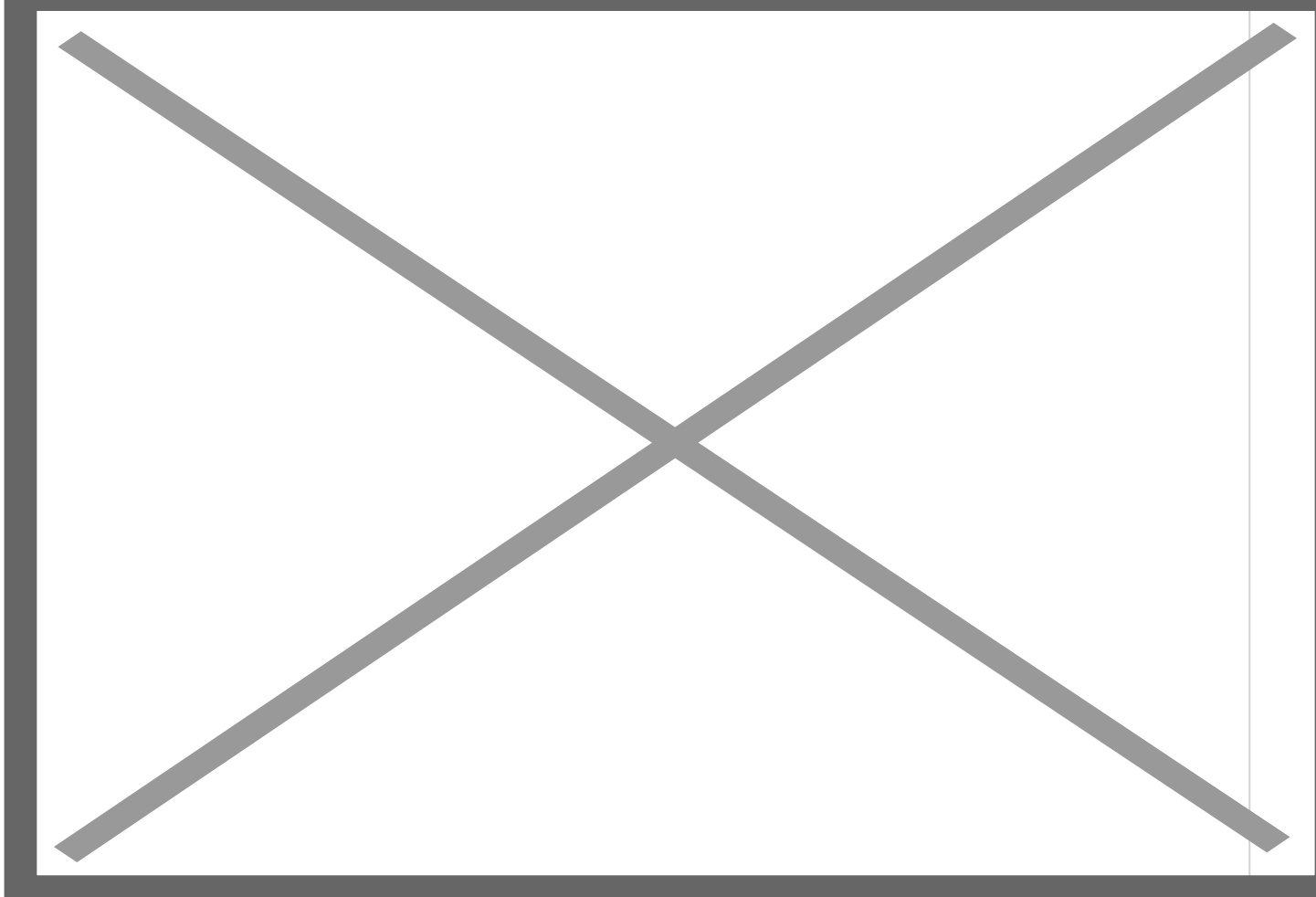


Billionaire Elon Musk pours \$75 million into Donald Trump campaign, underscoring influence on U.S. election

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Elon Musk walks to the stage to speak alongside Republican presidential nominee Donald

New York, October 16 (RHC)-- Billionaire Elon Musk has funnelled \$75 million over three months into an organization he created in support of former United States President Donald Trump, the 2024 Republican presidential candidate.

The spending, revealed in a federal disclosure on Tuesday, underscores how Musk has become a key piece of Trump's efforts to win the November 5 presidential election against Democratic candidate Kamala Harris. It also underscores the persistent influence of mega-donors in US politics.

Speaker to right-wing personality Tucker Carlson earlier this month, Musk said he had created the group, known as a political action committee or PAC, to "support the core values that I believe in".

Named the America PAC, the group describes those values as the pursuit of secure borders, sensible spending, safe cities, a fair justice system, free speech and self-protection.

Musk — who owns the car company Tesla, the social media platform X and the aerospace company SpaceX — is considered one of the wealthiest men in the world.

The South Africa-born entrepreneur endorsed Trump following an assassination attempt against the former president in Butler, Pennsylvania, in July. Musk later joined Trump on the campaign trail when Trump returned to Butler for another rally in October.

"As you can see, I am not just MAGA. I am dark MAGA," Musk said at the time, gesturing to his black "Make America Great Again" hat.

Speaking at the Butler rally, Musk said Democrats want "to take away your freedom of speech, they want to take away your right to bear arms, they want to take away your right to vote, effectively."

Trump has regularly referenced Musk's endorsement on the campaign trail. He also pledged to tap Musk to lead a newly envisioned government efficiency commission if he regains the White House in November.

All told, America PAC had spent \$87 million on the race as of October 9th -- just one week ago -- largely investing in voter mobilisation and canvassing efforts in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Georgia, Nevada and Arizona.

As a result of the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United ruling, corporations have been able to spend an unlimited amount on political activities in support of candidates, as long as they do not directly coordinate with a campaign.

Previously, corporations were limited as to how much they could spend to help a candidate win. But the Citizens United decision paved the way for the creation of super PACs, which — unlike traditional PACs — have no cap on fundraising.

Spending in U.S. elections has since surged, of course. The ruling also saw an increase in so-called "dark money" -- with individual able to hide their election spending through shell companies that donate to super PACs.

OpenSecrets, a politics watchdog, projects that a record total of \$15.9 billion will be spent on federal elections during the 2024 season.

That will exceed the \$15.1 billion spent during the 2020 election cycle — though, when adjusted for inflation, the value of that dollar amount is roughly worth \$18.3 billion in today's currency.

OpenSecrets also reported that outside spending on campaigns — including through Musk's America PAC — is well outpacing previous election cycles. Outside groups have spent nearly \$2.6 billion so far this year, and there is still a month until the election. That's nearly a billion more than at the same point in 2020.

OpenSecrets said outside spending has favoured conservatives this election season, in a reversal from last year, when liberals received more.

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