



FRONTLINE UPDATES

*Please share your name,
group, and location in the chat*



This meeting is being recorded and you'll get the recording and all links in a follow up email

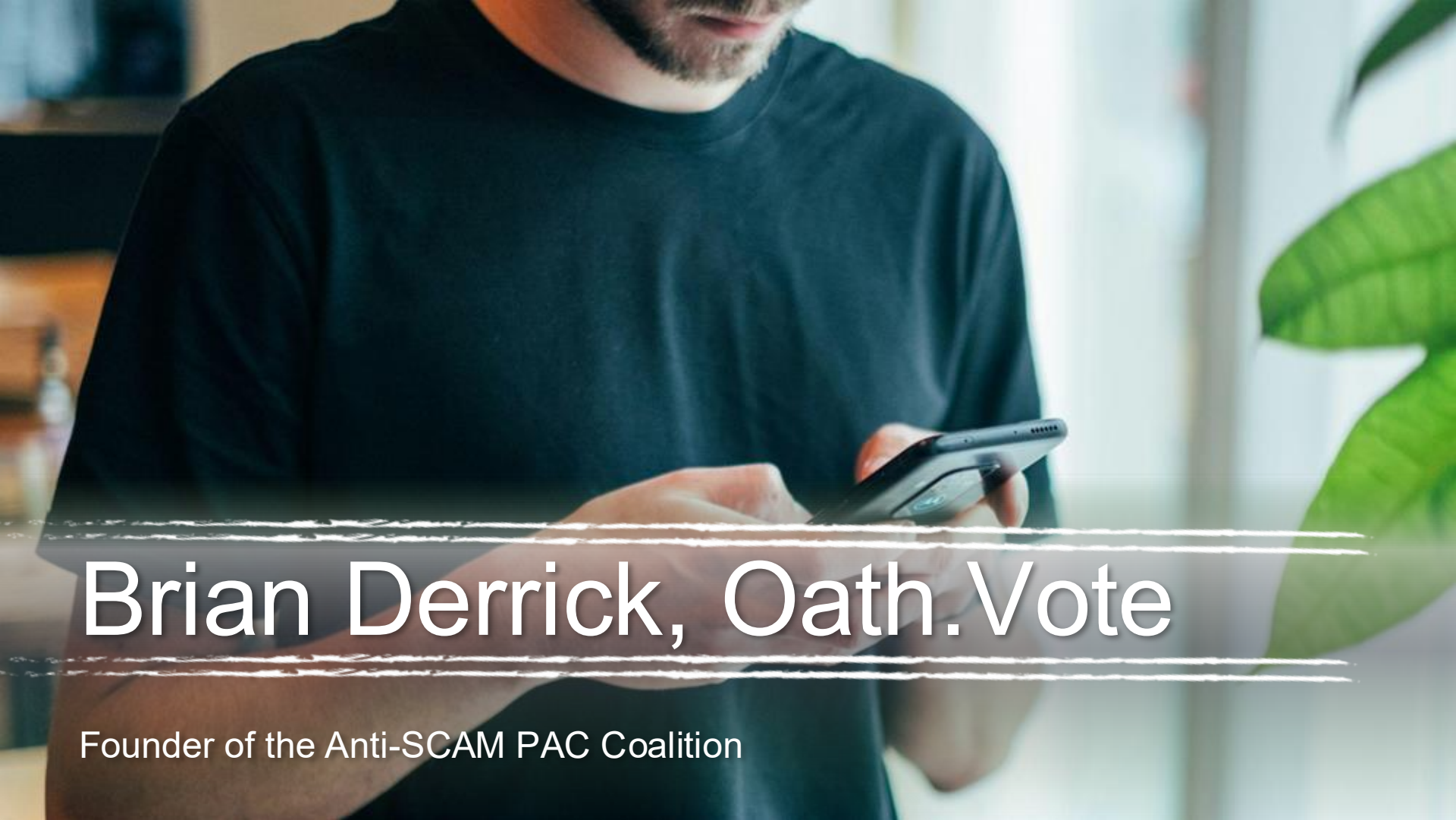
Couple ground rules for chat

- Stay on topic
- Keep it positive

Reach out to our moderator, Sonali for technical questions or support via private message

SCAM PAC AGENDA

1. The problem - Finale Norton
2. How it works - Brian Derrick
3. Personal impact - Mona Zeftel
4. Scam Busters - Susan Labandibar
5. Act Blue Jail - Ryan Mioduski
6. Q&A

A man with a beard, wearing a black t-shirt, is holding a smartphone in his hands. He is looking down at the phone. The background is slightly blurred, showing a green plant on the right and some shelves on the left. A semi-transparent banner with a white border is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Brian Derrick, Oath.Vote".

