

WHICH WOMEN CAN RUN? THE FUNDRAISING GAP IN THE 2020 ELECTIONS' COMPETITIVE PRIMARIES

AN OPENSECRETS GENDER, RACE AND MONEY IN POLITICS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION:

The US Congress is significantly more white, and more male, than the US electorate as a whole and has been this way for all of American history. With this in mind, we ask: How can we achieve a more representative and equitable democracy, what role does money in politics play in upholding a lack of diversity, and, most importantly, what role might money be able to play in ultimately electing a Congress that looks more like the people it represents?

As we have shown in previous work, movement toward racial and gender diversity in Congress can be thwarted at several points in the election process. First and foremost: Sitting members of Congress hold a significant incumbency advantage. Typically, 90% or more of the members of the House who seek reelection are ultimately successful. Given that Congress is less diverse than the candidate pool, progress toward diversity is typically expected to be slow. Exacerbating this, as we showed in [mid-2020](#), when members retire, the candidates who run for the open seat created by a retirement typically share many of the same demographic characteristics as the member they are replacing. This is true for both parties. For the purposes of this study, we are excluding these noncompetitive races where the incumbent holds a significant electoral advantage.

There are typically between 10% and 20% of the Congressional races that we might consider to be competitive, which are the focus of our paper due to the gender and racial progress these elections can foster. Our previous work shows that competitiveness is a key component in both electoral success and candidate fundraising – competitive races result in the incumbent losing more often, and lead to all candidates in the race raising significantly more money. In this previous work we only looked at general election contests, but many candidates run in competitive primaries instead of (or in addition to) the general election contests. For this work, we look at both competitive primary and competitive general elections.

While we have traditionally focused on standard candidate fundraising, here we will also explore an increasingly important type of spending in federal elections: outside spending. Most competitive races see some amount of outside spending, although the amounts vary significantly by race and by candidate.

We find the following:

- 1) In competitive primary and general elections, Democratic Black women challengers and open seat candidates receive significantly less money from large individual donors than do any other group of candidates.
- 2) This does not appear to be caused by prominent Democratic fundraising group Emily's List favoring non-Black candidates.
- 3) Black Democratic women candidates receive much less than other candidates from early donors, educators and retirees.
- 4) We find no major differences among racial, gender, or racial/gender groups appear in the amount of outside spending supporting or opposing candidates.

DATA COLLECTION

Candidate Race Identification:

The Center for Responsive Politics has been collecting data on candidate race and ethnicity since 2018. To collect this information, we ask candidates to self-identify their race and ethnicity. After initially contacting candidates by phone and email in 2018, we shifted to using an email survey instead, dramatically increasing the response rate. Although candidates provided a variety of responses to the race and ethnicity questions, we ultimately code each candidate into one (or more) racial categories that align with U.S. Census categories, with the addition of a “Middle East/North Africa” category.

For our data collection methodology, we used self-identification techniques modeled after our 2018 research. We attempted to collect the racial and ethnic identities of every 2020 federal candidate in the 2020 elections who registered with the FEC and who had an online footprint for their candidacy. The techniques we used to gather the candidates' demographics included pulling information from campaign biographies found on their campaign sites, candidate interviews with reputable media sources, verified demographic information listed by organizations such as CQ Roll Call, the Daily Kos and the Center for American Women and Politics, and conducting a survey of every federal candidate in the 2020 elections, within the boundaries of the candidates whose campaign contact information was available and who responded to our inquiry. Among the candidates whose demographic information could not be found through self-identification, we identified their race but made clear in our database that the race was not self-identified. We categorized the responses into six racial categories: white, Black, Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latinx, Indigenous, and Middle East/North Africa (MENA). For multiracial candidates — candidates who identify with more than one racial group — we documented their identities using multiple columns.

Given that this paper focuses on competitive elections only, several of these racial groups fall out of the analysis. There were no Indigenous candidates who ran in races we identified as competitive, for example.

A list of candidates in competitive elections and their racial identification can be found in [Appendix A](#). For the full list of all 2020 candidates, contact the author.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

While we are able to review all fundraising by all candidates, we specifically narrow the scope of this paper to review active 2020 candidates in competitive House races only.

