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Oligarchs in U.S. politics are linked to support for members of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

✦ AI Overview

Yes, wealthy donors often characterized as oligarchs contribute substantial funds to both the Democratic and Republican parties through super PACs and other spending groups. A 2025 analysis by the [Brennan Center for Justice](#) found that super PACs tied to both Donald Trump and Kamala Harris received hundreds of millions of dollars from dark money groups in the 2024 election cycle.

Mega-donors and their political spending

Political donations from ultra-wealthy individuals to campaign super PACs and dark money groups have increased significantly, especially following the 2010 *Citizens United v. FEC* Supreme Court decision, which led to the creation of super PACs. Some prominent examples from the 2024 presidential election cycle include:

- **Donors to Republicans:** Billionaires like Elon Musk, Timothy Mellon, and Miriam Adelson collectively provided hundreds of millions of dollars to pro-Trump super PACs.
- **Donors to Democrats:** The pro-Kamala Harris super PAC, Future Forward USA, received more than \$136 million from an affiliated dark money group, whose funding reportedly includes large sums from billionaires like Bill Gates.

Mechanisms for donor influence

Wealthy donors use various legal avenues to contribute large sums to political campaigns and influence elections:

- **Super PACs:** These committees can accept unlimited contributions from individuals, corporations, and unions. Although they cannot coordinate directly with candidates, they spend unlimited sums on independent expenditures to support or oppose candidates. The largest super PACs in 2024 received the vast majority of their funding from mega-donors contributing \$5 million or more.
- **Dark Money Groups:** These nonprofits do not disclose their donors. They can channel large, untraceable sums to super PACs, which obscures the original source of the money and has increasingly become a major source of funding in US elections.
- **Issue-based spending:** Some wealthy donors focus their spending on specific policy issues, using their influence to advocate for their interests with elected officials from both parties. For example, the insurance company United Healthcare Services contributed to a Democratic-aligned super PAC in 2022 and has ties to the Republican administration.

Perception and concerns

The extensive financial support from the ultra-wealthy across both political parties has led to concerns and criticism from various groups:

- **Both parties as beneficiaries:** Some political commentators argue that both the Democratic and Republican parties benefit from oligarchic influence and have an interest in maintaining the current system.
- **Erosion of democracy:** Critics suggest that the outsized influence of mega-donors on both sides of the aisle threatens American democracy by giving the wealthy disproportionate sway over political outcomes.
- **Regulatory gaps:** Weak federal campaign finance regulations and a lack of enforcement by the Federal Election Commission (FEC) have enabled super PACs to operate with minimal oversight, blurring the lines between independent expenditures and coordinated campaign activities.



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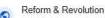
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