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Fact check: U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker doesn't mention half his campaign funds when talking about his out-of-state money



SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer Nov 1, 2018



Republican incumbent Congressman Lloyd Smucker, R-Pa., left, takes on Democratic challenger Jess King, during the 11th Congressional District debate hosted by WGAL and the York County Economic Alliance at Eastern York High School in Wrightsville Tuesday Oct. 30, 2018.

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CHRIS KNIGHT

Does [U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker](#) receive more campaign funds from outside Pennsylvania, or does his opponent, [Jess King](#)?

Both candidates have said it's important to “follow the money” — to trace who they'll be “working for” in Washington, D.C., as they represent Lancaster and York counties in Congress.

But after three debates and a month of [attack ads](#), it's clear that Smucker, the Republican incumbent facing an aggressive Democratic challenger, is not painting a full picture when talking about his campaign funds.

Before voters head to the polls on Nov. 6, LNP fact-checked a few of the most heated claims during the 11th Congressional District candidates' third and final debate, held at Eastern York High School in Wrightsville on Tuesday.

For a fact-check of some of their other [previous debate](#) claims, [click here](#).



LOCAL NEWS

U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker, challenger Jess King square off on the caravan, immigration and health care in final debate

SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer

Where the money comes from

Claim 1: Smucker said 60 percent of King's campaign funds have come from outside Pennsylvania. King said more of Smucker's funds — 70 percent — come from out-of-state, and that hers “is like 55 percent out-of-state.”

Claim 2: King said 52 percent of Smucker's funds come from political action committees while hers “comes from people.”

Claim 3: Smucker called her figures “absolutely incorrect.” He said she gets a “significant portion of her dollars” from “literally liberals, leftists” in San Francisco and New York. Voters, he said, should visit [OpenSecrets.com](#), which he said does “a good job identifying where candidates' dollars come from.”

First off — both candidates get the majority of their [campaign funds](#) from outside the district and outside Pennsylvania. That's far from abnormal in today's politics.

And while it's tricky to get a full picture of where all their money is coming from, it's clear that Smucker is leaving some major pieces out of the conversation about his own finances.

On the first claim, Smucker was roughly correct when speaking about King's out-of-district donations, and how a significant portion has come from places like San Francisco and New York. King isn't denying that, and she accurately said her out-of-state donations make up 55 percent of her account.

But when Smucker called her claims "absolutely incorrect," he was wrong. He pointed out the Open Secrets website — operated by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Responsive Politics — and [continued to promote it on social media after the debate](#).

There are a couple issues here.

The website, and therefore Smucker, singled out only half of his total campaign funds.

It shows about \$800,000 of donations to his campaign, with 53 percent inside the state and 47 percent outside. What it doesn't include (and this is mentioned in the footnotes) are donations under \$200 that don't need to be disclosed and, more important for Smucker, political action committee donations.

Smucker has received about \$880,000 more from political and corporate committees, according to Federal Elections Commission reports. Those committees are almost entirely from outside Pennsylvania. They include some local groups like Lancaster General Health and the Hershey Company, but they are still almost entirely made up of groups based outside of Pennsylvania — from Exxon Mobil to Koch Industries.

Even Google, which is based in that same Silicon Valley city that Smucker is criticizing King for getting donations from, has a PAC based in Washington and it donated \$2,000 to him.

King doesn't take any money from corporations' political action committees. She has received about \$41,000 from other kinds of political committees — so Open Secrets is missing that PAC money from her.

But it is also missing the smaller donations, which accounted for roughly \$631,000 of King's \$1.6 million raised. While the campaigns aren't required to disclose the details of those smaller donations, King's campaign spokesman said that when they're accounted for, 54 percent of all her funds come from out-of-state and 46 percent from within Pennsylvania.

Smucker, for his part, has raised just \$14,300 from donors who gave less than \$200, according to campaign finance reports.



POLITICS

Jess King 'sets a new bar' for Democrats fundraising in Lancaster with \$429,000 cash edge over U.S. Rep. Lloyd Smucker

SAM JANESCH | Staff Writer

The caravan

Claim: Building a case for President Donald Trump’s proposed southern border wall, Smucker said the caravan of Central American immigrants approaching the border includes 7,000 to 10,000 people. He compared it to “the entire city of Columbia coming across the river to York County.”

Claim: The congressman implied the caravan “would be a perfect opportunity” for people who “want to harm us, want to enter our borders, who intend to harm us.”

In Smucker’s first public comments about [the caravan](#), he roughly doubled its actual size. The Mexican government estimates there are now about 4,000 migrants in the caravan, down from as many as 7,000 earlier in their journey.

So, it’s less than half the size of Lancaster County’s 10,300-resident river town.

The caravan has been widely reported to contain mostly impoverished Hondurans seeking asylum in Mexico and the United States. Trump has repeatedly claimed there are criminals in the mix, and the Department of Homeland Security recently said there are “gang members” or those “with significant criminal histories” but has not offered examples or evidence.

According to U.S. law, the migrants may apply to enter the country and seek asylum if and when they arrive.

Abolishing ICE

Claim: Smucker said King “wants to disband ICE,” the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency that some Democrats plan to abolish. “She’s part of a group that calls ICE a terrorist group,” he said.

Smucker [has been citing King’s endorsement](#) from a national progressive group called Justice Democrats to make this mostly false claim. He said King made a “pledge” to agree with their platform when she asked for their endorsement — and their platform does include abolishing ICE, which it calls a “state-funded terror group.”

King has correctly said the only “pledge” part of the endorsement was to not take corporate PAC money (which she doesn’t do). As for the rest of the platform, Justice Democrats said its candidates would “generally agree” with it, and King has consistently said she does not support abolishing ICE.

Medicare and Social Security

Claims: Smucker and King both made similar claims to what they’ve said previously on Medicare and Social Security. King said “Medicare-for-all” would save \$2 trillion by replacing consumers’ current health care costs, and Smucker said that would mean “doubling our tax rates.” King said Smucker voted to “cut half-a-trillion-dollars” from the programs while Smucker called that incorrect. [Check LNP’s previous fact-checks on those claims here.](#)

Claim: Smucker, trying to rebuff the idea that a single-payer system would work in the U.S., said Canadians with that type of system wait an average of 20 weeks for “medically necessary benefits.”

Smucker correctly named [a study from the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute](#) that detailed Canada’s average wait time. The finding was the result of an annual survey of physicians, according to the group’s website.



POLITICS

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