

# [***Trump ramps up efforts to attract more megadonors as Haley launches fundraising blitz***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B72-DC91-DY7V-G03F-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; With two primary season wins in his pocket, former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/president-donald-trump-45) is ramping up efforts to bring potential megadonors into the campaign fold with personal calls, motorcade rides and meals at his Mar-a-Lago private club, a source familiar with the endeavor told CNN.

Casino magnate [*Steve Wynn*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/12/politics/steve-wynn-foreign-agent-registration-case/index.html) spent the night of the New Hampshire primary alongside Trump. Aerospace mogul [*Robert Bigelow*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/15/politics/ron-desantis-donor-robert-bigelow/index.html) and Las Vegas businessman Don Ahern traveled in Trump's motorcade to [*his recent Nevada campaign event*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/27/politics/biden-haley-trump-election-campaign/index.html) after meeting with the former president. And on Thursday, a slate of big donors is expected to have dinner with Trump during a fundraiser at a private home in Palm Beach, Florida.

The source said that Trump has recently garnered financial commitments from many of these high-dollar donors, including Ahern and Bigelow, who was one of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis' [*biggest financial backers*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/15/politics/ron-desantis-donor-robert-bigelow/index.html) and donated $20 million to the super PAC backing DeSantis' presidential bid. DeSantis [*dropped out*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/21/politics/desantis-ends-2024-campaign/index.html) of the GOP race earlier this month.

Trump also met with GOP megadonor [*Rebekah Mercer*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/15/media/rebekah-mercer-parler/index.html) at his Florida resort last year. The Mercer family's financial backing in 2016 was instrumental to helping him win the presidency that year.

It was not immediately clear if any of these recent financial commitments would appear in campaign filings due this week with federal regulators, covering the final months of 2023. Politico [*first reported*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/01/30/trump-big-donors-00138498) the details of Trump's outreach to donors.

After he [*announced his 2024 presidential run*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/15/politics/trump-2024-presidential-bid/index.html), several large Republican donors [*publicly said*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/16/politics/stephen-schwarzman-blackstone-trump-2024/index.html) that it was time to move on from the Trump, following his loss in 2020, the events of January 6, 2021, and the lackluster results for Trump-backed candidates in swing states in the 2022 midterm elections. While some of these high-dollar financiers are coming around to Trump, [*others have shifted*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/27/politics/koch-donors-nikki-haley-donald-trump-south-carolina/index.html) to former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley after previously backing DeSantis.

Officials with MAGA, Inc., the super PAC supporting Trump, say they have raised more than $46 million in the second half of 2023 -- a spike from the $13 million the group raised in the first half of last year.

Haley's big money push

Haley - Trump's last remaining major rival for the GOP nomination - has also launched a major fundraising push in recent days and is slated to hold at least 13 money-raising events across the country ahead of the South Carolina primary next month.

As Haley seeks to court donors, Trump's campaign managers issued a statement Monday arguing that she has no path to the Republican nomination - despite her support from [*Americans for Prosperity Action*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/28/politics/koch-network-nikki-haley/index.html), the political arm of the deep-pocketed network associated with Kansas billionaire Charles Koch.

That sentiment was expected to be repeated by campaign manager Susie Wiles when she presents to a gathering of conservative donors in Palm Beach.

Haley's campaign is also expected to make its case before the donors in Florida, who form the American Opportunity Alliance. Its members include hedge fund billionaires Ken Griffin and Paul Singer and members of the Ricketts family, the owners of the Chicago Cubs.

Griffin, the CEO of Citadel, praised Haley's "tremendous track record of leadership" but said he will continue to focus on congressional races "while voters decide who will serve" as the Republican Party's presidential nominee.

"America would be well served by someone with (Haley's) foreign policy credentials and policy priorities in the White House," Griffin said in a statement Tuesday. "She cares deeply about the future of all Americans and has demonstrated effective leadership advancing policies that promote lifelong prosperity, upward mobility, and our nation's safety and security."

But, he added, "while voters decide on who will serve as the Republican Party's nominee for President, I will continue my focus on actively supporting U.S. House and Senate candidates prioritizing economic freedom and a strong defense of America at home and abroad."

As CNN previously reported, several conservative outside groups and donors opposed to Trump's candidacy have said [*they now must redouble their efforts*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/26/politics/republican-donors-trump-haley-senate/index.html) to help Republicans [*win the Senate*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/01/politics/senate-race-rankings-january-2024/index.html) and hold the House in November.

Griffin donated $5 million in January to a super PAC supporting Haley's candidacy, according to his spokesman Zia Ahmed. Ahmed said Griffin has made significant contributions to congressional candidates, including giving $10 million to a super PAC aiding Republican Dave McCormick's bid for Senate in Pennsylvania and $5 million to support Republican Tim Sheehy's Senate candidacy in Montana.

Haley, for her part, is working to bank the resources to finance her long-shot bid to stop Trump through the [*South Carolina primary on February 24*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2024/calendar) and possibly on to Super Tuesday on March 5.

She appeared Tuesday at a fundraiser in New York co-hosted by several Wall Street billionaires, including Ken Langone, Cliff Asness and Stanley Druckenmiller.

Haley's main message to the donors gathered there was that she wants to "make America normal again," Eric Levine told CNN's Erin Burnett Tuesday night.

Levine said that he remains firmly behind Haley even after her losses to Trump this month. He called the energy at the fundraiser "electric."

"Nobody is fazed. They still believe in Nikki, and I have every expectation that they're with her to the end, as am I," Levine said on "OutFront," adding that Haley's path "is to stay in it accumulate as many delegates as possible."

Her fundraising swing through New York City is expected to bring in $1.5 million in new donations, according to a Haley campaign official.

Trump's recent threat that those who continue to donate to Haley would be "permanently barred" from his orbit angered some of her donors and has served to boost her fundraising.

"I contributed early and significantly to Nikki and thought I had done my job," Asness, the co-founder of AQR Capital Management, wrote on [*social media recently*](https://twitter.com/CliffordAsness/status/1751034471040557482). "But if past contributions don't qualify me for being 'barred' from his RINO (yes they are the republicans in name only) cult I may have to contribute more now."

Haley's campaign officials say she has raised $4 million online since her [*second-place finish in the New Hampshire primary*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/23/politics/trump-new-hampshire-primary/index.html) and seized on Trump's threat to excommunicate her donors by selling campaign T-shirts bearing the words: "Barred. Permanently."

On Tuesday, the former South Carolina governor reaffirmed her commitment to staying in the race, arguing that "a day in ***politics*** is a lifetime" as she remains optimistic that she will be able to close the gap between her and Trump before the South Carolina primary.

"We've got a month until the election," she said during an interview with CBS News. "In New Hampshire, I moved 25 points in three weeks. We are anywhere and everywhere in South Carolina. ... People are starting to show up because now they're ready to start paying attention."

This story has been updated with additional information.

CNN's Ebony Davis contributed to this report.

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