

PAC formed to help working-class candidates pays thousands to Bryce, consultants

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The PAC Randy Bryce rolled out in March to back working-class congressional candidates has yet to make a single donation to someone running for office, according to his latest FEC report.

Instead, nearly half the money it spent went to pay the ironworker for consulting, cover his travel costs or buy email contacts from his old campaign.

But Bryce told WisPolitics.com that's because 2020 campaigns are just now getting off the ground and he's planning a re-launch of Iron PAC within a month to expand its reach.

"We're going to have more people helping us out, and we're going to be able to reach out more to candidates as well," the former 1st CD candidate told WisPolitics.com.

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Late last year, the Working Families Party announced Bryce was joining the progressive group as a senior adviser to recruit and elect working-class candidates. But Bryce said he left that role in March, when Iron PAC launched. He also has been working on other things, including going back to work as an ironworker.

Beyond the money Iron PAC paid Bryce, it also paid \$5,964 to the consulting firm Strategy and Hustle, which helped the former Dem congressional candidate roll out the PAC back in March. It also spent \$3,186 on telecommunications services and another \$2,895 on compliance services.

State GOP spokesman Charles Nichols said the spending suggests Bryce started a “scam PAC to pad his own pockets,” referencing issues that popped up during the 2018 campaign over the Dem’s past.

“This is the behavior we have come to expect from Randy Bryce,” Nichols said.

In his fundraising pitch to roll out the PAC, Bryce made a promise to backers that “with your support, Iron PAC will seek out and support working people who do more than acknowledge that the middle class is struggling. Iron PAC will work with men and women who are struggling and give them the tools to fix our country.”

In the interview, Bryce noted he’s started promoting Dem House candidate JD Scholten, who’s challenging U.S. Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa. That includes traveling to Iowa recently to join Scholten for an event. Iron PAC also sent a fundraising pitch Thursday on Scholten’s behalf based on King’s comments about the impact of rape and incest on the world’s population.

The Caledonia Dem was a powerhouse fundraiser as he sought to take on then-House Speaker Paul Ryan before the Janesville Republican announced he wouldn’t seek re-election in 2018. All told, Bryce raised and spent nearly \$8.6 million in his bid for Wisconsin’s 1st CD that he lost to Republican Bryan Steil with 42.3 percent of the vote.

Iron PAC, meanwhile, reported receipts of \$23,736 between March 1 and June 30 with expenditures of \$21,622, leaving it with \$2,114 in the bank.

The FEC filing shows the PAC paid Bryce \$9,000 in \$3,000 increments over April, May and June. It also reimbursed him \$524 in travel costs and paid his congressional campaign \$900 for email contacts.

When the PAC was announced, one report noted Bryce had some 450,000 donors that he planned to tap to help other Democratic congressional candidates who lack personal wealth or a network of wealthy backers.

Of the money the PAC raised, \$13,607 was unitemized, meaning it came from donors who gave \$200 or less. The donations the PAC detailed included \$1,015 from Alex Lawson of Washington, D.C., who founded the firm Strategy and Hustle, which helped with the PAC’s rollout.

Iron PAC’s biggest donation was \$4,663 from Middle Seat Consulting in Silver

Spring, Md.

Meanwhile, Bryce's latest filing for his congressional campaign shows it has more debts than assets despite his impressive fundraising haul starting in spring 2017 through the 2018 election.

The campaign listed \$3,678 in receipts during the second quarter, \$4,327 in expenditures, and \$372 cash on hand with \$19,951 in obligations and debts.

Almost all of the receipts his congressional campaign reported were from Rapid Returns, a California-based direct mail firm that worked for Bryce during his failed congressional bid.

The report listed three debts: \$10,095 to TOSKR Inc., a California telecommunications firm; \$6,100 to Akerman LLP, a Florida law firm; and \$3,756 to Blue State Digital, of New York, for software.

Bryce said the campaign sought to pay off individuals first and was now seeking to rent his fundraising list in accordance with FEC regulations as it looks to retire the remaining debt.

"We are taking care of our obligations to make sure that people do get paid off and everyone that we owe money to," Bryce said.

See the first filing from Iron PAC:

<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/125/201907259151659125/201907259151659125.pdf>

See the latest filing from Bryce's congressional campaign:

<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/857/201907129150566857/201907129150566857.pdf>

See the Iron PAC email sent on Scholten's behalf:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/bryce-email/>

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