

# Beshear super PAC raised almost \$2.6 million in first year

BY TOM LOFTUS | KENTUCKY LANTERN

Tapping his broad base of Kentucky donors and landing three hefty contributions from out of state last summer, Gov. Andy Beshear’s super PAC raised \$2.56 million in its first year of existence.

The political action committee, called In This Together, had mixed results as it spent \$2.24 million of that money trying to promote Beshear’s policies and elect Democratic candidates both in Kentucky and across the country.

Disclosure reports filed with federal regulators early this month show that — by far — the largest shares of In This Together’s spending were applied here in Kentucky: to help defeat a proposed constitutional amendment that would have allowed the legislature to appropriate tax dollars for private schools, and to help elect appeals court Judge Pamela Goodwine to the Kentucky Supreme Court.

While In This Together was on the winning side in those campaigns, it lost its other top priority campaigns including its effort to elect Democratic governors in New Hampshire and Indiana.

Beshear created In This Together two months after winning reelection as governor in November 2023. Its official purpose, according to its registration with the Internal Revenue Service, is to “help good people and good candidates win difficult elections.”

It’s also a mechanism to allow Beshear — prevented by the state Constitution from seeking a third term as governor — to fuel his political ambitions by making connections and winning friends both inside Kentucky and nationwide.

In This Together is required to periodically disclose details of the donations it gets as well as the donations it makes — and it did so in a timely way in its first year. It files one part of its financial information (as a super PAC) with the Federal Election Commission, and another part (as a nonprofit “527 organization”) with the Internal Revenue Service.

Eric Hyers, who managed Beshear’s two campaigns for governor and is the strategist for In This Together, said this is “a common structure” for political organizations like In This Together “that wish to contribute and spend money across many different state elections, to comply with the varying state campaign finance laws.”

However, Kentucky Lantern and most — if not all — media outlets in Kentucky reported throughout 2024 only on the disclosures In This Together filed with the FEC, which include slightly less than half of the organization’s receipts and expenses.

Kentucky Lantern last week reviewed In This Together’s reports filed with both the FEC and IRS for this story which for the first time presents a comprehensive picture of the super PAC’s financial activity in its first year.

Combining these IRS disclosures with those from its FEC reports shows that



Gov. Andy Beshear delivers his State of The Commonwealth address in the House chamber at the State Capitol in Frankfort on Jan. 8.

during its first year, In This Together took in \$2,562,615 and spent \$2,241,047.

## WHO GAVE MONEY TO IN THIS TOGETHER?

Here are the names of the largest donors listed in the forms filed with the IRS and FEC by In This Together:

- Deborah Simon, Carmel, Indiana, retired, \$250,000. Simon is a philanthropist and a Democratic mega donor. She is the daughter of the late Melvin Simon, a billionaire shopping mall magnate and co-owner of the Indiana Pacers. She also contributed to Beshear’s campaigns for governor in 2019 and 2023 as well as to the Kentucky Democratic Party and the Democratic Governors Association.
- Andrew Nathan Schwartzberg, Rockville, Maryland, president of Preservation Services LLC, \$250,000. Preservation Services LLC is a real estate development business focusing on affordable housing.
- Glenn Fuhrman, New York, New York, CEO of Virtru Investment Partners, \$200,000.
- Developers of new Frankfort shopping center The Paddocks of Frankfort, \$100,000. (Donors specifically were TPOF Manager LLC, and two companies managed by Patrick Madden: Sir Barton Place and War Admiral Place.)
- Freedom Adult Day Healthcare, Louisville, and its managing member Nachiketa Bhatt, Prospect, \$50,000. Bhatt contributed to the Ken-

tucky Democratic party in recent years and to Beshear’s 2023 campaign.

- Mark A. Swartz and Mike Swartz, Kentucky highway contractors, \$50,000. Mark Swartz, of Winchester, operates Swartz Enterprises; Mike, of Olympia, owns Mike Swartz Enterprises. Each gave \$25,000 to In This Together. The Swartz family has been a major donor to Andy Beshear political committees. Their businesses perform tree removal and related services under state government contracts.
- Barbara Banke, Geyserville, California, \$50,000. Banke heads Jackson Family Wines in California, as well as Stonestreet Farms in Kentucky. She is a mega political donor who has backed Republican causes in a big way, but she donated to Beshear in 2023.
- William Seale, Annapolis, Maryland, \$50,000. Seale has been a big donor to Beshear political causes. A report listing his contribution to In This Together says he is retired.
- Beam Suntory, New York, distillery, \$50,000.

Those nine donors together gave \$1,050,000 to In This Together — 41% of all the super PAC’s receipts.

But In This Together reported more than 750 other contributions during the year — in amounts from \$5 to \$25,000.

Many of these contributions were donations of \$1,000 to \$5,000 given by scores of Kentuckians who have been loyal backers of Beshear or Beshear appointees to state boards

or commissions.

Who got the money from In This Together?

Here are the names of the political candidates and causes that got the largest donations from In This Together in 2024:

- Kentuckians for Public Education, a PAC opposing Amendment 2, which was on the ballot in November, \$950,000. This Kentucky PAC was created by Hyers, the Beshear strategist. Advertising it purchased included television commercials featuring Beshear and a teacher opposing the constitutional amendment backed by Republican legislative leaders that would have allowed tax dollars to be spent on private schools. Voters overwhelmingly defeated the amendment.
- Kentuckians for Good Judges, a PAC supporting Pamela Goodwine’s election, \$335,000. This was also a PAC created by Hyers. In addition to the \$335,000 given to this PAC, In This Together also made a \$2,100 contribution to Goodwine’s campaign committee.
- In This Together New Hampshire, a PAC supporting Democratic candidate for governor in New Hampshire Joyce Craig, \$255,000. Craig lost that election, but this contribution helped Beshear make connections in New Hampshire which might help him should he decide to run for president in 2028.
- Democratic Governors Association, Washington, D.C., \$150,000. Beshear was recently elected by Democratic governors to be the organization’s vice chair this year and chair-elect

for 2026. This raises Beshear’s national profile because he will play a leading role in fundraising for Democratic candidates for governor in 36 states during the 2026 midterm elections.

