

# Super PACs Outspent Candidates in Run-Up to Tuesday

In the two weeks leading up to Super Tuesday, outside political action committees supporting the Republican presidential hopefuls spent three times as much as the candidates themselves, according to a Wall Street Journal analysis, the latest sign of how these new "super PACs" are transforming electioneering.

Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich spent a combined \$2.4 million on television ads during the last two weeks in Ohio, Oklahoma, Georgia and Tennessee, the contests with the most delegates Tuesday, according to a review of spending on TV commercials.

The super PACs supporting their candidacies spent \$7.85 million in those states during the same period, according to data these groups are required to file with the Federal Election Commission.

Outside groups are fast supplanting the traditional party fund-raising arms and organizational efforts that have driven elections for a generation. They are providing a flood of cash, but also pose a challenge for candidates, who are prohibited by law from coordinating with them.

"The most significant thing that is happening so far in this election cycle is the influence of third-party advertising," said Rex Elsass, an Ohio-based media strategist with the Strategy Group for Media who has done work for Mr. Gingrich. "It will probably be the loudest drumbeat in the presidential, Senate and House campaigns—even more so than the candidates."

## On the Issues

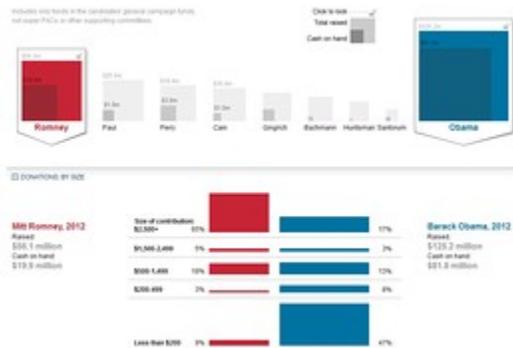
Read where each Republican hopeful stands on major issues in the campaign.

[View Interactive](#)

Abortion	<h3>Education</h3> <p> <b>Newt Gingrich:</b> "Dramatically shrink the federal Department regulations." But supported Obama admin competition for states, which encourages c because it also promotes charter schools.</p> <p> <b>Ron Paul:</b> Abolish the Education Department and end</p> <p> <b>Mitt Romney:</b> Supported the federal accountability standi was wrong earlier in his career when he wa came to see the value of the federal govern unions" and putting kids and parents first.</p>
Debt	
Economy	
Education	
Energy	
Environment	
Same-Sex Marriage	
Health Care	
Immigration	
Social Security	
Taxes	
Terrorism	

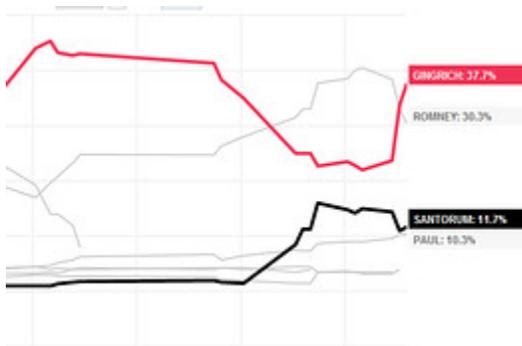
## Campaign Finance

Compare the candidates' fundraising.



## Poll Tracker

WSJ's guide to the latest political polls



- [More photos and interactive graphics](#)

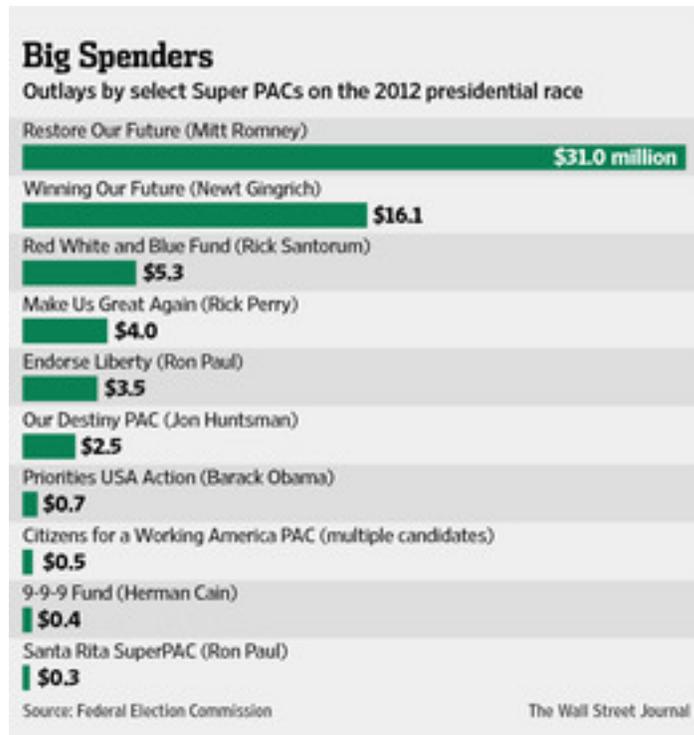
More than half the total Super Tuesday spending came in Ohio. Mr. Romney, who narrowly topped Mr. Santorum, spent \$1.5 million on TV ads in the two weeks before the contest. His affiliated super PAC, Restore Our Future, spent \$1.7 million, much of which was devoted to advertisements criticizing Mr. Santorum's vote to permit federal funding of Planned Parenthood.

