

Tracking Money and Influence

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Things to Pay More Attention to

- Smaller donations are now big. Learn how that system works and who the major players/vehicles are, including ActBlue on the left and the Trump campaign/joint committees on the right. See if your local politicians have changed how they do fundraising (especially if they are on the left, because ActBlue makes it easier to track).
- Focus on the expenditures. We too often look mainly at contributions, but how candidates and committees spend their money is important, too (think of spending at Trump-owned properties and extend that idea locally).
- The easiest data to get is about the money, but the money data is about PEOPLE. Use it to build relationship networks to guide your reporting. Who works for whom? Which causes do candidates support?
- What do lawmakers care about? One guide is their public statements, which now can be made in the Congressional Record, on official sites and on social media. Track them.

Things to Pay Less Attention to

- Tweets, in most cases (see above)

Resources

- [FEC Itemizer](#) (for individual electronic filings)
- [Individual contribution search](#) (FEC)
- [Congressional lobbyist search](#) (House.gov)
- [House office expenditures](#)
- [House private trips](#) & [Senate private trips](#)
- Future lobbyists ([Senate](#) & [House](#))
- [Congressional statements](#)
- [Searching the Congressional Record](#) by member
- [Twarc](#) (if you aren't going to ignore tweets)