

Post in Who's funding Minneapolis elections?

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Mr. Bearman. When I teach public policy, I ask my students the following question. If I line your mother and your father against a wall and I tell you you must shoot one or the other, who has the power in that situation? The person making the decision or the person shaping the question? I would argue that the person shaping the question.

In this case, I look across the landscape of what is going on in the City and try to see who is really shaping the discussion. And I then ask myself who is funding them because most people have jobs and kids and lives beyond just politics. We have a paid advocacy class that has been growing in strength and is leading the discussion in our community more and more, especially as people like you and I are involved less and less. I wonder who is funding them.

I see three groups that have really shaped the discussion this election in Minneapolis. FairVote, as RCV is driving all the debate, all the campaign strategy. It is even driving people to get snarly with each other on this forum. RCV would not be here if FairVote had not pushed it and not continued to protect it. And I have looked at their 990's, I have asked Jeanne Massey personally and gotten no answer to who is funding them. I honestly, legitimately would love to know who is behind it.

Second, I see Our Revolution Twin Cities. I have also asked them who is funding them. I asked as one of their folks was literally carrying in cases of free beer to a gathering of several hundred people. And was told that it was all donated. And that because they had not accepted any cash donations, they don't have to disclose who is funding them. But I know they had what had to have been thousands of dollars of donations between food, drinks, venues, printing at the convention, their website, etc. But they have not filed any paperwork.

Third, I see WedgeLive as a huge influence on the conversation. They have a

huge web/twitter/Facebook/video operation, much more than could be done by one person with a full-time job. I see them attack many people who they think are too entrenched in City Hall but enough but oddly, never Betsy Hodges, who has been in City Hall 12 years. When John Edwards decided he was going to do a write-in campaign for the BET, his first supporter was Javier Morales, who is married to John Stiles, Betsy Hodges Chief of Staff. I would love to see the financing of that operation disclosed also.

I also think there are other organizations that are having a huge influence on elections, groups that I hope I will be able to get information on who is funding them eventually. The Bike Coalition has nine positions listed on its website that someone is paying for. They are responsible for the growing bike lane wars. Jake Virden and the Park and Power project through Hope Community which I think is a grant from a local foundation. NOC. BLM. TakeAction Minnesota. A few others. There is money behind these folks, serious money. I expect when their reporting is filed, we will better understand who is funding them. And better understand what is tearing our community apart. After all the non-profit reporting is in, I hope to make a request to all the major players to ask the same question - who is funding them.

I don't think we are seeing just a popular uprising. I think there is money driving what we are seeing. I do agree with Mr. Kelly that some is probably local and some national. But without reporting, it is all speculation.

I think raising a stink about last-minute mailings is really a smoke screen. The last minute mailings will have an impact of a few points in the voting at best. The real power, the real shaping of what is happening, is with the groups that I listed above. It is in paying people from the Advocacy Class to work day in and day out on the issue you want to have promoted. We still honestly don't understand the money behind that. And that is why I ask.

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