



The Big Money Behind Walker's Campaign

Who maxed out this year?

By Lisa Kaiser
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The latest campaign finance filings show that Gov. Scott Walker took in \$9.5 million this year, with 120 donors giving the maximum to him under the law, \$10,000. A whopping 93 of them, or 78%, of these maxed-out individual donors are from out of state and cannot cast a ballot for him. Most lack any connections to Wisconsin at all.

These \$10,000 donors cannot give more money to Walker or another candidate before the fall election. But, thanks to a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling and a case brought in federal court by a Republican activist, the Government Accountability Board will no longer enforce the state's aggregate contribution limits. That means that the Walker mega-donors can now contribute unlimited amounts to political action committees (PACs) or a political party in this election cycle. And, of course, these big donors can contribute to independent and dark-money groups, which will shield their identity from public scrutiny.

Walker's Big Money

Here's a snapshot of Walker's latest round of mega-donors:

■ **The Usual Suspects:** Walker returned to the deep pockets of his recall mega-contributors, including Las Vegas gambling billionaire Sheldon Adelson and his wife, Miriam. Adelson donated \$250,000 to Walker in 2012, despite not having any discernable business interest in Wisconsin. Other recall mega-donors who maxed out this year include New York hedge fund manager Louis Bacon, who chipped in \$100,000 for Walker's recall; Houston-based Anheuser-Busch distributor John and Barbara Nau, who sent \$90,000 directly to Walker's recall campaign; and Waukesha's Robert and Patricia Kern of Generac, who each donated \$10,000 in June and \$100,000 in the recalls.

Dr. Richard, Dvorah and Batsheva Roberts each contributed \$10,000 to Walker in June, when they'd held a fundraiser for Walker in their New Jersey home. National Review Online reported that Walker had taken swipes at his pal, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, and, possibly, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin at the event. Dr. Roberts had ponied

up \$100,000 to defend Walker in the 2012 recall, a sum he bragged about at the June fundraiser, NRO reported.

■ **New Out-of-State Money:** Walker attracted maximum \$10,000 donations from new conservative donors across the country, including oil magnate Sid Bass and Edward, Lee and Ramona Bass; Illinois' Jeffrey Brincat of payday lender Consumer Financial Services; David, Jon, Lindsay, Michael, Nancy, Sean and Shery Cotton, affiliated with the Meridian Health Plan, Michigan's largest Medicaid HMO; New York financier Alfred Eckert III, originally from Wauwatosa; Jacqueline Ferro of Chicago and Lake Geneva, Wis., the wife of the new co-owner of the *Chicago Sun-Times*; Midland, Texas, GOP donor Marcia French; hedge fund managers Anne Dias Griffin and Kenneth Griffin of Chicago; Leslie and John Malone of Liberty Media and the Koch brothers' Cato Institute; Chesapeake Energy's Aubrey McClendon, whose money helped to fuel the 2004 Swift Boat attack on John Kerry; Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens; Dallas investor Robert Rowling, who'd given huge sums to Karl Rove's American Crossroads; GOP fundraiser and former ambassador Mel Sembler; Atlanta trucking magnate James Stephenson; reality TV personality Donald Trump; and New York investor George Yeager.

■ **Right-Wing Ideologues:** Walker has taken on pet conservative issues while in office and he's being rewarded handsomely for his loyalty. He received \$10,000 contributions from yet more right-wing ideologues with no roots in the state. They include James Macdougald of Florida, author of *Free Enterprise Nation* and an anti-public worker activist whose work is echoed by Walker, according to *The Progressive*. Another supporter is San Francisco billionaire William Oberndorf, who's given "tens of millions" of dollars to the school voucher movement nationwide, according to ThinkProgress, and who, with his wife, has donated \$114,950 to Wisconsin voucher candidates, according to the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. Susan Gore of the free-market think tank Wyoming Liberty Group gave to the max. John "Jack" Templeton of the John Templeton Foundation also donated \$10,000 to Walker this spring. Templeton, with his wife, sent \$50,000 to Walker during the recalls. He's donated almost a half-million dollars to anti-marriage equality group National Organization for Marriage. Perhaps that's why Walker can't risk divulging his true feelings on the same-sex marriage ban in Wisconsin. And, not surprisingly, Virginia James, a Koch million-dollar donor club member who has given generously to Wisconsin GOP candidates, also donated \$10,000 to Walker this year.

■ **Wisconsin's 1%:** Names you may recognize include Robert Uihlein of Schlitz Brewing; Jay Jensen of Madison's Classen Quality Coatings; Mary and Terry Kohler of Sheboygan; the state's wealthiest man, John Menard, worth \$7.7 billion; Tula Solberg, owner of a chain of groceries in northern Wisconsin; investor and GOP donor George and Julie Mosher of Milwaukee; and Wisconsin Dells entrepreneur Jack Waterman, formerly a Democratic donor who now supports Walker. Cathy White also donated \$10,000 this year. She's the wife of Rite-Hite chief Michael White, who had sent out an email to his employees warning them of the personal risks of voting for Obama in 2012.

■ **Corporate Executives:** Walker has reaped \$10,000 each from corporate titans and their family members, both in Wisconsin and elsewhere. One prominent example is the \$70,000 he raised from members of the Michels family, owners of the Brownsville, Wis.-based Michels Corp. and Michels Pipeline. Also chipping in \$10,000 each were Don Dyer, Rex Gore and Brent Southwell of Austin, Tex.-based Professional Janitorial Services, a nonunion company under heavy criticism by the SEIU. Home Depot is represented by Ken Langone of New York and Wilma Marcus of Atlanta. Supermarket chain Meijer, with headquarters in Michigan, is connected to Walker mega-donors Doug and Hendrik Meijer, Mark Murray and James Symancyk. The chain is expanding rapidly in Wisconsin and is adding a distribution center in Pleasant Prairie to fuel its growth.

■ **Sports Team Owners:** Walker has generated maximum donations from owners of sports teams, including Randy Kendrick, wife of the owner of the Arizona Diamondbacks; banker Jeff Records, part owner of the Oklahoma City Thunder; and Edward Roski of the Los Angeles Kings and Lakers.