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CLC Uncovers Two “Scam PACs” Defrauding Donors

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ISSUES: **CAMPAIGN FINANCE**



Nobody likes robocalls, but they’re an effective way to raise money for political campaigns. Yet some of the groups behind these calls aren’t actually using donations to support political causes.

Instead, these committees, often referred to as “scam PACs,” pretend to fundraise for major candidates or issues while secretly diverting almost all of their donors’ money back into fundraising or the fraudsters’ own pockets.



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that they were falsely told would be used to support Trump and Republicans.

The robocalls from “Patriots for American Leadership” (PAL) and “Campaign for a Conservative Majority” (CCM) began with a clip of former President Trump’s voice before proceeding to ask callers to donate to help support him.

“President Trump needs your emergency support right now,” a PAL call intones. “With no time to waste and results coming in by the minute, do your part to help the campaign until the very end by pressing 3 right now to contribute to elect President Trump.”

“We need every American who supports the re-election of President Trump to press 3 now to pledge your support and contribute,” a voiceover pleads on a call from CCM. “Even if you have contributed in the past, please contribute again.”

But neither group actually used donors’ money to meaningfully support Trump or other Republican candidates. Instead, almost all of the funds were diverted to the scam PAC operators or spent on even more fundraising, sometimes through payments to companies owned by the operators — which may have been little more than shells used to cover up their theft.

Patriots for American Leadership has reported raising nearly \$1.4 million. It reported donating just 3% of its money to federal candidates or committees. But even this tiny amount of political activity appears to be falsified: no federal committee has ever reported receiving funds from PAL.

Instead, PAL diverted \$730,000 to its treasurer, Eddie Shivers, either through direct payments for Shivers’s “salary” or through payments to a purported vendor, “ANTT Promotions,” that Shivers set up just before creating PAL. The rest of the funds were plowed back into more robocalls for “fundraising.”

Since April 2022, PAL has not filed any legally required campaign finance reports with the FEC. The Commission has sent numerous FEC letters asking about the



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missing reports, but PAL has not responded, apart from a two-sentence unsigned statement claiming it “has had no activity” and would “terminate moving forward.”

That doesn’t mean PAL has stopped defrauding donors. In fact, an anti-robocalling service called NoMoRobo recorded a robocall from PAL as recently as February 2024, raising the prospect that PAL is continuing to fraudulently raise funds after trying to claim to the FEC that it is defunct.

“Campaign for a Conservative Majority” is a similar story. It has raised nearly \$480,000 by using clips of former President Trump’s voice in its robocalls, while pledging to support his re-election.

The top recipient of its funds is an LLC that was formed by William and Anna Hartford, who serve as CCM’s treasurer and assistant treasurer, respectively.

CCM has reported to the FEC that it donated \$55,000 to other federal committees. But \$12,200 of those disbursements appear to have never actually



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went to the hundreds or paid for more fundraising.

In the 2023-2024 election cycle, CCM has reported essentially no activity to the FEC. But NoMoRobo, the robocall blocking service, has recorded a phone call from CCM as recently as September 2023.

Like PAL, it is thus possible that CCM is continuing to raise funds under false pretenses while failing to report its activity to the FEC.

CLC’s complaint urges the FEC to immediately investigate Patriots for American Leadership and Campaign for a Conservative Majority for their apparent violations of the Federal Election Campaign Act, and CLC further plans to refer these two scam PACs to the Department of Justice for possible criminal prosecution.

Recent criminal convictions demonstrate that federal authorities are prepared to hold scam PAC operators accountable. Last year, two men, Matthew Nelson Tunstall and Robert Reyes Jr., were sentenced to prison terms of 10 years and 7 years respectively for operating scam PACs that raised millions while claiming to support political candidates or causes.

It’s crucial that federal investigators shed light on these apparent scam PACs and hold their operators accountable for defrauding the public.

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