

One Nation Is A Dark Money Nonprofit Within The McConnell Political Network

SUMMARY: One Nation, a nonprofit with close ties to Senator Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, has announced a [\\$10 million advertising campaign](#) targeting the Build Back Better Act.

Despite operating as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, One Nation had put \$40 million in television advertisements in the 2020 cycle. In September, One Nation transferred around \$75 million to McConnell-linked super PAC Senate Leadership Fund, enabling One Nation to skirt campaign finance disclosure rules on TV or radio ads. One Nation shares staff with Senate Leadership Fund, and both organizations were run by Steven Law, who began his career as a McConnell aide.

Some information has been reported on One Nation's contributors:

- Despite non-disclosure of contributions, The Guardian has reported that mega-donor Sheldon Adelson had given the group \$10 million around 2016.
- One Nation's funding has also been tied to the energy industry. Southern Company, a Fortune 500 business, was revealed to have contributed \$1 million to the group in 2020; oil refiner Andeavor contributed \$2 million, spread across 2016 and 2017. Finally, industry group the American Petroleum Institute has at least contributed \$50,000 to One Nation.
- One Nation's board of directors included Ken Cole, a former Pfizer lobbyist who had sat on the board of the Chamber of Commerce. Steven Law described seeking out Cole for his time at different industries, praising his "breadth of management experience and judgment."

One Nation Was A Dark Money Group, Connected To Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell And His Wider Political Network, Which Contributed \$75 Million In The 2020 Cycle Without Disclosing Contributions

One Nation Was A 501(c)(4) Nonprofit Organization, Allowed To Keep Contributions Undisclosed, Which Spent Over \$40 Million On Television Advertising In The 2020 Cycle

Open Secrets HEADLINE: "Senate GOP 'Dark Money' Group Passing Millions To Super PAC, Avoiding Disclosure" [Open Secrets, [10/21/20](#)]

One Nation Operated As A 501(c)(4) Nonprofit, Meaning It Could Not Have Politics As Its Primary Purpose And Was Not Obligated To Disclose Contributions. "Operating as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, One Nation is not allowed to have politics as its primary purpose and does not disclose its donors. Yet the dark money group has poured millions of dollars more into elections while avoiding FEC disclosure." [Open Secrets, [10/21/20](#)]

One Nation Put \$40 Million In Television Ads Across At Least Eleven States. "Senate Republican leadership-aligned 'dark money' group One Nation has funneled around \$75 million into 2020 elections without ever disclosing a dime to the Federal Election Commission, new campaign finance filings and ad records

show. One Nation bankrolled around \$40 million in TV ads across at least eleven states, according to OpenSecrets' new online ad data database and research in partnership with the Wesleyan Media Project." [Open Secrets, [10/21/20](#)]

One Nation Sent Millions In Its Funding To The McConnell-Aligned Super PAC Senate Leadership Fund – A Move Which Also Enabled One Nation To Skirt Disclosure Rules On Its Own Television And Radio Advertisements

2020: After Completing Television Advertisements, One Nation Contributed \$27.5 Million To McConnell's Super PAC Senate Leadership Fund. "Senate Republican leadership-aligned 'dark money' group One Nation has funneled around \$75 million into 2020 elections without ever disclosing a dime to the Federal Election Commission, new campaign finance filings and ad records show. [...] Shortly after, One Nation stopped spending on TV ads once the FEC's disclosure window kicked in, it passed \$27.5 million to Senate Leadership Fund, a super PAC aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) that shares staff and offices with the dark money group." [Open Secrets, [10/21/20](#)]

The Major Contribution To Super PAC Enabled One Nation To Skirt Federal Campaign Finance Rules On Disclosures For Advertisements 60 Days Before An Election. "Giving money to the allied super PAC rather than continuing to spend directly on TV ads enabled One Nation to skirt federal campaign finance rules that require it to disclose spending on TV or radio ads mentioning candidates within [60 days before Election Day](#) while still pouring millions more into 2020 elections." [Open Secrets, [10/21/20](#)]

Along With Giving Them Contributions, One Nation Shared Staff And Offices With McConnell Super PAC Senate Leadership Fund

One Nation Shared Staff And Offices With Republican Super PAC Senate Leadership Fund. "Masterminded by former White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove, One Nation launched in 2015 and effectively replaced the once-dominant Crossroads GPS. One Nation spent more than it raised in 2018, totaling \$64.1 million, as it funneled money to other conservative groups. Last year, One Nation gave \$18.6 million to the Senate Leadership Fund, a GOP-allied super PAC that shares staff and offices with the nonprofit." [Open Secrets, [11/21/19](#)]

