

# GOP support slips nationwide among business class, but not here

Sunday, December 09, 2007

By Bill Toland, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Post-Gazette

Anecdotal evidence -- Morgan Stanley CEO John Mack's symbolic and much ballyhooed defection from the Bush camp in favor of New York Sen. Hillary Clinton's campaign, for instance -- and several polls show the Republican Party is losing support among the business class, but in southwestern Pennsylvania, that core bloc remains in the GOP's corner.

A Post-Gazette analysis of contributions to presidential primary campaigns through the first three quarters of the year shows that, in and around Pittsburgh, Republicans still get the lion's share of contributions from investment firms, construction magnates, bankers, energy companies, the metals industries and chief executive officers large and small.

White-collar-wise, Democrats continue to do well collecting money from attorneys, technology companies and medical professionals (in addition to the more blue-collar labor groups).

This autumn, the Wall Street Journal announced on its front page that the "GOP Is Losing Grip On Core Business Vote," suggesting that fiscal conservatives are upset with spending levels under President Bush and the formerly Republican House and Senate. A "potentially historic shift" was in the making, and the GOP was at risk of losing its lucrative title as the party of big business, altering fund-raising road maps for future elections.

But here, Republican candidates have benefited from the largesse of the usual customers. Frequent GOP contributor and 84 Lumber founder Joe Hardy gave \$2,300, the maximum primary contribution allowed under federal law, to former New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani; and Louis Astorino, head of the Downtown architecture firm, did the same. Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney received contributions from Consol Energy (including company Chief Operating Officer Peter Lilly and CEO Brett Harvey) and several from Allegheny Energy. In September, Arizona Sen. John McCain received a \$1,000 check from venture capitalist and FreeMarkets Inc. founder Glen Meakem (who headed former Lt. Gov. Bill Scranton's ill-fated 2006 campaign for the governor's office) and from former Mellon CEO Frank Cahouet.

On the Democratic side, Mrs. Clinton has received several contributions from UPMC President and CEO Jeffrey Romoff and from Downtown law firm Reed Smith LLP. U.S. Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois won contributions from Strip District tech startup Penthera Partners, chairman and founder of the Sheridan Broadcasting Corp. (owner of WAMO) Ronald Davenport, and plenty of doctors and physicians. Sen. Joe Biden counts Castlebrook Development and the Atticus Fund, a life insurance settlement fund, among his donors. Sen. John Edwards, an attorney, scored checks from the law firms of Caroselli Beachler McTiernan, Pepper Hamilton, the attorney for United Steelworkers and dozens more lawyers.



## Democrats reign in Pa.

Perhaps the contribution patterns are unchanged because Pittsburgh, as it always seems to be, is insulated from larger national trends, thanks to its staid demographics and unique politics.

Whereas the rest of the country is getting less homogenous and more socially liberal, Pittsburgh is overwhelmingly white, socially conservative and still influenced by big labor.

"It's always been that way in Pittsburgh," said Jim Roddey, who was a businessman before he became active in Allegheny County politics. He will soon be the chairman of the Allegheny County Republican Party.

He also said what might be treated as a political defection elsewhere is, in Pittsburgh, just an example of a savvy donor hedging his bets.

"When I was running for office, I would have people that call me that said, 'I'm going to contribute to you, but I hope you understand that I have to give to Dan [Onorato], too,' " he said.

Indeed, southwestern Pennsylvania defies the overall blue state trends. In Pennsylvania through three fund-raising quarters, Democratic presidential candidates have raised nearly twice as much as Republicans, \$4.53 million to \$2.29 million.

But in southwestern Pennsylvania (defined here as any community with a ZIP codes starting with 152, 151, 150, 153, 156, 160, 161, 162, 159, 157, 155 and 154), Republicans have outgained Democrats \$533,543 to \$508,470.