Brian Derrick, Oath.Vote

Founder of the Anti-SCAM PAC Coalition

What Is a PAC?

PACs pool campaign contributions from members or donors to influence elections, legislation, and ballot initiatives across America.

PAC

Contribution limits set by FEC or state, can give to candidates directly

Super PAC

No limits and no coordination

IE

Independent Expenditure on a candidate's behalf



How Do Most PACs Operate?

Fundraising Methods

- Donor events and grassroots outreach
- Digital advertising
- Payroll deductions for connected PACs

Spending Categories

- Political advertising and messaging
- Campaign consulting services
- Direct candidate support
- Administrative and compliance costs

📄 **Key Restriction:** PACs must file detailed FEC reporting on all contributions and expenditures.





Self-Dealing: When Insiders Benefit

Self-dealing redirects PAC funds to benefit officers, associates, or related entities rather than advancing political causes.

Connected Consulting Firms

PAC funds paid to companies owned by officers or close associates

Blurred Lines

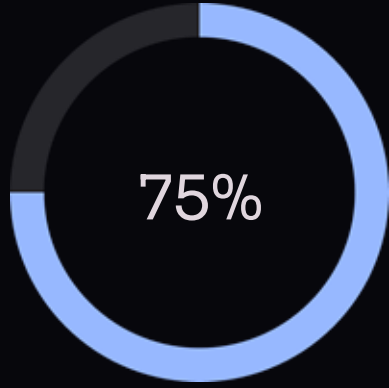
Millions funneled through strategist-linked firms, raising coordination concerns

Legal Gray Areas

Practices may be technically legal but ethically questionable, risking penalties

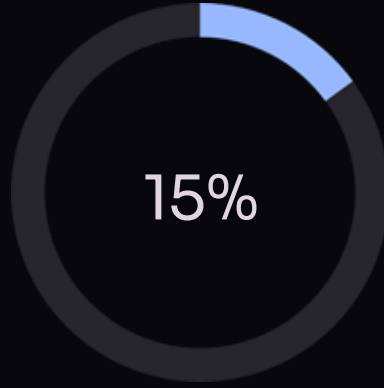
Case Study: Progressive Turnout Project spent more than \$37M on fundraising activities through one firm - Mothership Strategies

