



## Here are the biggest donors in the midterm elections

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Rich Americans spent big this midterm season to impact down-ballot races for their candidates of choice.

The 2022 midterm election cycle has seen a boom in spending in the lead-up to Election Day. Research group OpenSecrets estimates that federal election spending increased by nearly \$2 billion compared to 2018.

Even more eye-popping, 10 wealthy individuals poured \$540 million combined into this year's elections, according to campaign finance data from OpenSecrets.

### ADVERTISING

These mega-donors are giving most of their money to outside groups such as super PACs that can raise and spend unlimited sums on election ads.

Roughly 62 percent of their donations boosted Republicans, who have received far more support than Democrats from big money groups leading up to November, a reversal from recent elections where wealthy donors favored Democrats.

Here are the 10 largest donors in the midterms, according to the most recent Federal Election Commission filings compiled by OpenSecrets:

### **George Soros**

**Total donations: \$128.5M**

**Affiliation: Democrat**

Soros, a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor who made his fortune as a hedge fund manager, has donated \$128.5 million to his own outside group, Democracy PAC, which then doled out millions of dollars to several super PACs supporting Democratic candidates.

His group donated \$10.5 million to Senate Majority PAC, a super PAC controlled by Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.). It also gave \$1 million to J Street Action Fund, a pro-Israel group that backs Democrats, and Planned Parenthood's super PAC. If the group makes other donations, they won't be revealed until after the election.

Soros has long been a target of right-wing attacks and conspiracy theories over his prolific donations to Democrats. His donations to support democracy in Hungary drew attacks from the country's authoritarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán that included antisemitic tropes.

### **Richard Uihlein**

**Total donations: \$80.7M**

**Affiliation: Republican**

Uihlein is the co-founder of shipping giant Uline, one of the nation's largest privately owned companies. The Illinois-based billionaire has emerged as a major force for Republicans in recent elections, and the 2022 election cycle marks his highest donation total.

He's the top donor to Club for Growth, one of the most powerful conservative super PACs, giving \$23.2 million. Uihlein also gave \$3.5 million to a group backing Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), continuing his longstanding efforts to influence key Wisconsin races.

### **Kenneth Griffin**

**Total donations: \$68.6M**

**Affiliation: Republican**

Griffin, the CEO of Miami-based hedge fund Citadel, is one of the wealthiest mega-donors, with an estimated net worth of \$31 billion, according to Forbes.

He gave \$18.5 million to the Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC controlled by House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), making him the top individual donor to the group that is backing dozens of House GOP challengers. He gave another \$10 million to the Senate Leadership Fund, which is affiliated with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

Last year, "meme stock" traders accused Citadel of colluding with trading platform Robinhood to halt trading of GameStop stock. Griffin denied that his firm was involved in the decision during a congressional hearing on the issue.

### **Jeff Yass**

**Total donations: \$47.3M**

**Affiliation: Republican**

Yass is the billionaire founder of quantitative trading firm Susquehanna International Group. He's a longtime GOP donor who backs candidates favoring minimal taxes and government regulation and is vice chair of the libertarian Cato Institute's board.

Yass donated \$15 million to the School Freedom Fund, accounting for the vast majority of the Club for Growth-aligned group's fundraising. The super PAC aired ads attacking Democratic candidates over COVID-19 school closures and "critical race theory" and waded into GOP primaries.

He donated \$5 million to a super PAC supporting Sen. Rand Paul's (R-Ky.) reelection and gave \$1.9 million in bitcoin to Crypto Freedom PAC, a pro-crypto group that is backing GOP Senate hopeful Blake Masters in Arizona.

### **Timothy Mellon**

**Total donations: \$40M**

**Affiliation: Republican**

Mellon, a longtime GOP mega-donor, is the grandson of banking tycoon Andrew Mellon and was chairman of a transportation firm that was bought by freight rail giant CSX this year.

The Wyoming-based billionaire donated \$10 million to the Congressional Leadership Fund. He gave another \$5 million to the Sentinel Action Fund, a super PAC aligned with the Heritage Foundation's action fund that spent most of its money on ads attacking Sen. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.).

A major supporter of former President Trump and his efforts to tighten immigration laws, Mellon received attention for donating \$53 million to Texas's border wall fund last year.

### **Sam Bankman-Fried**

**Total donations: \$39.8M**

**Affiliation: Democrat**

Bankman-Fried, the founder and CEO of crypto exchange FTX, is a new addition to the list of top donors.

The billionaire crypto executive sent most of his donations — \$28 million — to his Protect Our Future PAC, a super PAC focused on preventing the next pandemic that mostly backed Democrats facing progressives in primaries.

That's a fraction of the \$1 billion total Bankman-Fried previously said he would spend to support Democratic candidates in the midterms and the 2024 election. He called his previous statement a "dumb quote" in an [interview with Politico](#) earlier this month, arguing that more donations can only go so far in the general election.

"At some point, when you've given your message to voters, there's just not a whole lot more you can do," Bankman-Fried said.

### **Fred Eychaner**

**Total donations: \$35.8M**

**Affiliation: Democrat**

Eychaner, a longtime Democratic mega-donor and supporter of LGBT causes, runs Newsweb Corporation, which owns several radio stations and newspapers in the Chicago area.

He's the top donor to Democrats' House Majority PAC. He gave \$9 million to House Majority PAC and donated another \$8 million to Senate Majority PAC. Eychaner consistently gives the maximum allowed donation to the Democratic National Committee and Democrats' other campaign committees.

**Stephen Schwarzman**

**Total donations: \$35.5M**

**Affiliation: Republican**

Schwarzman runs the Blackstone Group, one of the world's largest private equity firms.

The New York City billionaire donated \$10 million to both the Senate Leadership Fund and the Congressional Leadership Fund, providing a huge boost to Republicans' bid to retake control of Congress. He's been a top 10 donor in each of the last three elections.

**Peter Thiel**

**Total donations: \$32.6M**

**Affiliation: Republican**

Thiel, who co-founded PayPal and currently runs data analytics firm Palantir Technologies, has emerged as a major GOP booster.

Thiel is joining the list of top donors for the first time, primarily placing his bets on two GOP Senate hopefuls. He gave \$15 million to a super PAC supporting Arizona's Blake Masters, a former executive at Thiel's firm, and another \$15 million to a super PAC supporting J.D. Vance in Ohio.

**Larry Ellison**

**Total donations: \$31M**

**Affiliation: Republican**

With an estimated net worth of nearly \$100 billion, according to Forbes, Ellison is by far the wealthiest individual on this list.

The Oracle Corp. chairman donated \$20 million to the Opportunity Matters Fund, a super PAC aligned with Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) that is backing GOP candidates in tight Senate races.