Competitiveness:

We found in previous research that the primary factor influencing the amount of fundraising in a race is whether it is competitive or not. Therefore, for this report, we focus *only* on competitive races. One major limitation of our earlier work is that many races are competitive in the primary election but not the general election. Candidates running in competitive primaries may raise less than candidates running in competitive general elections because the election is earlier in the year and once it is finished the candidate who won no longer needs to aggressively fundraise. Furthermore, states hold primaries on different dates ranging from early March to mid-September, which further complicates the process. To normalize this, we collected the pre-primary campaign finance reports for all active candidates. Pre-primary reports cover the time period up to 2 weeks before the primary election. We then identified the primary races identified as competitive by Ballotpedia and the party or parties for which the race was competitive. By doing this, we can analyze a broader and larger group of competitive races in 2020. In addition to the competitive primaries identified from Ballotpedia, we also analyzed any general election race identified as remotely competitive by the Cook Political Report as of one week prior to the November elections. Using this methodology, we identified 103 competitive general election races and 93 competitive primary elections.

Chamber:

US Senate races typically cost far more money than a typical House race, and the variation in the amount of fundraising in these races is extreme. The most expensive non-presidential race in 2020 – one of the two Georgia Senate races – saw the candidates raise a combined \$261 million. The cheapest Senate race in 2020, in Idaho, saw only \$4.4 million raised. Due to this wide variance, as well as the small number of competitive Senate races in a given election year, we exclude them from this analysis. Of note, some of the top fundraisers of the cycle – all in Senate contests – were either white women (Amy McGrath, Sara Gideon, Martha McSally) or Black men (Jamie Harrison, Raphael Warnock).

Candidate type:

Many candidates run for a short period of time, raise a small amount of money, and drop out before the election. These candidates are excluded. Additionally, for much of the analysis we only include Democratic or Republican candidates because nonpartisan or third-party candidates traditionally raise significantly less money. Although there were significant independent candidates in 2020 (Al Gross, for example) they did not run in any of the competitive House races analyzed here.

These scope limitations leave us with 351 distinct candidates running in competitive primary races and 193 candidates running in competitive general races. Forty candidates ran in both competitive primary and general races, but they are treated as two separate observations for this analysis.

SUMMARY RESULTS

Intersectional analysis is key for this work. Table 1 shows the average amount raised from active candidates in competitive primaries and in competitive general races. Immediately, it is obvious why an intersectional approach is required for any work with this kind of data.

Table 1: Average fundraising by candidates in competitive primary and general races

Competitive Primary Candidates			
	Incumbent	Challenger	Open Seat
White Woman	\$2,172,783 (1)	\$745,941 (41)	\$883,377 (36)
Woman of Color	\$4,050,361 (4)	\$576,737 (18)	\$405,144 (16)
White Man	\$1,503,084 (13)	\$380,865 (62)	\$458,410 (111)
Man of Color	\$1,659,865 (4)	\$581,606 (20)	\$400,960 (21)
Competitive General Election Candidates			
	Incumbent	Challenger	Open Seat
White Woman	\$5,900,346 (13)	\$3,834,648 (26)	\$3,695,360 (12)
Woman of Color	\$7,211,624 (5)	\$3,216,783 (12)	\$3,575,047 (5)
White Man	\$5,155,657 (44)	\$2,038,498 (35)	\$1,826,266 (15)
Man of Color	\$6,063,353 (8)	\$3,165,233 (4)	\$4,542,897

Excluding incumbents, white women raise more than women of color in both competitive primary and general races. The difference is less pronounced among general election candidates – in open seat primary contests, white women raise twice as much as women of color. And, with the exception of open seat primary contests, men of color raise more than white men. **So, whatever fundraising advantage may help women seems to primarily help white women, and whatever fundraising advantage may help people of color seems to primarily help men.** Intersectional analysis is merited, as is delving deeper into divides by party, racial group, and parsing apart the types of money the candidates are raising.

Traditionally, candidates rely most heavily on donations from “large” individual donors – who give over \$200 to the specific candidate in the cycle – to fund their campaigns. In addition to the money from these large donors, candidates typically make up the rest of their fundraising with money from political action committees and “small” individual donors – those who give less than \$201 to the candidate in the cycle. Some candidates also supplement that fundraising with significant self-financing although this is fairly uncommon.

Incumbents in competitive seats – noting that there are far fewer of these generally – are excluded from this analysis since their fundraising behaves somewhat differently than the other types of candidates and is heavily swayed by outliers (e.g. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, whose primary was identified as competitive).