- McCormick for Governor, \$100,000. This was Democratic candidate for Indiana governor Jennifer McCormick’s campaign com-

mittee. McCormick lost.

- Working Hard for Kentucky PAC, \$26,500. This is another PAC created by Hyers. Its registration papers say its purpose is to “elect legislators who will work hard for Kentucky families.” Disclosure reports show that it spent nearly all of its money on digital advertising and direct mail opposing the reelection of Louisville Republican Rep. Emily Callaway. Callaway won her reelection.

In This Together made other, much smaller, contributions to candidates backed by Beshear.

Also, it should be noted that the activity of In This Together does not represent the complete picture of Beshear’s ongoing political activity. Also last year he created a separate dark money PAC that raises big contributions and supports Beshear’s chosen candidates and causes.

But as a dark money PAC, Heckbent does not disclose names of its contributors or those to whom it gives contributions.

This article by Tom Loftus was originally published by the Kentucky Lantern at kentuckylantern.com.

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JAN 02, 2025	HENRY BOLES JR., 1544 ST. RT. 1849, SYMSONIA, KY 42082 ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE ESTATE OF HATTIE BOLES, 2381 ST. RT. 564, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.ATTY. HON. J. TODD ELMORE, 503 BROOKHAVEN, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.
JAN 06, 2025	EMMA CONNOR, 145 STATE ROUTE 348 E, SYMSONIA, KY 42082, EXECUTRIX FOR THE ESTATE OF RAYMOND CONNER 145 STATE ROUTE 348 E, SYMSONIA, KY 42082, ATTY. HON. JACOB BLANKENSHIP, 100 SOUTH 4TH STREET, SUITE 400 PADUCAH, KY 42001.
JAN 06, 2025	CURTIS WHITE 5740 ST. RT. 849 E, BOAZ, KY 42027, EXECUTOR FOR THE ESTATE OF NANCY BALMER, 5677 ST. RT. 849 E, BOAZ, KY 42027, ATTY. HON. HOLLY HOM RA, 555 JEFFERSON ST. STE 301 PADUCAH, KY 42001.
JAN 13, 2025	TAMMY STEPHENS, 5873 ST. RT. 45 SOUTH, MAYFIELD, KY 42066 ADMINISTRATRIX FOR THE ESTATE OF BOBBY STALLING, 5873 ST. RT. 45, SOUTH, MAYFIELD, KY 42066M ATTY. HON. DAVID HARGROVE, P.O. BOX 315, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.
JAN 13, 2025	ROBERT THOMPSON, 7481 ST. RT. 80 WEST, MAYFIELD, KY 42066 EXECUTOR FOR THE ESTATE OF CAROLYN PEPLINSKI, 6638 ST. RT. 80 WEST, MAYFIELD, KY 42066, ATTY. HON. BRYAN WILSON P.O. BOX 708, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.
JAN 13, 2025	JEFFREY HOLSHOUSER, 1540 ST. RT. 1684, BOAZ, KY 42027, EXECUTOR FOR THE ESTATE OF MARILYN HOLSHOUSER, 2893 ST. RT. 534 SYMSONIA, KY 42082, ATTY. HON. BRYAN WILSON, P.O. BOX 708, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.
JAN 13, 2025	JASON HARPOLE, 4678 ST. RT. 849 W, MELBER, KY 42069, AND MARCY REDDEN, 4670 ST. RT. 849 W, MELBER, KY 42069, CO-ADMINISTRATORS FOR THE ESTATE OF JIMMY HARPOLE, 2427 BURCHARD ROAD, MELBER, KY 42069, ATTY. HON. BRYAN WILSON, P.O. BOX 708, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.
JAN 14, 2025	WAYNE SANDERSON, 4299 MOUNT HOREB PIKE, SUSAN SANDERSON, 1157 OAK MANOR CT., ST. LOUIS, MO 63119 AND BOBBY SANDERSON, 11 PT CARDY LANE, ST. LOUIS, MO 63110, CO- EXECUTORS FOR THE ESTATE OF WELDON SANDERSON, 1625 LOWES ROAD, CUNNINGHAM, KY 42035, ATTY. HON. DAVID HARGROVE, P.O. BOX 315, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.
JAN 14, 2025	REBECCA WRAY, 6355 METROPOLIS LAKE ROAD, WEST PADUCAH, KY 42086, EXECUTRIX FOR THE ESTATE OF JAMES PATTERSON, 500 BECK LANE, MAYFIELD, KY 42066, ATTY. HON. MORGAN WIGGINS, P.O. BOX 708, MAYFIELD, KY 42066-0034.
JAN 17, 2025	TOMMY JOE ARANT, 5651 BARBARA DRIVE, FITCHBURG, WE 57311, ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE ESTATE OF CHARLES ARANT, 265 ST. RT. 381, ATTY. HON. DAVID HARGROVE, P.O. BOX 315, MAYFIELD, KY 42066.
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JAN 21, 2025	JEFFREY GARNER, 1216 SEATON STREET, KELLER, TX 76248, EXECUTOR FOR THE ESTATE OF ROBERT L. GARNER, 20793, ST. HWY, 0 ADVANCE MO 63730, ATTY. HON. MARIANA GOFF, P.O. BOX 10120, BOWLING GREEN, KY 42102.
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