The leader in the region was Mr. Giuliani, with more than \$283,000 through three quarters, according to Federal Election Commission records. Next was Mr. Obama, who collected more than anybody else in and near the city -- \$120,400 from ZIP codes beginning with 152.

Mr. Giuliani was bolstered overall by big-business contributions from Washington, Fayette and Greene counties: the aforementioned Mr. Hardy, Wendy Cameron (Washington Hospital board of directors), Charles Case (Case Scalo Development), Douglas Farnham (PFBC Environmental Energy Technology), Gilbert Gabriel (Gabriel Brothers discount stores), John Yocca (A.C. Coy, a local tech staffing company) and dozens more.

Jack Piatt, head of Millcraft Industries, gave \$2,300. He said he didn't consider himself a political junkie, but so far as he can tell, whatever Republican drift exists can be traced back to one Big Thing: "I think the chatter is mostly because of this war situation," he said. "A lot of these people that you talk to are anti-Bush because of the war. I don't know that that's fair."

'President has worn us out'

Nationally, Democratic candidates have a huge fund-raising lead, partly a reflection of the Republican Party yet to be smitten with one particular candidate (and partly thanks to the Democrats' own improvements in fund-raising). The shift among the business class, Democrats believe, also plays a part in the fund-raising success.

"This president has worn us out," said William Green, GOP political consultant. "The core, the base, has been called upon for seven years" and hasn't gotten much out of it in terms of fiscal discipline or Social

Security reform. President Bush "never vetoed anything. I hear that time and time again .... There was a feeling like this in the Watergate era, when Nixon let down so many people."

More statistical evidence: Securities and investment industries have given \$13.5 million to Democratic candidates, \$10.4 million to Republicans, a 56-44 advantage in primary money. In the 2004 presidential race, the same sectors gave \$8.81 million to President Bush and \$4.42 million to Sen. John Kerry. Commercial banks this year have made Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Obama their top two recipients, followed by Mr. Romney and Mr. Giuliani. Hedge funds and private equity groups have given \$2.5 million to Republicans through October; \$3.3 million to Democrats.

In the health sector, President Bush received \$10.73 million, Mr. Kerry \$6.88 million three years ago, according to [OpenSecrets.org](http://OpenSecrets.org).

Today Democrats are getting \$680,000 from "health products and pharmaceuticals" sectors and \$4.04 million from "health professionals"; Republican candidates have received \$536,000 from the health and pharmacy sectors and \$3.16 million from health professionals throughout the primary fund-raising seasons.

"The business community is coming around to our side," said Damien LaVera, a spokesperson for the Democratic National Committee. Businesses, for example, increasingly are worried about how they'll pay for employee health-care benefits. A national health-care system appeals to some of them.

Democrats also are more trusted -- according to recent polling -- to handle deficit reduction and the economy.

"Those are three issues that are incredibly important to business," Mr. LaVera said.

Oil, gas industries like GOP

The national contribution trends and polling data complement each other. A joint Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll said 37 percent of "professionals and managers" queried identified themselves as Republican or leaning Republican. Three years ago, the figure was 44 percent. And today, Americans say they trust Democrats more so than the GOP to "control government spending" and deal with taxes and the economy, a reversal from the previous presidential election.

On the other hand, the oil and gas industries have given \$545,058 to Mr. Giuliani through three quarters, plus \$309,933 to Mitt Romney and \$189,935 to Sen. John McCain. Mrs. Clinton has received \$220,000 from those two industries, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks and categorizes federal campaign contributions. Agribusiness also figures to remain a Republican lock.

So is this a case of bandwagon jumping, or covering all the bases in the event of a Democratic presidential victory?

A result of improved Democratic fund raising overall (they lead \$241 million to \$175 million)? An anomaly, the result of the first two-party free-for-all since 1928, that might correct itself once the general election is upon us? Or is this a true philosophical shift among businessmen and women, the white-collar and CEO classes?

"There's been a few rough spots for the Republicans," said Grace Stanko, co-owner of North Hills Printing and active in the local GOP.