Table 2: Average fundraising by challenger and open seat candidates in Democratic primaries

Racial Gender Group (N)	Average Total Receipts	Amount from PACs	Average Individual Donations	Average from Large Individual Donors	Average from Small Individual Donors
Asian Women (4)	\$777,726	\$68,513	\$682,868	\$514,814	\$168,053
Asian Men (3)	\$880,476	\$23,834	\$851,955	\$764,740	\$87,215
Black Women (12)	\$309,665	\$18,285	\$282,220	\$161,104	\$121,116
Black Men (14)	\$682,678	\$18,083	\$653,560	\$545,883	\$107,677
Latina Women (8)	\$694,240	\$25,512	\$662,056	\$490,627	\$171,429
Latino Men (5)	\$172,447	\$6,000	\$155,250	\$129,464	\$25,785
MENA Women (3)	\$884,783	\$8,833	\$488,415	\$373,119	\$115,297
MENA Men (2)	\$909,606	\$4,500	\$912,408	\$863,910	\$48,498
White Women (33)	\$829,092	\$18,224	\$712,095	\$527,408	\$184,687
White Men (34)	\$575,831	\$9,245	\$400,785	\$342,296	\$60,649

Table 3: Average fundraising by challenger and open seat Democratic candidates in general elections

Racial Gender Group (N)	Average Total Receipts	Amount from PACs	Average Individual Donations	Average from Large Individual Donors	Average from Small Individual Donors
Asian Women (3)	\$4,697,172	\$522,780	\$3,963,509	\$3,095,201	\$868,308
Asian Men (1)	\$5,639,061	\$596,398	\$4,656,755	\$4,111,206	\$545,549
Black Women (7)	\$2,306,815	\$299,934	\$1,872,776	\$1,193,182	\$679,594
Black Men (1)	\$5,755,917	\$574,838	\$5,176,270	\$3,557,157	\$1,619,113
Latina Women (1)	\$1,825,085	\$288,228	\$1,451,641	\$1,112,130	\$339,510
Latino Men (2)	\$2,733,941	\$208,656	\$2,470,423	\$2,000,540	\$469,883
MENA Men (1)	\$6,248,210	\$271,960	\$6,134,051	\$3,365,833	\$2,768,218
White Women (24)	\$4,177,123	\$405,473	\$3,476,907	\$2,617,012	\$859,895
White Men (10)	\$2,892,861	\$258,416	\$2,554,272	\$1,761,273	\$792,999

White and Latina Democratic women outraised white men and Latino men in all cases in Table 3 and women outraise men with small donors and PACs in all cases as well. The implications of this are complex since PAC funding was a third-rail to many candidates in 2020 and is rarely a significant source of funds to challengers and open-seat candidates. However, donations from small individual donors are significant in these kinds of races and are often the best early warning signal that an incumbent may be in trouble. They are also an area where candidates who are outside of their party's mainstream can "make up" for some of the conventional fundraising advantages more traditional candidates can have.

Among the demographic groups, white women tend to have the highest totals in every category with some very occasional exceptions. Similarly, Black women tend to have the lowest totals in every category – particularly in overall fundraising and in the amount raised from large individual donors. This mirrors our previous work showing that Black women raise significantly less from large donors in all types of races. Given that large individual donors are the primary source of campaign funds, this wide gap could cause major problems for women trying to run competitive and successful campaigns.

There are some important caveats here. First, different “types” of races are competitive in primaries depending on the party. Urban, frequently poorer, districts are often only competitive in the primary for Democrats and elections in those regions is often less expensive. For Republicans, the most competitive primary races tend to be in rural, deeply conservative regions – also frequently poor. However, the other category of competitive races are those that are competitive in both the primary and general election – and those races, frequently suburban or semi-rural regions – are often extremely expensive. If candidates of color are more likely to run in poorer districts, they might also reasonably expect to raise less money since the most likely pool of donors – their own constituents – have less to give.

The data on this for 2020 are mixed.

