

# The Washington Post

## Citizens United chief watches as other groups reap windfall from landmark case

Jason Horowitz | August 27

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TAMPA — Dave Bossie has no regrets. He just wishes he were getting a little more love.

Bossie, president of the conservative advocacy group Citizens United, pioneered the new political universe of super PACs with [his successful Supreme Court case](#) against federal restrictions on campaign contributions. Since the landmark ruling in the winter of 2010, Republican-leaning groups such as American Crossroads and Restore Our Future, as well as their Democratic counterparts, have brought in hundreds of millions of dollars. Citizens United, on the other hand, has experienced no such deluge of funds.

Seem like a raw deal?

“It does,” Bossie said as he walked onto the red-white-and-blue convention floor Monday afternoon. His aides carried envelopes filled with news releases about his organization’s latest film, an anti-President Obama opus called “The Hope and the Change,” and handed out home-burned DVDs marked with the word “Screener” to reporters. (“Most powerful documentary I’ve ever seen in my life,” Fox News’s Sean Hannity declared on the Citizens United Web site.)

“We are ready, willing and able to work with anybody,” said Bossie, who invited people to a showing at the adjacent Liberty Plaza.

He said he doesn’t “begrudge” the fundraising success of the super PACs that were the “byproduct of our Supreme Court case.”

Bossie said the introduction of Citizens United into the political vernacular has both benefited and burdened him. “I get on an airplane,” he said, “and I used to have to say I work for Citizens United and then launch into what we did. I don’t have to do that anymore.”

For the uninitiated, here’s how the group describes itself on its Web site: “Through a combination of education, advocacy, and grass roots organization, Citizens United seeks to reassert the traditional American values of limited government, freedom of enterprise, strong families, and national sovereignty and security.”

It also produces highly partisan films, including “Hillary: The Movie,” the 2008 flick about then-presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton that gave rise to the Supreme Court case.

Although Bossie said his organization has benefited from the “branding, marketing aspect” of the case, there is a downside, he said, when liberal groups try to link Citizens United to controversial conservative mega-donors such as the Koch brothers, the billionaire industrialists and founders of the Cato Institute.

“Well, you know what?” Bossie said, as a crowd of Ron Paul supporters in cowboy hats marched by. “I’d love for you to print my address in the newspaper article so that the Koch brothers know where to find me. Because they have not ever supported us, and I would love it if they did. So it has harmed us in the sense that I wonder if guys, men and women out there that want to support us are going, ‘Eh, if I do support them, then I’m mixed up in it.’ ”

Some of the top power brokers in the super PAC firmament do not feel particularly bad for Bossie.

“I’m not a cosmic karma kind of guy,” said Haley Barbour, a former governor of Mississippi and, with Karl Rove, a top rainmaker at American Crossroads.

“Karl Rove and I and others are not involved in this to make money. We don’t take anything,” Barbour said as he stood below the convention stage, where he had just taped a short promo for the event’s big speeches. “We’re not involved in it for anybody else to make money. We’re involved in it because we believe this country has to have a change. And it’s not about who gets the business.”

Ed Cox, chairman of the New York Republican Party and son-in-law of Richard Nixon, said he looks forward to his state being awash in super PAC money this election season. But he was reluctant to give Bossie credit, suggesting that there wasn’t much of a role for him “once you establish the principle that people are free to give to whatever organization they want, to best accomplish whatever job they’re interested in.”

Although Bossie said he has made peace with the way things have developed, he admits feeling irked during the Republican primaries when super PACs — made possible by his group’s landmark legal challenge — used their newfound muscle to target and tarnish Newt Gingrich, his original candidate of choice.

“In the heat of the moment you say, ‘Golly gee willikers, what an unfortunate set of circumstances that they are able to run these ads,’ ” Bossie said. “But guess what? Newt Gingrich, his super PAC raised more than others, and it didn’t help him.”