One Nation Was Run By Steven Law, Former President Of Crossroads GPS, Who Had Began His Career Under McConnell

Steven Law Worked As CEO Of Senate Leadership Fund, One Nation, And American Crossroads/Crossroads GPS. "Steven Law brings two and a half decades of diverse experience in government, politics, ethics and management to his role as chief executive officer of Senate Leadership Fund, One Nation, American Crossroads and Crossroads GPS – four organizations that have transformed the world of independent advocacy, inspired numerous imitators on the left and right, and helped elect and defend new leadership in Congress that is dedicated to the goals of limited government, free markets, and a safer, more prosperous America." [Georgetown University – "Steven Law," accessed [10/13/21](#)]

Steven Law Began His Career As An Aide To Senator McConnell. "Law began his political career with U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY), starting as McConnell's legislative assistant on judiciary and campaign finance reform, manager of his first reelection campaign in 1990, chief of staff, and top adviser during McConnell's chairmanship of the Senate Ethics Committee." [Georgetown University – "Steven Law," accessed [10/13/21](#)]

One Nation Received \$10 Million In Contributions From Megadonors Such As Sheldon Adelson, As Well As Millions From Energy Companies

One Nation Received \$10 Million From Mega-Donor Sheldon Adelson

The Guardian: One Nation Received \$10 Million From Mega-Donor Sheldon Adelson. “Two other GOP operatives familiar with Adelson told the Guardian he had given \$10m to One Nation, a group run by Steven Law, once a top aide to Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell. A ‘dark money’ group, legally able to keep its donors secret, One Nation was launched in May 2015. This year it has spent at least \$16m on ads in several Senate races.” [The Guardian, [8/27/16](#)]

One Nation Received Contributions From Oil Refiner Andeavor, Fortune 500 Energy Company Southern Company, And The American Petroleum Institute

CREW: Southern Company, A Fortune 500 Business Headquartered In Georgia, Contributed \$1 Million To Dark Money Group One Nation In 2020. “Fortune 500 energy and utility company Southern Company contributed \$1 million to dark money group One Nation in 2020, according to a [disclosure](#) posted on the corporation’s website. One Nation is closely aligned with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. During 2020, the group poured more than \$20 million into the Senate runoff election in Georgia, where Southern Company is headquartered.” [Citizens for responsibility and Ethics in Washington, [9/23/21](#)]

CREW: Oil Refiner Andeavor Contributed \$2 Million To One Nation Across 2016 And 2017. “One of the country’s largest oil refiners, Andeavor, contributed \$1 million in both 2016 and 2017 to One Nation, a dark money group with close ties to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), according to voluntary disclosures on the company’s website. Since One Nation is not required to disclose its contributors, Andeavor’s disclosure of its contributions makes it one of the only known donors to the politically active nonprofit.” [Citizens for responsibility and Ethics in Washington, [9/23/21](#)]

American Petroleum Institute Contributed \$50,000 To One Nation. “In 2018, One Nation also received \$50,000 from the American Petroleum Institute, and another \$50,000 from the Real Estate Roundtable in 2017.” [The Intercept, [4/14/20](#)]

Former Pfizer Lobbyist Ken Cole Sat On One Nation’s Board Of Directors

Ken Cole, A Former Pfizer Lobbyist Who Had Sat On The Board Of The Chamber Of Commerce, Sat On The One Nation Board. “One Nation, one of the dark-money groups spending the most to back Republican candidates for Senate, added a former Pfizer lobbyist and U.S. Chamber of Commerce board member to its board of directors at the end of 2019. [...] Ken W. Cole, who has long worked in government relations for companies like General Motors and Honeywell, as well as the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, joined the board of One Nation last year. The group listed Cole as a director on its latest annual report, filed to the Virginia State Corporation Commission in March, but he’s not yet listed publicly on its website.” [The Intercept, [4/14/20](#)]

- **Steven Law: Ken Cole Was Sought Out For “Breadth Of Management Experience And Judgment.”** “One Nation defended its board appointment of Cole, claiming that his work for Pfizer was not a conflict since he left the company early last year. ‘Ken has been a respected leader in a variety of different companies and industries. After he retired, we sought him out for his breadth of management experience and judgment,’ One Nation President Steven Law said in a statement to The Intercept. ‘Our boards provide guidance on macro issues like financial controls, budgets, compensation and management policies. They do not direct day-to-day activities.’” [The Intercept, [4/14/20](#)]