"But I think that we're trying to pull things together and make it a better, stronger party, [both] locally and across the board."

Bill Toland can be reached at [btoland@post-gazette.com](mailto:btoland@post-gazette.com) or 412-263-2625.

First published on December 9, 2007 at 12:00 am

## Political capital

How the two major political parties and their top presidential contenders have fared with fund-raising in the region (broken down by the first three digits of the region's postal codes) during the first three quarters of 2007.

POSTAL CODE	DEMS	GOP
152xx (Pittsburgh):	\$368,414	\$211,716
151xx (Pittsburgh/Allegheny):	\$46,366	\$90,857
150xx (Allegheny/Beaver):	\$33,561	\$52,135
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$448,341</b>	<b>\$354,708</b>
153xx (Washington/Greene):	\$12,669	\$90,355
156xx (Westmoreland/Armstrong):	\$25,059	\$20,160
160xx (Butler):	\$7,070	\$13,060
161xx (Lawrence/Mercer):	\$1,000	\$2,950
162xx (Armstrong/Clarion):	\$424	\$5,900
159xx (Indiana/Cambria):	\$625	\$13,737
157xx (Indiana/Jefferson):	\$11,170	\$18,852
155xx (Bedford/Somerset):	\$1,212	\$5,900
154xx (Fayette):	\$900	\$7,921
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$60,129</b>	<b>\$178,835</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$508,470</b>	<b>\$533,543</b>

## Democrat fund-raising

	CLINTON	OBAMA	EDWARDS	BIDEN
152xx (Pittsburgh):	\$72,148	\$120,400	\$51,921	\$58,000
151xx (Pittsburgh/ Allegheny):	\$10,410	\$18,008	\$12,448	0
150xx (Allegheny/Beaver):	\$1,990	\$6,051	\$5,870	\$18,900
153xx (Washington/Greene):	\$2,550	\$7,169	0	\$2,599
156xx (Westmoreland/ Armstrong):	\$1,000	\$5,584	\$5,250	\$7,100
160xx (Butler):	\$1,900	\$2,000	\$750	\$2,000
161xx (Lawrence/Mercer):	\$100	\$150	\$250	0
162xx (Armstrong/Clarion):	\$99	\$100	\$225	0
159xx (Indiana/Cambria):	0	\$500	0	0
157xx (Indiana/Jefferson):	0	\$2,300	\$3,270	0
155xx (Bedford/Somerset):	0	\$212	0	\$4,800
154xx (Fayette):	0	\$500	\$400	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$90,197</b>	<b>\$162,974</b>	<b>\$80,384</b>	<b>\$88,599</b>

## Republican fund-raising

	GIULIANI	ROMNEY	PAUL	MCCAIN
152xx (Pittsburgh):	\$112,450	\$58,325	\$10,551	\$19,405
151xx (Pittsburgh/ Allegheny):	\$55,480	\$22,050	\$2,025	\$7,014
150xx (Allegheny/Beaver):	\$22,230	\$15,700	\$2,945	\$18,44
153xx (Washington/Greene):	\$72,750	\$9,100	\$250	\$3,130
156xx (Westmoreland/ Armstrong):	\$4,350	\$9,400	\$3,400	\$560
160xx (Butler):	\$4,150	\$4,250	0	\$210
161xx (Lawrence/Mercer):	\$1,450	\$1,025	\$3,175	\$325
162xx (Armstrong/Clarion):	\$250	\$650	\$400	\$4,600
159xx (Indiana/Cambria):	\$7,600	0	\$450	\$4,950
157xx (Indiana/Jefferson):	0	\$100	\$600	
155xx (Bedford/Somerset):	0	\$4,800	\$1,000	0
154xx (Fayette):	\$600	\$3,600	\$350	\$520
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$283,360</b>	<b>\$128,200</b>	<b>\$36,448</b>	<b>\$44,158</b>