Table 4: Average household income (HHI) of districts in which Democratic candidates ran

Democratic Primary Candidates		
	Average District HHI	
<i>Candidate's Racial Group</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Asian/Pacific Islander	\$70,570	\$83,580
Black	\$66,621	\$65,080
Hispanic/Latinx	\$52,373	\$46,787
MENA	\$73,852	\$99,784
White	\$78,275	\$72,810
Democratic General Candidates		
	Average District HHI	
<i>Candidate's Racial Group</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Asian/Pacific Islander	\$67,976	\$74,858
Black	\$71,436	\$64,198
Hispanic/Latinx	\$53,265	\$91,607
MENA	\$88,660	\$78,174
White	\$70,252	\$66,482

In the primary election, Black women and men both run in districts with a lower household median income level than white candidates but the difference is fairly small. In the competitive general elections, however, Black men and women run in fairly indistinguishable districts from white men and women, at least as far as district income (from 2019 Census estimates) is concerned. Latina candidates run in significantly poorer districts.

Modeling:

While the summary data certainly suggest that women of color, and in particular Black women, raise less money in competitive races than other candidates, many factors could explain these results. As mentioned, the district's voters' income level may significantly affect how much a candidate in that district can raise – and, indeed, for competitive races those two values are positively correlated (0.11). How many white people live in a district may also affect the level of fundraising, particularly for candidates of color. A district's proportion of white residents is negatively correlated with the total fundraising in the district -- as a district gets "whiter," the cost of the election decreases. Both of these variables are included in our regression analysis.

Rather than treating political party and competitiveness as independent variables we chose to run regressions on smaller subsets of the data. Both party and competitiveness would be expected to affect fundraising (Democrats raised significantly more money than Republicans on average in 2020, and competitive races always see more fundraising), but for this paper we run separate models for each political party for clarity.

Our main independent variables of interest are, of course, the race and gender of the candidates. We created dummy variables for every racial group and then created interaction terms to identify any potential – and expected – interactive effects. To account for the fairly wide variation in total fundraising, we logged the total fundraising variable.

RESULTS

Even accounting for the district-level factors, race and gender both affect a candidate's fundraising totals. **In both primary and general contests, the interaction variable was statistically significant and positive for Democratic white women, and statistically significant and negative for Democratic Black women.** There were not enough Black women to perform a similar analysis for Republican candidates. The differences here show that the wide gap between total fundraising numbers in Tables 5 and 6 are, indeed, significant and not explained only by district-level factors.

We did run additional models with other types of money, including donations from PACs, as the dependent variable but the results were not statistically significant. We also ran the same models on different racial groups but none of these generated significant results either. Only the models testing total overall fundraising and the amount of money raised from large donors generated significant findings. These findings show, starkly, that Black women are at a unique disadvantage – and white women at a unique advantage – when fundraising. Although large donors are not the *only* source of fundraising, they are the most significant source for most candidates. As shown in Tables 2 and 3 the differences in fundraising between Black and white women from small donors are less extreme, suggesting that Black women are able to somewhat make up for the disadvantage with large donors by fundraising from small donors instead.

Tables 5 and 6 See attached.

Table 5: Primary regression of Open Seat and Challenger Candidates, competitive races

Primary Elections: Open Seat and Challenger Candidates, competitive races						
<i>Total Receipts</i>						
	Republicans			Democrats		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>District Income</i>	0.00 (0.20)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
<i>% White residents in district</i>	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.001 (0.008)	-0.005 (0.008)	0.009 (0.009)	0.01 (0.009)	-0.01 (0.009)
<i>Woman</i>	0.67*** (0.26)	0.75** (0.27)	0.02 (0.68)	0.62** (0.3)	0.8777** (0.34)	0.29 (0.47)
<i>Black</i>		0.43 (0.64)			0.25 (0.51)	
<i>White</i>	0.83** (0.37)		0.56 (0.45)	0.41 (0.30)		-0.14 (0.45)
<i>Black woman</i>		-3.17** (1.33)			-1.4* (0.76)	
<i>White Woman</i>			0.76 (0.74)			0.58** (0.62)
<i>N</i>	202	202	202	118	118	118
<i>Large Individual Donors</i>						
	Republicans			Democrats		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>District Income</i>	-0.24 (1.4)	-0.72 (1.38)	-0.24 (1.4)	0.14 (3.05)	-0.72 (3.0)	0.7 (3.0)
<i>% White residents in district</i>	-2,711* (1,477)	-2,056 (1,436)	-2,591 (1,482)	4,916* (2,973)	5,166* (2,816)	5,340* (2,953)
<i>Woman</i>	67,001 (47,339)	81,531* (48,223)	-44,961 (122,842)	29,103 (98,460)	148,835 (107,553)	-175,446 (139,918)
<i>Black</i>		245,755 (115,200)				251,053 (161,530)
<i>White</i>	96,884 (67,289)		49,884 (82,417)	-71,962 (107,015)		-248,310* (144,465)
<i>Black woman</i>		-439,319* (240,880)			-598,044** (242,887)	
<i>White Woman</i>			131,761 (133,398)			354,177* (197,182)
<i>N</i>	202	202	202	118	118	118

