

National & World

Super-PAC's Exploit Loophole

By Matt Rodgers - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - Mmr187@psu.edu

111 million viewers tuned in to watch the Super Bowl and its synonymous commercials on February 6. But, it may amaze people that the money spent on Super Bowl commercials that weekend paled in comparison to the money that Super-PAC's spent to tarnish one candidate and praise another in the Nevada, Minnesota, Colorado and Missouri's primaries and caucus'. Super-PAC's have become the new hot-topic in Washington and out on the campaign trail. You could say that the Super-PAC is the new grease that keeps the wheels of our government turning.

These new organizations, called Super PAC's, have taken the ideology of the Political Action Committee (PAC), but instead of donors directly donating to a candidate's campaign or their associative PAC, donors can also donate money to new Super PAC's. These organizations in turn use the money to advance the mission of the Super PAC. Every candidate now has at least one Super PAC "campaigning" for them. Super PAC's are in new unguided water that can easily get out of hand; and quickly. Unlimited budget's for the big cats leave the grassroots politician in an almost insurmountable position.

Political fundraising is kind of like an onion; there are many layers to be peeled back. The typical donation is from a person, company or organization. These donors can donate up to \$2,500 a year. If donors wanted to "invest" more into their candidate and his/her platform, they turn to the candidate's associative PAC. While this PAC may not fully support a candidate, they will spend money on items that their candidate also endorses, and they believe in. In the past few elections, the limits on these PAC donations have been curbed to even the playing field. But, politicians being politicians and lobbyists being lobbyists, it was only a matter of time before they found a loophole in the general election legislation.

Super-PAC's have swooped in and picked up where the law ends. The PAC's take any donation from \$1 up to millions. While the Super PAC is not officially affiliated with a candidate, they do officially endorse their platform. Donors can now donate to the Red, White and Blue Super-PAC that is a conservative political group; Red, White and Blue also endorse Rick Santorum, off the record. Romney's main Super PAC is "Restore our Future." Instead of Santorum or Romney's campaign paying out of their own coffers for commercial time leading up to different primaries, the Super PAC use their donations to pay for commercials, cold call, or putting a sign up on the side of the road. By endorsing a cause and not a candidate, Super-PAC's squeeze their way through an unfortunate loophole.

As of Feb. 28, Red, White and Blue have generated over \$4.9 million; Restore our Future has raised over \$26.8 million. As you can see, there is a dramatic difference between Santorum, a somewhat grass root candidate, and Romney, who has his coffers filled by big business. According to opensecrets.com, over \$75 million have been raised among all presidential candidates, including Obama. Of that \$75 million, \$72 million came from organizations outside each candidate's campaign. Out of that \$72 million, 350 Super PAC's accounted for \$61 million of it. It seems that these new Super PAC's now hold more value than a candidate's campaign does. As much as we would like to think that the donations are in good nature, we are kidding ourselves because you know favors will be granted down the line.

A time where Americans are enduring the biggest recession since the Great Depression, the amount of dollars raised for these candidates could be better used helping our economy recover. Usually 90% of campaign workers are volunteers, thus facilitating big business vs. the American public. When it comes to politics, you need to know what is going on, otherwise you mind as well walk through life with a blindfold. Your vote means more this November's election than it has in any November in recent past. Take control of your world, VOTE!



Kim Jong Un (Photo courtesy of abcnews.go.com)

The passing of North Korea's "Dear Leader, Kim Jong Il" in December has left its neighbors, and most of the world wondering what's next. Kim Jong Il's third son, second from the same mother, Kim Jong Un has been named the new ruler of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The 29-year-old Un finds himself, through blood-line only, the newest leader of one of the world's most volatile countries. He takes the helm of a country whose people have lived in famine for the past decade, yet are known to have enough money to produce nuclear weapons; weapons that can potentially reach the continental United States. The world waits to see if Un releases the reins on the autocratic monarchy, or follows his father's line.

At a time where 'Revolution' has run rampant across the world, the re-opening of peace talks in the Korean peninsula would be a step in the right direction. Pyongyang has intimated opening dialogue with Washington, but asks for over 300 thousand tons of food to help rescue its population from never-ending famine. Face to face talks between Pyongyang and Washington on Feb. 23 showed little promise, with the US Special

Representative to North Korea saying it was a good first meeting with the new government.

