

Washington, D.C., Elections

Defense Contractors Claim Top Donor Spots for Connecticut House Lawmakers

— Juliann Ventura, 6.26.2024



WASHINGTON, DC — Two weeks ago, the AARP foundation filed a class action age discrimination **lawsuit** against leading U.S. military contractor RTX Corp. — which also happens to be a top contributor to several Connecticut lawmakers in the U.S. House, according to recent reports from the campaign finance nonprofit **OpenSecrets**.

The complaint alleges that RTX, formerly known as Raytheon, rejected job-seekers aged 40 and older while favoring recent college graduates. RTX did not respond to multiple requests for comment about the case.

Defense contractors like RTX have also faced criticism as tensions abroad in Ukraine and Israel have led to increased arms manufacturing and shipments overseas that have allegedly led to mass civilian casualties – and large profits for these defense giants.

Two of the country's top defense contractors, RTX and Lockheed Martin, either together or separately claimed leading spots on the top campaign committee contributors lists of Reps Rosa DeLauro, Joe Courtney and John Larson from 2023 to 2024, according to OpenSecrets data.

Almost immediately following Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel, the market values of major military contractors like RTX and Lockheed Martin increased by about \$23 million, according to **Barron's**.

"They [defense contractors] just get tremendous amounts of money, the more dangerous the world is, the better it is for them," said Paul Shannon, the co-director of the Raytheon Anti-War Campaign and a director of Massachusetts Peace Action. "It's not a good situation to have an industry that does poorly if there's peace and does extremely well the more dangerous the world is."

In a statement, a spokesperson from Lockheed Martin said that military sales are made between governments so "discussions about sales to foreign governments are best addressed by the U.S. government."

RTX did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

RTX was the top contributor to Courtney's campaign committee from 2023 to 2024, according to an Open Secrets **report**. The defense giant tied as the **fifth** highest contributor to DeLauro's campaign committee, just above Lockheed Martin. While RTX was not listed as a top contributor to Larson's campaign committee, Lockheed Martin tied with several other groups for **fifth** on his list.

Reports showed that the campaign committees for DeLauro and Courtney each received between \$10,000 to nearly \$12,000 in contributions from RTX from 2023 to 2024. DeLauro and Larson each received between \$10,000 to almost \$11,000 from Lockheed Martin.

A spokesperson from Courtney's campaign said that the defense industrial base "provides good-paying union jobs to tens of thousands of workers and protects our security here and abroad" and that Courtney, as a member of the House Armed Services committee, will continue to make sure that the state's defense industrial base has "the tools it needs so our Armed Forces' can maintain its unmatched superiority."

"It's the right thing for Connecticut workers and it's the right thing for national security," Courtney's campaign spokesperson said.

In a statement, Larson said that "anyone who gives to my campaign is supporting my agenda, not the other way around." He added that the U.S. faces "serious global security challenges, which is why it is critical we maintain a strong defense industrial base, with the best machinists and engineers in the world."

DeLauro's press office did not respond to a number of requests for comment.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, RTX has seen a boom in revenue. RTX saw a surge of orders tied to replenishing Kyiv – \$3 billion worth – since the invasion, Reuters **reported** last October. A 2022 revenue **report** showed that the company surpassed both Boeing and Lockheed Martin, garnering \$67.1 billion in profits.

Similarly, in fiscal year 2022, RTX and Lockheed Martin were both leading U.S. defense contractors.

Top 10 defense contract recipients in FY 22 (\$ in billions)

RTX Corp. and Lockheed Martin received the largest amount of money in defense spending in FY 22.

