by former South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint.

Rove's American Crossroads SuperPAC and its sister PAC Crossroads GPS were the top non-candidate fundraisers of the 2012 election cycle, spending some \$175,706,789 of the \$300 million the twin organizations raised in the 2012 cycle, [according](#) to OpenSecrets.org. Almost all of that money was spent in a wasted effort to replace Obama with Mitt Romney as president, plastering the airwaves with slick television commercials devoid of any meaningful information.

American Crossroads/Crossroads GPS may even become a poster child for the irrelevancy of massive, unlimited corporate spending on elections in the wake of the [Supreme Court's Citizens United decision](#).



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Of the eight races where Crossroads spent \$500,000 or more in 2012, it [lost seven races](#), winning only in the Nebraska U.S. Senate race. That hardly counted as a victory, however, as Republican Deb Fischer never trailed former Senator Bob Kerrey. Nebraska is one of the reddest of red states, where Republicans control all state offices (turning out even Democratic Governor Ben Nelson in the 2012 election), as well as the state legislature.

Contrast this with former Congressman Ron Paul's endorsement record, where an astonishing eight of 11 U.S. House candidates [endorsed by Paul won](#) their elections. Or the Ron Paul-aligned Liberty for All SuperPAC, which raised \$3 million during the 2012 election cycle — only one percent of the Crossroads fundraising — and [won nine of 10 races](#) into which they committed their money. And an overwhelming number of Liberty for All PAC candidates endorsed were not incumbents. Apparently, money isn't everything, and elections can't be bought by mindless negative advertisements alone.

Rove [built up his Crossroads with just a handful of large donors](#), including Las Vegas casino owner Sheldon Adelson (\$23 million) and investor Harold Simmons (\$20.5 million). [According to Forbes](#) magazine, "Almost one third of the \$104 million Rove's American Crossroads super PAC spent this election cycle came from just five members of the *Forbes* rich list."

Rather than employing ["corporations are not persons,"](#) as a slogan to attack the heart of freedom of speech and press, the logical conclusion to be drawn from the 2012 elections is instead: "A fool and his money are soon parted." Meanwhile, the war for the heart of the Republican Party will continue between establishment figures in Washington and those grass-roots leaders in the Tea Party and the Ron Paul-aligned Liberty movement.

Photo of Karl Rove: AP Images



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