

Busted! Adam Schiff Funneled Millions To Defense Contractors After Taking Bribes From Those Contractors Agents



BY TYLER DURDEN

While Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) campaigns for a Senate seat on a platform of earmarks for local causes, the 12-term Congressman has been busted steering millions in taxpayer dollars to for-profit defense contractors, many of whom have been political donors to his campaigns.



According to an investigation by [Politico](#), Schiff "has offered an incomplete and potentially misleading account of his record on earmarks."

A POLITICO review of congressional earmarks and political contributions found that in addition to the money for homelessness and drug treatment, Schiff also steered millions to for-profit companies and raised tens of thousands for his House reelection campaigns from corporate executives and people connected to them. The review was mostly limited to [publicly available data](#) from the brief three-year window when corporate earmarks were disclosed.

In two particularly egregious cases, Schiff channeled millions in funding to Smiths Detection and Phasebridge, Inc., two defense companies within his district - with \$6 million steered to Smiths Detection and \$3 million to Phasebridge. Both moves would have been barred under reforms adopted in 2010. This financial maneuvering coincided with Schiff receiving \$8,500 in contributions from PMA Group PAC and two family members of Paul Magliocchetti, founder and owner of the lobbying firm retained by both defense companies.

In 2011, Paul Magliocchetti was sentenced to 27 months in prison for making illegal campaign contributions.

The earmarks Schiff delivered for donors

Rep. Adam Schiff's office told POLITICO he doesn't have records of his earmarks from the time he entered Congress in 2001 until 2007. Below is a snapshot of publicly available data on for-profit earmarks and corresponding campaign contributions from 2003 to 2020.

Earmarks	Company	Amount donated to Schiff's Campaign
\$9 million	Smiths Detection for chemical weapons sensors and Phasebridge Inc. that was developing a radar frequency distribution system for the Navy*	\$8,500
\$1 million	Eureka Aerospace for military technology to stop vehicles that ignored checkpoints	\$34,550
\$1 million	Tanner Research Inc. for detecting IEDs	\$15,800
\$800,000	Orbits Lightwave Inc. for an "ultra stable coherent laser" project	\$3,700
\$492,000	Superprotonic for solid acid fuel cell research	\$1,500

*Donations made via lobbyist PMA Group and associates
Source: POLITICO Reporting
Chris Cadelago/ POLITICO

Schiff claims not to have a full accounting of his earmarks.

The Congressman's campaign has been quick to minimize these connections, emphasizing the small proportion of these contributions in his overall fundraising and underscoring his commitment to ensuring Californians' tax dollars work for their benefit. In a boilerplate response, spokesperson Marisol Samayoa said: "Californians know and trust Adam's record of getting things done, and as a U.S. senator, he will do what it takes to ensure Californians' tax dollars are put to work for them and their priorities," adding "These contributions amount to less than one tenth of one percent of what Adam has raised over 20 years in Congress, and were driven by what was best for our troops and his constituents. It is ridiculous to suggest otherwise."

However, Schiff's lack of transparency in providing a complete list of his earmarks further fuels the cloud of skepticism surrounding his actions.

"We were always concerned about the pay-to-play aspects and that's something that every lawmaker must live with," said Steve Ellis, president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, a nonpartisan budget watchdog, who has been analyzing earmarks for decades. "If you're getting a campaign contribution and getting your earmark for that same company or for a client of that lobbyist, it has that perception."

The earmark process was changed following rising spending on a series of congressional pay-to-play scandals in the mid-2000s, including that of former Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-CA), who admitted to taking millions in bribes from defense contractors, as well as disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who dubbed the appropriations panel a "favor factory."

More of Schiff's shiftness via Politico...

— Schiff [directed \\$1 million](#) to Pasadena-based Eureka Aerospace, which was developing military technology to stop vehicles that ignored checkpoints. Eureka Aerospace CEO James Tatoian [contributed \\$24,600](#) to Schiff between 2006 and 2016. Others in Tatoian's household gave another \$9,950 through 2020. His only other federal contributions in recent years went to former Republican Sen. Martha McSally of Arizona, a retired Air Force colonel and former pilot.

— Schiff [channeled \\$1 million](#) to Tanner Research Inc. of Monrovia for detecting IEDs. CEO John Tanner [donated \\$15,800](#) to him from 2003 to 2012.

— Schiff got an \$800,000 earmark for Orbits Lightwave Inc. for an ultra stable coherent laser project. Yaakov Shevy, Orbits Lightwave's co-founder and president, donated \$2,500 to him over his time in Congress and executive Katrin Saroukhanian gave \$1,200 from 2007 to 2010.

— Schiff also secured \$492,000 for Superprotonic for solid acid fuel cell research. Co-founder Calum Chisholm of Pasadena and executive Sami Mardini of Duarte combined to donate \$1,500 to Schiff in 2007 and 2008.

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POLITICO could not analyze many of Schiff's earmarks or possible corresponding donations because the public record of dollars that flowed to companies is extremely limited. Schiff's campaign declined to provide the list of earmarks from between 2001 and 2007, contending they didn't have one. Schiff refused a Los Angeles Daily News request to reveal his projects when pressed in 2007.

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