Fundraising: Where Donations Disappear



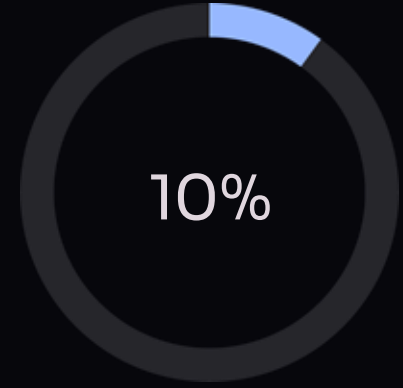
Fundraising

Some PACs spend majority on fundraising, not politics



Actual Impact

Minimal funds reach candidates or causes donors intended



Overhead

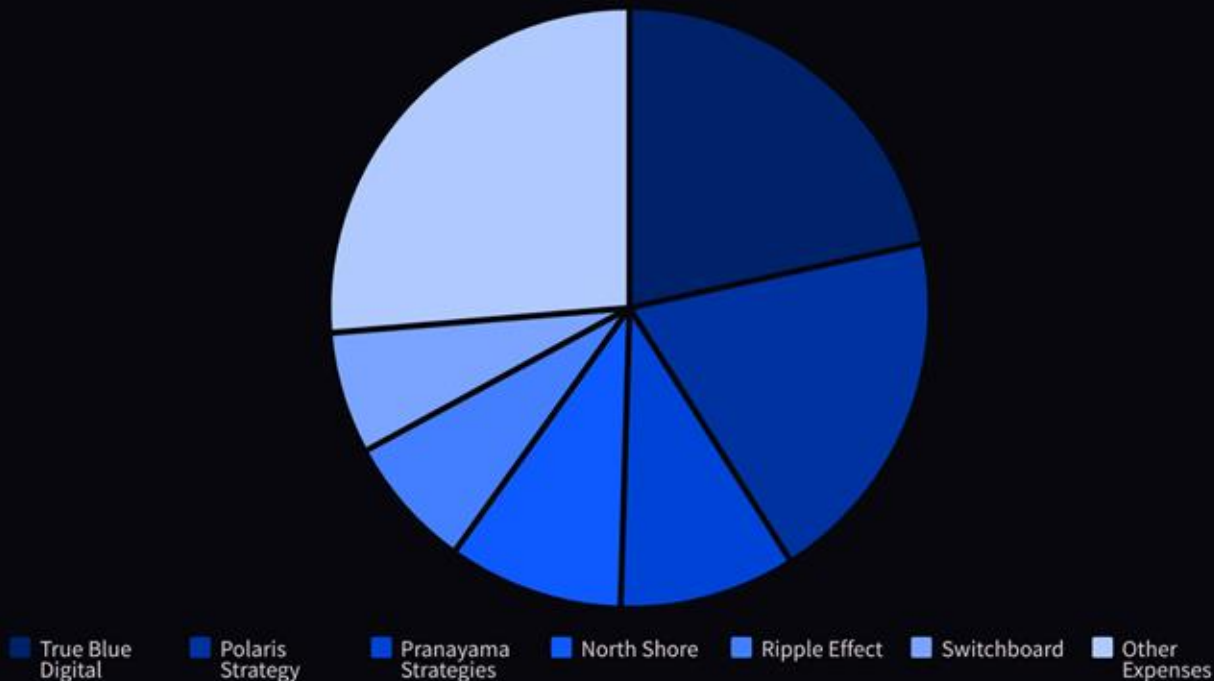
Fundraising firms owned by PAC operators

Warning Signs of Scam PACs

- Disproportionate spending on solicitations
- Consultant fees paid to PAC insiders or family members
- Minimal actual contributions to candidates or causes

Fundraising Overhead: Defend Our Courts

Defend Our Courts, a PAC that reported spending \$1.8 million in total, allocated a significant portion of its budget to fundraising activities. Approximately \$1.3 million of its total spending went towards various fundraising efforts, primarily through a select group of consulting firms.



As the chart illustrates, a substantial part of Defend Our Courts' expenditures was directed to these key fundraising consultants, highlighting the significant overhead involved in generating campaign contributions.



Mona Zeftel & Susan Labandibar

Swing Blue Alliance and Scam PACs

Overwhelmed by emails



ScamBusters

1. SPAM: Work with partners to stop the flood of unsolicited political solicitations.
2. SCAM Fight corrupt PACs as part of the anti-scam PAC coalition
3. EDUCATE: Help political volunteers and donors avoid scam PACs and focus on winning elections!



Grandma Jill's Inbox

☆ Grandma Jill 13 members



 Susan Labandibar 3	FW: Toxic Water Warning — From: 4Patriots <news@play.theamericanbeat.com> Sent: Saturday, December 13, 2025 7:41:53 AM
 Susan Labandibar	FW: In echoes of Minneapolis, whistleblower says Maine company bilked Medicaid dollars — From: Just The News <news@up
 Susan Labandibar	FW: this is our last chance... — From: MILLIONS slashed in Social Security?? via Progressive Turnout Project <admin@e.turnou
 Susan Labandibar	FW: Chief Justice Roberts ROASTED Trump — From: ! Trump is praying you ignore this email Progressive Turnout Project <ad
 Susan Labandibar	FW: Jen Psaki's massive MS NOW battle: >> — From: Breaking News [via TurnoutPAC.org] <admin@e.turnoutpac.org> Sent: Fri
 Susan Labandibar 3	FW: The Department of War is coming after me: — From: Mark Kelly message (via DEMVP) <info@demvp.org> Sent: Friday, Dec
 Susan Labandibar	FW: If you are a Cambridge Democrat, please keep reading... — From: Elect State Dems (via DLCC.org) <staff@dlcc.org> Sent: I
 Susan Labandibar	FW: The Department of Defense is coming after me — From: Mark Kelly <admin@e.turnoutpac.org> Sent: Friday, December 12,
☐ Susan Labandibar	FW: regarding Your MS Now viewership — From: Reaching out again (via Progressive Turnout Project) <admin@e.turnoutpac.or
 Susan Labandibar	FW: Susan, the DLCC is expanding our target map! — From: Heather Williams (via DLCC.org) <staff@dlcc.org> Sent: Friday, Dec
 Susan Labandibar	FW: Trump is LAUGHING in our faces [huge Supreme Court BOMBHELL] — From: EMERGENCY UPDATE (TurnoutPAC.org) <ad
 Susan Labandibar 2	FW: Ilhan Omar is a by-product of fraud — From: Tyler Bowyer, Turning Point PAC <news@play.theamericanbeat.com> Sent: Fri
 Susan Labandibar	FW: Court coup — MAGA seizes permanent control of Arkansas — From: Breaking: <info@teamdefendourcourts.ccsend.com>:

Progressive Turnout Project

You have been invited to represent Massachusetts Democrats in our House Advisory Board. Please share your honest opinions to develop a foolproof strategy against the dangerous House GOP >>

REGISTERED TO: `susan.labandibar@techboston.com`

REPRESENTING: `Cambridge, Massachusetts`

RESPONSE: `Pending`

DUE: `11:59PM`



BEGIN NOW →

Hello: due to your status as a top Massachusetts Democrat, you have been selected to join the House Advisory Board today.

10% increase in turnout?

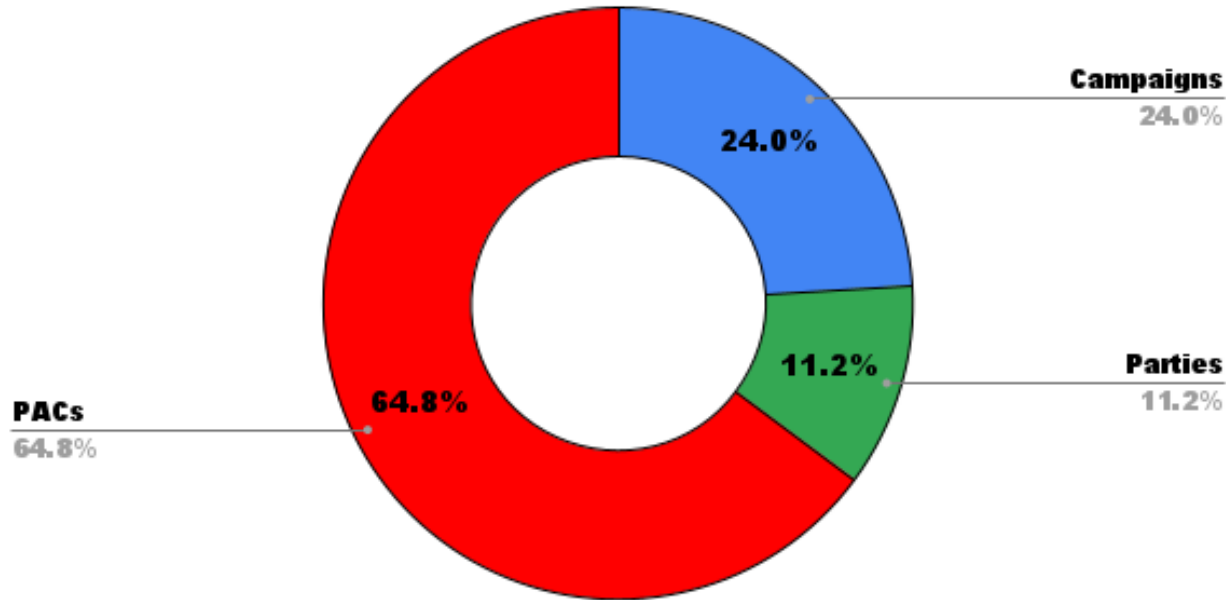
The best way to turn out voters is with one-on-one conversations.

Progressive Turnout Project is built around this truth, proven time and time again by researchers — including us. On average, our field work boosts voter turnout by more than 10%.



