

# [***GOP Faces Stiff Financial Battle In Key Senate Race After Costly Primary***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKY-2R01-DXXD-70KN-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Screenshot-2024-02-21-at-3.14.00-PM-e1708546943954.png)

Cleveland businessman Bernie Moreno won the Ohio Republican Senate primary in a strong showing Tuesday, and now faces an incumbent Democratic senator with a formidable campaign war chest.

Incumbent Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown enters the general election with $13.5 million in cash on hand as of Feb. 28, Federal Election Commission (FEC) filings [*show*](https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/053/202403079622327053/202403079622327053.pdf). Moreno, the [*newly-minted*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/20/bernie-moreno-beats-matt-dolan-ohio-primary-gop/) GOP nominee, meanwhile, had [*$2.4 million*](https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/122/202403079622346122/202403079622346122.pdf) in his campaign account as of Feb. 28.

The figures preview what is sure to be an expensive contest for a Senate seat in a state that has trended significantly red in past cycles; major PACs affiliated with both parties have already pledged to spend heavily in the general election.

“No amount of special interest money will be enough to save Sherrod Brown from the fact that he votes with Joe Biden's radical leftwing policies 99% of the time,” Moreno told the Daily Caller News Foundation. “I'm one of the top fundraisers of all GOP challengers this cycle and will have the resources to defeat Sherrod Brown in November.”

Between [*independent expenditures*](https://www.fec.gov/data/independent-expenditures/?data_type=processed&is_notice=true&most_recent=true&candidate_id=S2OH00477&candidate_id=S4OH00192&candidate_id=S4OH00200&min_date=01%2F01%2F2023) and the campaign spending of the race's [*three main candidates*](https://www.fec.gov/data/candidates/senate/?q=S2OH00477&q=S4OH00192&q=S4OH00200&election_year=2024&cycle=2024&election_full=false&is_active_candidate=true), the Ohio Republican primary cost roughly $40 million, according to FEC records; conservative super PACs spent roughly $20 million on efforts either supporting or opposing Matt Dolan, Bernie Moreno or Frank LaRose in the Ohio Republican primary since 2023, [*according*](https://www.fec.gov/data/independent-expenditures/?data_type=processed&q_spender=C00487470&q_spender=C00790923&q_spender=C00833566&q_spender=C00834630&q_spender=C00835942&q_spender=C00844613&q_spender=C00845685&is_notice=true&most_recent=true&candidate_id=S2OH00477&candidate_id=S4OH00192&candidate_id=S4OH00200&min_date=01%2F01%2F2023) to FEC filings. Outside spending in the Ohio GOP primary mostly went toward advertisements and get-out-the-vote efforts.

The gap in fundraising between Moreno and Brown widened over the course of the Republican primary, with the [*latter*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00264697/?tab=filings) raising more than the [*former*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00837484/?cycle=2024&tab=filings) every filing period in 2023, per FEC filings.

Brown has raised $33.7 million this election cycle, the most of any sitting member of Congress, [*according*](https://www.fec.gov/data/candidates/senate/?election_year=2024&cycle=2024&election_full=false&is_active_candidate=true) to FEC records. Moreno, meanwhile, raised $9.7 million between February 2023 and February 2024, $4.2 million of which was a loan from himself, according to FEC records. [***(RELATED: Trump-Backed Candidate Defeats Establishment Favorite In Key Swing-State Primary)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/20/bernie-moreno-beats-matt-dolan-ohio-primary-gop/)

State Senator Matt Dolan, one of Moreno's opponents, raised over $11 million for his primary bid, [*according*](https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/159/202403079622352159/202403079622352159.pdf) to a FEC filing. Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, Moreno's other major opponent, [*raised*](https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/806/202403119622366806/202403119622366806.pdf) just over $2.2 million.

Ohio Republicans may be able to rely on their national allies to overcome the financial gap.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) [*raised*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00027466/) $88.8 million in 2023 and the first month of 2024, slightly more than the [*Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee*](https://www.fec.gov/data/committee/C00042366/), its liberal counterpart, during the same period, according to FEC records. Republicans also have the structural advantage, needing only one victory to flip the Senate (assuming they win West Virginia) while Democrats are forced to defend numerous vulnerable seats.

“Sherrod Brown has been running for office for 50 years and is Chairman of the Banking Committee, so of course he's going to raise a ton of money from lobbyists who want Brown to do them favors,” NRSC spokesman Philip Letsou told the DCNF. “Bernie Moreno is a tremendous fundraiser and will have the full force of the NRSC and Senate Leadership Fund behind him, so we expect him to close the money gap quickly,” Letsou continued.

Brown received most of his campaign funds from out-of-state donors between 2019 and 2024, [*according*](https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/sherrod-brown/geography?cid=N00003535&cycle=2024&type=I) to OpenSecrets. Employees at top lobbying firms have also [*donated generously*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/13/lobbyists-love-swing-state-democrats/) to his campaign.

Moreover, some on the left seem to view Moreno as the candidate they have the best shot at beating in November.

Duty and Country PAC, a group [*affiliated*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/03/13/dems-meddle-in-ohio-senate-race-to-boost-trump-backed-candidate-00146928) with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and funded by the Democrat-aligned Senate Majority PAC, spent over $3 million on advertisements, FEC records [*show*](https://www.fec.gov/data/independent-expenditures/?data_type=processed&q_spender=C00666388&is_notice=true&most_recent=true&candidate_id=S2OH00477&candidate_id=S4OH00192&candidate_id=S4OH00200). The ads touted Moreno's closeness to former President Donald Trump and painted him as “too conservative for Ohio,” Politico [*reported*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/03/13/dems-meddle-in-ohio-senate-race-to-boost-trump-backed-candidate-00146928).

“Special interests, liberal elites, and Chuck Schumer are welcome to burn every single dollar they have to try to save Sherrod Brown,” a spokesperson for the Ohio Republican Party told the DCNF. “It won't change the fact that Donald J. Trump is headed toward another massive victory in the Buckeye State, and America First candidate Bernie Moreno will be right by his side when they win in November.”

I'm so grateful for the resounding support of Ohioans in all 88 counties. I thank Matt Dolan and Frank LaRose for a spirited primary contest. I look forward to uniting our party and working to send Sherrod Brown packing in November!

- Bernie Moreno (@berniemoreno) [*March 20, 2024*](https://twitter.com/berniemoreno/status/1770292615851745551?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

National Democrats have signaled their willingness to spend big to keep Brown in office.

Senate Majority PAC announced in March that it plans to reserve $65 million worth of television advertisements in Ohio, The Washington Post [*reported*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/03/11/senate-democrats-ads-super-pac/). The Senate Leadership Fund, Senate Majority PAC's Republican rival, meanwhile, has announced $57.5 million in Ohio spending.

Senate Majority PAC President J.B. Poersch has said the advertisements are intended to remind voters that “a woman's access to abortion, health care coverage for preexisting conditions, and the preservation and strengthening of Medicare and Social Security are all on the ballot,” The Post reported.

Ohio, a state Trump [*won*](https://www.politico.com/2020-election/results/ohio/) by nearly 10 points in 2020, has emerged as one of the GOP's primary targets ahead of the 2024 elections. Polls conducted between November 2023 and March 2024 show Brown leading Moreno, [*according*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/senate/2024/ohio/general/) to FiveThirtyEight, though the polls date from before the primary election.

“Ohioans want a Senator who will fight for workers and families, not someone selling them out in favor of open borders and radical green new deal climate policies,” Moreno told the DCNF.

The Brown campaign did not immediately respond to the DCNF's request for comment.

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**Graphic**

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