

Democrat Candidates for City Council Exposed Using Out of State and Foreign ‘Dark Money’ to Fund Local Campaigns for City Council.

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- Democrat candidates illegally label signs to conceal true source of funding. The signs for democrat council candidates James Coleman, Randy Smith, Sterling Wilder, and April Watson included a statement that the signs were paid for by “Lynchburg, Better Together.” That organization, however, does not formally exist under state campaign finance laws and, therefore, is prohibited by law for paying for the signs. When this illegality was exposed, the democrat candidates stated the funding really came from the left-leaning and nationally funded political action committee “Rural GroundGame.”¹
- Rural GroundGame is a state registered PAC (Political Action Committee). Over a three-month period from May 26, 2024, thru August 31, 2024, the PAC received over \$190,000 in funding² of which \$85,000, or over 44% was provided by the leftist dark money organization the Sixteen Thirty Fund.³
- Moreover, Rural GroundGame raised \$149,069.35 during the period from April 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, of which 67%, or \$100,000 was from the Sixteen Thirty Fund.⁴
- The Sixteen Thirty Fund is one of a group of funds operated by Arabella Advisors that have poured billions of dollars into US elections, often from foreign sources. The New York Times reported in April of 2021, that Swiss billionaire Hansjorg Wyss operates his “Hub Project”. The Times reports:

[t]he hub project is part of an opaque network managed by...[the] Arabella network, which has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars through a daisy chain of groups supporting Democrats and progressive causes. The system of political financing, often obscures the identity of donors, is known as dark money, and Arabella’s network is as leading vehicle for it on the left. The Arabella network’s money flows through nonprofits that serve as parent structures for a range of groups, including The Hub Project. The nonprofits then pass some of the funds along to other nonprofit groups or super PACs. The Hub Project...is housed within two Arabella-managed nonprofits, New Venture Fund, and the Sixteen Thirty Fund, which pay Hub Project Employees.⁵

The D.C. based Sixteen Thirty Fund has operated as a tax-exempt organization 501(c)(4) since 2009 and had \$192 million in revenue and \$196 million in expenditures in 2022.⁶ The nonprofit Sixteen Thirty fund donated “more than \$63 million to super PACs backing Democrats or opposing Republicans in 2020, according to Federal Election Commission filings.”⁷

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Altogether, Sixteen Thirty “doled out a whopping \$410 million in 2020, aiding Democratic efforts to unseat then President Donald Trump and win back control of the Senate...[and] illustrates the extent to which the left embraced the use of ‘dark money’”.⁸

As a charity, the Sixteen Thirty Fund is not required to identify its donors but media reports show the fund has received a \$51 million donation from one donor⁹ Additionally, “the Democratic donor group Democracy Alliance, which has dozens of members including billionaire George Soros, recommended last spring that donors invest several millions of dollars into Sixteen Thirty Fund...”, reports POLITICO.¹⁰

Moreover, one of the primary donation portals for the 1630 Fund is the leftist donor aggregator site ActBlue which is presently under investigation by states attorneys general for possibly allowing foreign dollars to be illegally reach US elections. ActBlue’s refusal to verify the identify of donors on its site opens the door for “rich foreign donors [to] take advantage [and] cook up schemes to influence elections” explained Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird who is leading a 19-state coalition of attorneys general investigating ActBlue’s practices. Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares.¹¹

¹ See, Legality of Lynchburg campaign signs under scrutiny, Mark Hand, Lynchburg News & Advance (Oct. 4, 2021) ([Lynchburg city council campaign signs under scrutiny \(newsadvance.com\)](https://www.newsadvance.com/lynchburg-city-council-campaign-signs-under-scrutiny), retrieved Oct. 4, 2024).

² Summary of Contribution Reports for Rural GroundGame (PAC-21-0063), Virginia State Board of Elections ([State Board of Elections - Campaign Finance Reporting \(virginia.gov\)](https://www.sbe.virginia.gov/campaign-finance-reporting), retrieved Oct. 4, 2024).