The scale of the problem

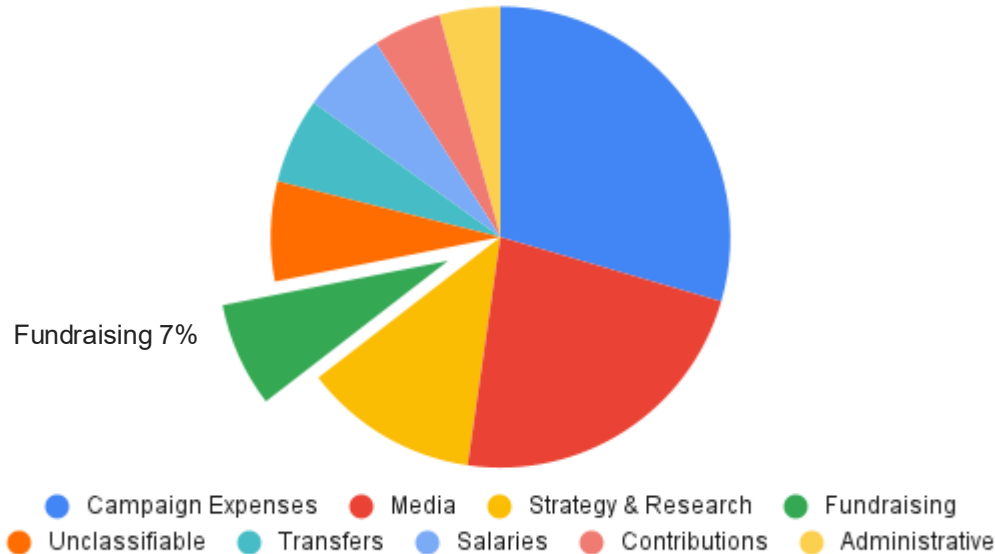
PACs Captured 65% of 2023/2024 Political Donations



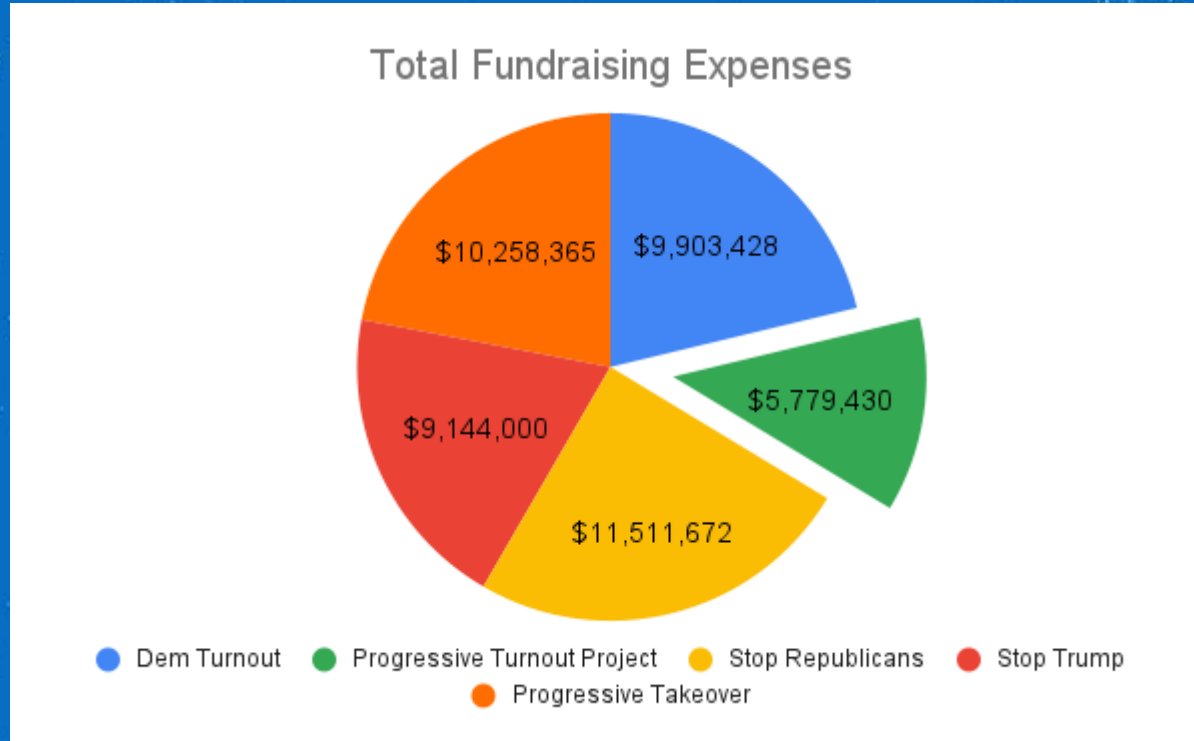
Progressive Turnout Project Expenditures

2023/24 Expenditures

Source: Open Secrets



Feeder PACs





Ryan Mioduski

ActBlue Jail and Scambusters

ActBlue's Recent Progress

ActBlue, the donation platform used by almost all Democratic campaigns, adopted stronger safeguards in August. This has reduced fundraising abuse dramatically.

They've investigated hundreds of reported misleading fundraisers, broadly enforced donor-protection policies, and 16 PACs have been permanently removed from ActBlue.