"Santorum says he's the principled conservative, but that's not how he voted," one ad said. The negative ads rotated with a positive one called "Saved." In it, a former business partner recounted how Mr. Romney temporarily shut his investment firm and mobilized employees to help find the man's missing daughter.

The average Ohioan saw these Romney-related ads about 20 times in the week before March 6, said a GOP ad-time buyer.

The super PAC supporting Mr. Santorum, the Red White and Blue Fund, countered with \$800,000 worth of ad spending in the final two weeks in Ohio, nearly three times as much as Mr. Santorum spent through his own campaign in the state. "How can Mitt Romney or Newt Gingrich beat Barack Obama, when on the vital decisions they're not much different?" asked one ad from the pro-Santorum group.

Winning Our Future, the super PAC backing Mr. Gingrich's campaign, spent \$770,000 on his behalf in Ohio, while Mr. Gingrich barely spent any money on TV ads in the state, according to ad-buying data.



Terry Casey, a Republican analyst in Columbus, said there was so much advertising in such a compact time that it became confusing and could have been counterproductive. "At times there would be two or three commercials in a row and it all sort of blended together—it was hard to tell who was who and who was for whom," he said.

Super PACs, unlike candidates' campaigns, may legally take in unlimited sums from a single donor. The impact of the super PAC money was reflected in the negative tone of the ads, said Mike Wilson, founder of a Cincinnati tea-party group. "I think there were many more attack ads, because the candidates weren't paying for them," he said.

Comparing campaign spending isn't an exact science because the two types of organizations aren't required to report the same types of spending to the FEC in a timely manner. The Journal compared super PAC reports filed with the FEC to the candidates' spending on television advertising as compiled by an independent ad-time buyer.

The spending reported to the FEC by the super PACs includes more than just TV ads, things such as Internet ads, production costs related to TV commercials and telephone calls to voters. But TV airtime usually makes up the bulk of costs for both groups.

## On the Issues

Read where each Republican hopeful stands on major issues in the campaign.

Abortion	
DEBT	
Economy	
<b>Education</b>	
Energy	
Environment	
Same-Sex Marriage	
Health Care	
Immigration	
Social Security	
Taxes	
Terrorism	

**Education**

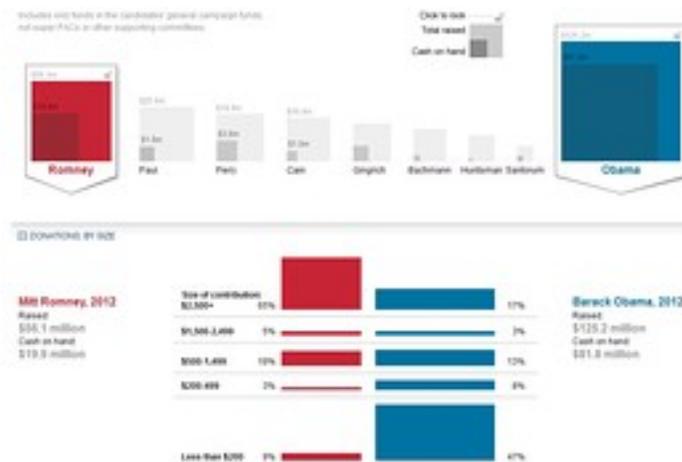
**Heavt Gingrich:**  
 Dramatically shrink the federal Department regulations. But supported Obama administration competition for states, which encourages it because it also promotes charter schools.

**Ron Paul:**  
 Abolish the Education Department and end

**Mitt Romney:**  
 Supported the federal accountability standards writing career in his career when he said came to see the value of the federal government unions" and putting kids and parents first.

## Campaign Finance

Compare the candidates' fundraising.



In the run-up to Super Tuesday, super PACs spent more money on television advertising than Republican presidential candidates, as they supplant the traditional campaign infrastructure. Brody Mullins has details on The News Hub. Photo: AP

Neither Rep. Ron Paul nor the super PAC supporting his campaign spent much in Ohio, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Georgia.

n the run-up to Super Tuesday, super PACs spent more money on television advertising than Republican presidential candidates, as they supplant the traditional campaign infrastructure. Brody Mullins has details on The News Hub. Photo: AP

Mr. Romney's campaign didn't run any TV ads in those states, with the exception of Ohio, in the last two weeks. His super PAC made up the difference, spending about \$900,000 in Georgia, \$400,000 in Oklahoma and \$750,000 in Tennessee.

Mr. Gingrich spent \$45,000 on TV those four states in the last two weeks, while his super PAC spent \$3.1 million, records show.

Mr. Santorum was the only candidate to spend more from his campaign than his super PAC did in the final two weeks. He outspent the Red, White and Blue Fund in Georgia, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

The super PACs have already moved on to the next primary contests, including the Kansas caucuses March 10 and two southern state primaries—Alabama and Mississippi—March 13.

Illinois is looming next, March 20, and the Chicago market is one of the most expensive in the country.