* p>0.10 ** p>0.05 ***p>0.01

Table 6: General Election Regression of Open Seat and Challenger Candidates, competitive races

General Elections: Open Seat and Challenger Candidates, competitive races						
<i>Total Receipts</i>						
	Republicans			Democrats		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>District Income</i>	0.00 (0.27)			0.00* (0.00)	0.0 (0.00)	0.00* (0.00)
<i>% White residents in district</i>	-0.01 (0.01)			-0.00 (0.01)	-0.003 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.00)
<i>Woman</i>	0.6** (0.27)		-0.38 (0.43)	0.05 (0.31)	0.29 (0.31)	1.03* (0.57)
<i>Black</i>					1.01 (0.92)	
<i>White</i>	-0.28 (0.35)		0.38 (0.6)	0.41 (0.30)		-0.8 (0.61)
<i>Black woman</i>					-1.91* (0.98)	
<i>White Woman</i>			0.27 (0.67)			1.51** (0.68)
<i>N</i>	52	0	52	50	50	50
<i>Large Individual Donors</i>						
	Republicans			Democrats		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>District Income</i>	11.09* (6.65)		11.92* (6.8)	19.75 (14.8)	10.25 (14)	14.97 (13)
<i>% White residents in district</i>	-7,436 (5,946)		8,019 (6,043)	-9365 (14441)	-11,296 (13,389)	-11,363 (12,870)
<i>Woman</i>	456,188* (236,946)		133,225 (534,022)	134,905 (448376)	-1,838,158** (793,735)	534,496 (442,631)
<i>Black</i>						1,742,943 (1,303,297)
<i>White</i>	-657,432** (314,125)		-807,207** (385,933)	474,222 (430170)	-1,734,136** (856,704)	
<i>Black woman</i>						-3,135,573** (1,394,812)
<i>White Woman</i>			407,165 (602,483)		276,346*** (948,728)	
<i>N</i>	52	0	52	50	50	50

* p>0.10 ** p>0.05 *** p>0.01

ANALYSIS

The biggest question remains, though: WHY do large individual donors seem to systematically donate less to Democratic Black women, even when all other factors are held relatively constant? For the following analysis, we only look at Democratic candidates given how few Black women candidates ran in competitive GOP races. To do this, we explore several explanations.

Although fundraising from large donors does seem to be the place where Black women struggle the most, who are these large donors who support competitive white women but don't support competitive Black women? We explore three explanations:

- 1) White women receive more support from "women's organizations" than do Black women.
- 2) White women receive more support from donors early in the cycle than do Black women.
- 3) White women receive more support from mainstay Democratic donors than do Black women.

Women's-issue PACs tend to be major supporters of women candidates and the largest, by far, of these is Emily's List. In OpenSecrets' case study on the contest between Marie Newman and Cori Bush, we noted that Newman was a major beneficiary of money from the PAC Emily's List, which is a liberal committee with the mission to elect more pro-choice Democratic women to Congress. Bush, while ultimately endorsed by Emily's List in the general election, was not a beneficiary of anywhere near as much money from the group. Emily's List [has been accused](#) of prioritizing white women in the past, but Table 7 shows that this was not the case in 2020.

Table 7: Average total received through Emily’s List in 2020, by racial group

Candidate’s Racial group	Average Amount from Emily’s List
Asian Women	\$56,426
Black Women	\$72,466
Latina Women	\$73,238
White Women	\$27,805

In fact, Black women in competitive general elections raised, on average, far more than the white women via Emily’s List.

To address whether white women get more money from significant, early major donors than Black women, we looked at the total sum of all donations to competitive primary candidates from donors giving to the candidate in 2019. These types of early donations serve double-duty – they signal the candidate’s viability, and can be used to fundraise for additional money. We look only at challengers and open seat candidates here.