³ Rural GroundGame, PAC-21-00063), Campaign Finance Report for reporting period May 26, 2024-August 31, 2024, at page 23 of 47; [Report PAC-21-00063_05-26-2024_to_08-31-2024.pdf](https://www.sbe.virginia.gov/campaign-finance-reporting); retrieved Oct. 3, 2024.

⁴ Rural GroundGame, PAC-21-00063), Campaign Finance Report for reporting period April 1, 2024-June 30, 2024); [State Board of Elections - Campaign Finance Reporting \(virginia.gov\)](https://www.sbe.virginia.gov/campaign-finance-reporting); retrieved Oct. 3, 2024).

⁵ Top Bidder for Tribune Newspapers Is an Influential Liberal Donor, The Swiss Billionaire Hansjorg Wyss helped build a sophisticated behind-the-scenes operation that attacked Republicans and promoted Democratic causes, Kenneth P. Vogel and Katie Robertson, The New York Times (April 13, 2021); [Swiss Billionaire Is a Top Bidder for the Tribune Newspapers - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/13/us/politics/swiss-billionaire-tribune-newspapers.html), retrieved Oct. 4, 2024).

⁶ ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer, Sixteen Thirty Fund, EIN: 26-4486735; [Sixteen Thirty Fund - Nonprofit Explorer - ProPublica](https://www.propublica.org/1630) ;retrieved Oct. 3, 2024.

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⁷ Swiss Billionaire Quietly Becomes Influential Force Among Democrats: Hansjorg Wyss, who recently dropped his bid to buy Tribune Publishing, has been a leading source of difficult-to-trace money to groups associated with Democrats, Kenneth P. Vogel, The New York times, May 3, 2021; [Swiss Billionaire Quietly Becomes Influential Force Among Democrats - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/03/us/politics/swiss-billionaire-quietly-becomes-influential-force-among-democrats.html); retrieved Oct. 3, 2024.

⁸ Liberal ‘dark-money’ behemoth funneled more than \$400M in 2020, Scott Bland, Politico, Nov. 17, 2021; [Liberal ‘dark-money’ behemoth funneled more than \\$400M in 2020 - POLITICO](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/17/liberal-dark-money-behemoth-funneled-more-than-400m-in-2020); retrieved Oct. 3, 2024.

⁹ Documents reveal massive ‘dark-money’ group boosted democrats in 2018, Scott Bland and Maggie Severns, Politico, Nov. 19, 2019; <https://www.politico.com/news/2019/11/19/dark-money-democrats-midterm-071725>; retrieved Oct. 3, 2024.

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Id.

¹⁰ Attorney General Bird Demands Proof from ActBlue Over Concerns of Illegal Donations that May Influence Elections, October 1, 2024, <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/attorney-general-bird-demands-proof-from-actblue-over-concerns-of-illegal-donations-that-may-influen>, retrieved Oct. 15, 2024.

Sixteen Thirty Fund donations to Virginia's Rural GroundGame.

Rural GroundGame (PAC-21-00063)

Reporting Period: 05/26/2024 Through: 08/31/2024
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Schedule A: Direct Contributions Over \$100 Full Name of Contributor Mailing Address of Contributor	Donor Information 1. Employer or Business (If Corporate/Company Donor: N/A) 2. Type of Business(If Corporate Donor Type of Business) 3. Business Location	Date Received	Contribution This Period	Aggregate To Date
Sixteen Thirty Fund 1828 L St NW Ste 300B Washington, DC 20036-5109	1. 2. 3. Washington DC	07/11/2024	\$85,000.00	\$85,000.00

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Sara for Virginia PO Box 358 Ruckersville, VA 22968-0358	1. 2. 3. Ruckersville VA	06/21/2023	\$2,892.00	\$2,892.00
Sara for Virginia PO Box 358 Ruckersville, VA 22968-0358	1. 2. 3. Ruckersville VA	06/30/2023	\$2,892.00	\$5,784.00
Sedgwick, Stephanie 880 Station St Herndon, VA 20170-4608	1. SELF 2. SELF 3.	06/04/2023	\$250.00	\$250.00
Sixteen Thirty Fund 1828 L St NW Ste 300B Washington, DC 20036-5109	1. 2. 3.	06/07/2023	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00

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Rural GroundGame ActBlue Page