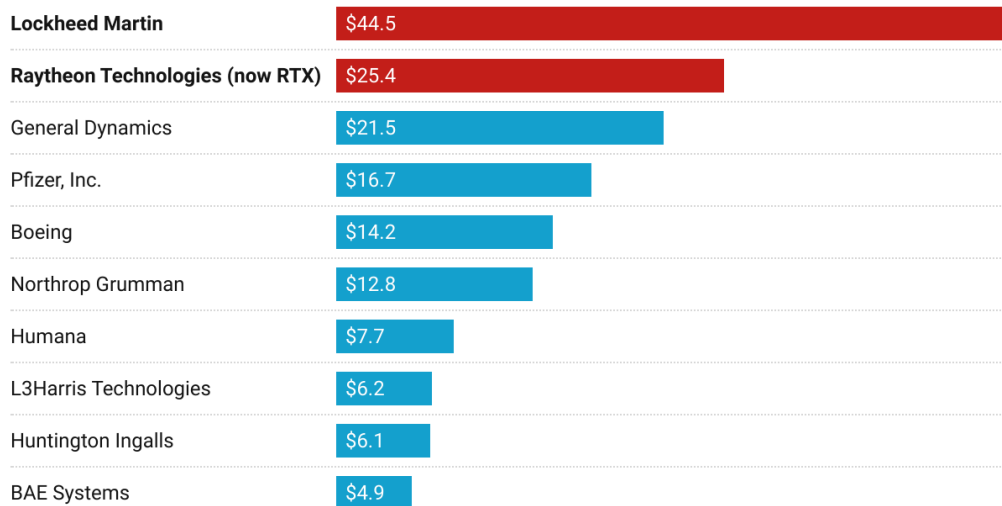


Chart: Juliann Ventura • Source: U.S. Department of Defense • Created with Datawrapper

In April, President Biden signed into law a \$95 billion foreign aid **bill** that included assistance for Ukraine, Taiwan and Israel, as well as humanitarian aid to people in Gaza. All of Connecticut's lawmakers in the House voted to **support** the bill that not only provided \$9 billion in aid to Gaza and elsewhere, but also \$17 billion in weapons for Israel.

Known as a leader in aerospace manufacturing and shipbuilding, Connecticut has received billions in defense spending. From fiscal year 2021 to 2022, Connecticut was one of three state economies with the largest overall increase in defense spending according to a defense department **report**. Connecticut was also one of the states that ranked highest in defense spending relative to its state GDP.

Top 10 states for defense spending in FY 22 (\$ billions)

Connecticut ranked #7 in total defense spending. It was also one of three states that had the largest overall increase in defense spending, which was mostly due to a large contract with RTX.

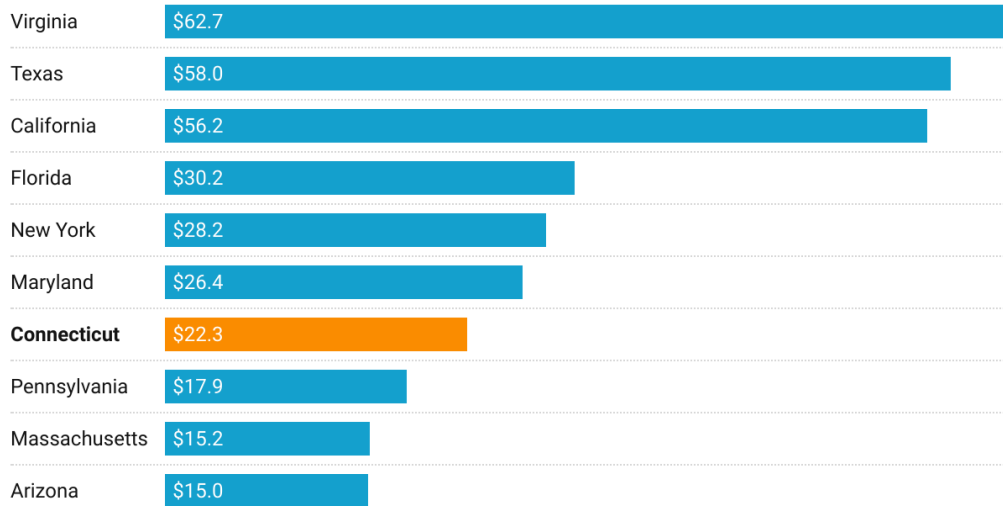


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For 2024, RTX **expects** sales between \$78 to \$79 billion, which could be an increase of more than \$10 billion from 2023. Lockheed Martin **expects** sales between \$68.5 to \$70 billion in sales this year, which could be an increase of nearly \$2.5 billion from last year.

Juliann Ventura 

 juliannventura2024@u.northwestern.edu