

# The Massive Progressive Dark-Money Group You've Never Heard Of

Over the past half decade, Democrats have quietly pulled ahead of Republicans in untraceable political spending. One group helped make it happen.

-Emma Green, The Atlantic

In a trendy co-working space in Washington, D.C.'s Dupont Circle—where people wear Chucks and fuss about fancy coffee—lies the progressive movement's empire of political cash. Over the past half decade, Democrats have quietly pulled ahead of Republicans in so-called dark-money spending, funneling hundreds of millions from anonymous donors into campaigns around the country.

The groups that spend money this way tend to have innocuous-sounding names and promiscuously spawn mini-organizations that take up particular state and local causes. The North Fund, for example, spent nearly \$5 million trying to legalize marijuana in Montana last year. The Sixteen Thirty Fund—the indisputable heavyweight of Democratic dark money—was the second-largest super-PAC donor in 2020, according to the investigative organization OpenSecrets, giving roughly \$61 million of effectively untraceable money to progressive causes. The organization that connects many of these groups—what a critic might call the mothership—is called Arabella Advisors.