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Undisclosed money flows into Minnesota's redistricting process

By [Andy Birkey](#)

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The courts have taken on Minnesota's redistricting process after the State Legislature's failure to get a plan past Gov. Mark Dayton. But groups from right and left are raising money from undisclosed donors, hoping to influence redistricting by bringing court challenges and giving other support.

Shared address with a GOP Minnesota think tank

Minnesotans for a Fair Redistricting shares the same address and some staffers as the Freedom Foundation of Minnesota, a conservative think tank, [according to a ProPublica report](#). Fair Redistricting's address is listed as that of Annette and Jack Meeks, a husband and wife duo active in Republican politics who work for Freedom Foundation. Annette Meeks was on Tom Emmer's Republican ticket for lieutenant governor in 2010.

Freedom Foundation has worked with the Cato Institute on research and events, which was founded by Charles Koch. It is also part of the [State Policy Network](#), a network of 59 state-based conservative think tanks. Freedom Foundation is listed as a "regular member," while other Koch-backed groups such as Americans for Prosperity are listed as "associate members."

Neither group legally needs to disclose donors. As ProPublica noted in their [research](#), there is no direct evidence that either group is directly funded by the Koch brothers, who have bankrolled libertarian and conservative causes across the country. Annette Meeks denied any connection. Jack Meeks, who also serves on the board of the Freedom Foundation, did not return requests for comment by ProPublica.

But Freedom Foundation and Fair Redistricting are indeed very connected. In addition to sharing an address with the Meeks, the groups share staff.

Fair Redistricting is registered under Jack Meeks' name; Jack is a member of the Freedom Foundation board. [Chris Georgacus is heading up the](#) Fair Redistricting effort and is also member of the Freedom Foundation board. Also working on redistricting for Republicans is [lawyer Tony Trimble](#), who also sits on the Freedom Foundation board.

No donors disclosed in Democratic effort either

On the Democratic side, the DFL has enlisted the National Democratic Redistricting Trust. The Trust is controversial in its own right. The Federal Election Commission decided last year to allow members of Congress to solicit unlimited, undisclosed donations for the trust," according to ProPublica.

The Trust took the DFL side in a lawsuit filed in January by a half dozen Republican voters. Former recount attorney for Sen. Al Franken, Marc Elias, is leading the legal effort along with DFL lawyer David Lillehaug.

A [handful of DFLers also sued in January](#), saying that they didn't feel that the Legislature was able to draw a nonpartisan map.

The Trust is closely affiliated with the national Democratic Party and last week [hired former Former Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee National Field Director Casey O'Shea as executive director.](#)