The talks are extensions of ongoing (and unsigned) peace agreements that would de-militarize North Korea's nuclear program. Other countries involved in the talks are South Korea, Russia, China and Japan. An agreement would allow representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access inside North Korea's nuclear program; both military and energy. Do not hold your breath on the latter, as IAEA talks are down the line in any scenario opening North Korea to the world.

As for now, America has to wait and see what the youngest "ruler" in the world will do.

Un was educated in Germany, under an alias, and has been exposed to the western world and media, unlike 99% of his population. He played basketball just like the kid next door did. But, that is about all the western world knows about him. Only one photo, prior to his recent appointment as ruler of the DPRK, was known to exist outside North Korea.

The US and South Korea held live war-games

School Shooting at an Ohio High School

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On Monday, Feb. 27 in Chardon, Ohio a town outside of Cleveland, a student gunman opened fire in Chardon High School's cafeteria at around 7:30 a.m. leaving three students dead and two students wounded. Thomas "TJ" Lane, 17, was the perpetrator. No motive has been announced.

According to witness reports, Lane entered the cafeteria with a .22 caliber handgun inside his bag and began shooting at four male students: Daniel Parmertor, 16, Russell King, Jr., 17, Demetrius Hewlin, 16, and Nick Walczak, 17. Three out of the four were shot in the back of the head. Parmertor died on Monday, King and Hewlin died the following day.

Nate Mueller, 16, claimed that Lane opened fire in the cafeteria and his right ear was grazed by a bullet. Mueller was not hospitalized.

And once the incident occurred most students and teachers knew how to act. School officials say they have prepared and practiced lockdown and school shootings simulations before. Joe Ricci, a math teacher, locked his classroom and put on a bullet-proof vest. It was reported that Ricci heard moaning and found an injured Walczak. Ricci administered first aid on the student. Walczak remains in serious condition.

Police reported that Lane also brought a knife with him and he fired 10 shots in the cafeteria.

Once Lane exited the cafeteria, the school's offensive coordinator for the football team, Frank Hall chased the shooter down a hallway. In the hall, Joy Rickers, 18, was shot in the buttocks as the gunman fled. Rickers remains in stable condition.

Lane fled the school but police apprehended him 45 minutes later, about a mile away from the school.

According to reports, Lane is not a current student at Chardon High School; he is currently attending Lake Academy, an alternative school in a nearby county. However, Lake did attend at Chardon High School until last year. Lane was known as an "at-risk student." According to students at both high schools, they claim Lane was a quiet person with little friends. They also claimed Lane was a good person who was never in trouble before.

Prosecutor David Joyce revealed that Lane was not bullied or under any influence and that Lane's victims were at random. Joyce also claimed that Lane is "not well."

Lane is currently held in juvenile court and he will be charged as an adult. He has been charged with three counts of aggravated murder and other offenses.

Lane's grandparents served as his guardians. Lane's father, Thomas was once arrested on attempted murder charges against his wife and has a restraining order; he spent nine months in jail and was released in June 2003.

Chardon High School canceled its classes until Friday, March 2. On March 1 the school opened for students and parents to talk to counselors.



Thomas Lane entering a police car. (Photo courtesy of nydailytimes.com)

N. Korea's Newest Leader Ready to Take Control

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on Feb. 25th that led to the DPRK issuing a statement of war, calling for a "sacred war of our own style" against South Korea and the US. The National Defense Commission went on to say that the sacred war would involve "means unknown to the world." While most see the statement as a muscle flex and a response to the live war games, it does have scary implications. When nuclear weapons are involved in any tension, the stakes raise exponentially.

If the status quo resumes, the 1.2 million man army of the DPRK will remain active across the demilitarized zone (DMZ or 38th Parallel) from South Korea. More importantly, over 30,000 American soldiers will remain in South Korea (It would be nice to have those soldiers come home at the same time America withdraws their troops from Iraq and Afghanistan). American foreign policy advisers warn America to stay vigilant until the Un "dynasty" makes the first move. No matter what happens, the world lost one of its ugliest figures the day Kim Jong Il died.