Table 8: Average amount of donations from individual donors in 2019

Racial/gender group	2019 donations
Asian Women	\$310,232
Black Women	\$103,899
Latina Women	\$308,933
MENA Women	\$240,302
White Women	\$381,074

As shown in table 8, white women do receive more money from “early donors” on average than do Black women. In fact, Black women candidates in competitive primaries receive less from early donors than do any other racial group of Democratic women candidates.

Finally, we looked at the broad industry in which the donors to these candidates work. CRP codes most donations from large donors according to the industry in which the donor works, and traditionally the largest sources of funds for most Democrats are retirees and people who work in education. But, both of these industries also give significantly less to Black women than to White (or Asian American/Pacific Islander) women.

Table 9: Average amount to Democratic women in competitive House general races

Money from Education/Educators	
<i>Candidate's Racial group</i>	<i>Average amount received</i>
Asian Women	\$201,172
Black Women	\$153,194
Latina Women	\$215,154
MENA Women	\$94,880
White Women	\$219,339
Money from Retirees	
Asian Women	\$472,500
Black Women	\$292,553
Latina Women	\$499,976
MENA Women	\$225,495
White Women	\$475,961

Although retirees and people working in education are of interest because of how significant they are as donors to Democrats, there were very few interest groups or industries where Black women outraised White women on average, and only two of those interest groups give significant money – women’s issues, and human rights. Given that Black women were outraised by white women generally, it certainly seems to be the case that these major donors in some of the Democratic party’s mainstay industries are driving the differences.

While more research is merited, it appears preliminarily that in 2020, Black women faced particular challenges with exactly the kinds of donors who are the mainstay of a typical congressional campaign: early donors, educators, and retirees. This points to three potential places where advocacy and activism might be able to narrow the fundraising gap in precisely the place where it could be most effective.

Outside Spending:

In 2020, nearly \$3 billion was spent on “outside spending” – or spending by groups not affected by traditional campaign finance limits and not directly linked to candidates. Although this is not as much money as is spent by candidates themselves, in many high-profile races, this money can be significant. Spending by outside groups typically takes the form of “independent expenditures,” which are often television or online advertisements either supporting or opposing candidates.

Outside spending groups are legally required to be separate from candidate committees, but party leadership has taken advantage of these fairly new organizations and now controls spending through many of these groups. In addition to party-linked groups, some super PACs – which are political action committees allowed to spend unlimited amounts of money supporting or opposing candidates – have been created to support specific kinds of candidates (e.g. far-right, Trump-linked candidates). In sum, super PACs are an important feature in many of the competitive elections listed here.

Super PACs and other outside spending groups need to disclose whether the advertisements they are paying for support or oppose the candidate targeted by the advertisement. This presents us with the opportunity to review whether candidates of color receive different types of advertising.

In the aggregate, this does not appear to be the case.

Table 10: Average amount of outside spending for all candidates in competitive primary and general elections

	Primary Candidates		General Candidates	
	<i>Opposing</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Opposing</i>	<i>Supportive</i>
Women of color	\$137,344	\$146,538	\$3,262,469	\$599,161
Men of color	\$159,441	\$275,712	\$2,580,421	\$622,354
White women	\$131,473	\$137,066	\$3,603,921	\$392,333
White men	\$114,967	\$140,684	\$2,365,723	\$524,558

In both competitive primary and general election House contests, white women and men receive similar amounts of supportive and oppositional spending as do candidates of color. In fact, men of color benefit from noticeably more supportive spending than do white men. Noticeably, men do receive more supportive spending than do women in both types of elections, and women are on the receiving end of more oppositional spending.

Many of the groups most likely to support candidates of color were specifically set up for that purpose. Black PAC and Emily’s List both were among the top 25 super PACs in 2020. Black PAC, despite the name, does not support only Black candidates, but its top non-presidential beneficiary was Sen. Raphael Warnock, who defeated Sen. Kelly Loeffler in a highly contentious runoff election. In addition to the groups mentioned above, several super PACs support Latinx candidates.

Was 2020 unique?

Some of the largest fundraising dates in 2020, particularly for Democrats, fell around events that had significant gendered and racialized implications. ActBlue reported its largest fundraising totals in history the day after Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died. Additionally, fundraising spiked in June

as the nation faced the aftermath of the brutal murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Kamala Harris's selection as the Democratic running mate also led to increased donations to Democratic candidates, led by women donors.