

the Kansas Citian

News and Opinions on Issues That Impact Kansas City and the Nation

Wednesday, August 1, 2012

Kansas Politics, Follow the Money



When it comes to Kansas politics, one organization is outspending, and outmaneuvering their competition.

No, we aren't talking about Koch Industries or their owners the Koch brothers, we're talking about the Kansas National Education Association.

Over the last two reporting periods the KNEA has raised over \$660,000. Of that, an amazing \$628,000 of it came through unreported donations. The KNEA claims these funds represent voluntary contributions by its members to its PAC.

With the money it raises the KNEA PAC maximizes its direct contributions to candidates it supports, i.e. Democrats and "moderate" Republicans, and sends out mailers on their behalf. Left over funds, and there are many, are then funneled into an array of other PACs who use the money to contribute directly to candidates

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the KNEA supports, to indirect advertisements supporting those candidates, and on to other PACs who do the same. Some of the PACs the KNEA PAC pays for include: the Senate Republican Leadership Committee (SRLC) - \$25,000, Kansas Jobs PAC - \$50,000, various state and federal Democrat PACs, Keeping the Kansas Promise PAC, Legislative Victory Funds 1, 2, and 3, Working Kansas Alliance, and approximately 30 regional teachers union PACs like the KNEA-SM PAC.

The Kansas Jobs PAC received \$181,000 in contributions. The KNEA directly contributed \$50,000 to the PAC and another \$25,000 indirectly through the SRLC, who donated \$100,000 in total to the organization. The remaining funds for the Kansas Jobs PAC came from the Teamsters union, a carpenters union, and the Kansas Quality Mental Health Services PAC.

The Kansas Jobs PAC then donated \$40,000 of the money they received to the Kansas Values PAC, an organization setup by Ryan Wright, executive director of the Kansas Values Institute. The rest went to direct and indirect contributions to the candidates the KNEA supports.

The Senate Republican Leadership Committee was created by Steve Morris, Kansas Senate president. As previously mentioned it gave \$100,000 to the Kansas Jobs PAC. It's second largest contributor is the KNEA, followed closely by the Kansas Contractors Association and the Kansas Quality Mental Health Services PAC. Are you starting to see a pattern here?

In addition to the large contribution the SRLC made to the Kansas Jobs PAC, it donated \$70,000 to the Kansas Traditional Republican Majority PAC, an organization run by Andy Wollen. Kansas Quality Mental Health Services PAC and the United Transportation Union kicked in the remainder of KTRMs donations.

The KTRM took that money and produced a number of mailings supporting various candidates, it also spent \$8,000 on "consulting" fees with Ryan Wright, founder of the Kansas Values PAC.

The campaign contribution limit for a single donor is \$1,000 per period, with current reporting periods being 2011 and the first of 2012 through the primary. By the time money has filtered through from the KNEA PAC to the smaller packs like the Kansas Values PACs, that money has gone to upwards of \$10,000 (\$1,000 per period per PAC connected to the KNEA) in direct campaign contributions and tens of thousands in indirect support.

When Democrats say the Citizens United SCOTUS decision will some how result in companies buying elections, what they really mean is it might result in other interests being able to amass enough funds to counteract the KNEA and other Democrat PACs overwhelming influence on the election process.

Posted by [theKansasCitian](#) at 11:25 AM

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