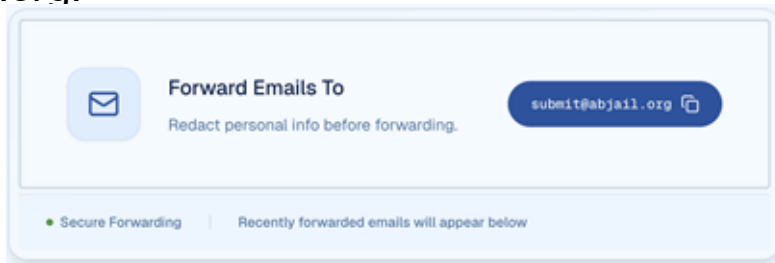
- **Entity Clarity**
- **Impersonation**
- **Fake Matches**
- **Misleading Branding**
- **PAC Disclosure**
- **Unsubstantiated Claims**

AB Jail - Easy Reporting

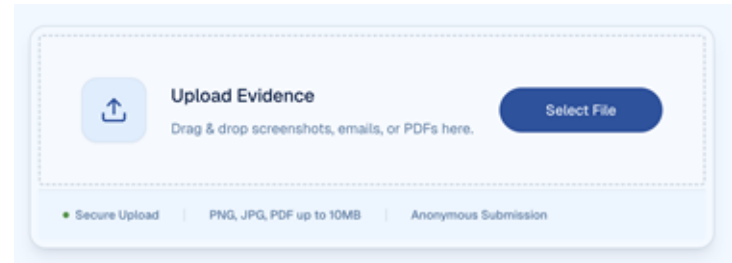
Forward deceptive political fundraising emails to submit@abjail.org.

You will receive an immediate reply with any detected violations of ActBlue's policy and a one-click option to report the email to ActBlue's trust and safety team.

Screenshots of text messages and emails are also accepted on the website at abjail.org.



This screenshot shows the 'Forward Emails To' section of the AB Jail website. It features a light blue background with a white rounded rectangle. On the left is a blue square icon with a white envelope. To its right, the text 'Forward Emails To' is displayed in bold, followed by the instruction 'Redact personal info before forwarding.' in a smaller font. On the right side of the rectangle is a dark blue button with the text 'submit@abjail.org' and a small copy icon. Below the rectangle, there is a status bar with two items: a green dot followed by 'Secure Forwarding' and a vertical line followed by 'Recently forwarded emails will appear below'.



This screenshot shows the 'Upload Evidence' section of the AB Jail website. It features a light blue background with a white rounded rectangle. On the left is a blue square icon with a white upload arrow. To its right, the text 'Upload Evidence' is displayed in bold, followed by the instruction 'Drag & drop screenshots, emails, or PDFs here.' in a smaller font. On the right side of the rectangle is a dark blue button with the text 'Select File'. Below the rectangle, there is a status bar with three items: a green dot followed by 'Secure Upload', a vertical line followed by 'PNG, JPG, PDF up to 10MB', and another vertical line followed by 'Anonymous Submission'.

Transparency

AB Jail provides the transparency that ActBlue's process lacks – we crowdsource reporting and make activity visible to everyone.

Recent Activity		View full archive →
Latest reports from the community.		
The Voter Protection Project	User Submitted	
⚠ False/Unsubstantiated Claims · Email	14m ago	
House Majority PAC (HMP)	Bot Captured	
⚠ ActBlue Permitted Matching Program · Email	5h ago	
Progress Action Fund (PAF)	Bot Captured	
⚠ ActBlue Permitted Matching Program · Email	5h ago	

Repeat Offenders		Last 90 days
Organization	Violations	Latest
Stop Republicans	148	11/23/25
Elect Democratic Women	42	12/2/25
National Democratic Training ...	18	11/5/25
CHC BOLD PAC	18	10/28/25
Democratic Strategy Institute	16	11/5/25

Scambusters Initiative

Scambusters is a newly formed group that meets virtually to crowdsource research on Scam PACs and fundraising abuse.

For example, we've identified some of the worst offenders of self-dealing and fundraising abuse.

$$\textit{Efficiency Ratio} = \textit{Electoral Expenditures} / \textit{Total Raised}$$

We're looking for more volunteers to expand our research to investigate more PACs and stay ahead of the 2026 cycle.

Easy Next Steps



- Submit a complaint on ActBlue Jail



- Learn more about becoming a ScamBuster researcher
- Sign up to be notified for our two-part class on getting rid of spam texts and emails



Questions?



Thank you!

Join us again next time:
January

