

Coalition of 19 AGs Launch Investigation Into ActBlue Over Money Laundering Allegations

By [Debra Heine](#)

A coalition of 19 Republican state attorneys general have launched a criminal investigation into the Democrat fundraising platform ActBlue over allegations of money laundering.

As [American Greatness](#) reported in April, multiple independent investigative journalists, including [O’Keefe Media Group \(OMG\)](#) and [Election Watch](#) have uncovered what appears to be illegal activity involving millions of dollars in campaign donations to Act Blue that have been laundered through unwitting small donors.

The process of breaking up large donations and submitting them under the names of small donors to cover up illegal contributions has been dubbed “smurfing.” Suspicions that ActBlue routinely engages in this type of illicit fundraising have dogged the outfit since at least [Joe Biden’s presidential campaign in 2020](#).

The Committee on House Administration, chaired by Congressman Bryan Steil (R-Wisc.), [launched an investigation](#) into Act Blue in November of 2023 to look into reports that the fundraising giant was skirting campaign donation laws and allowing rampant fraud on the site. The committee [widened its probe](#) in August 2024.

[The Truth About the Pins-and-needles Sharp Pain & Neuropathy \(Watch\)](#)

[Heart Surgeon Begs Americans: “Stop Doing This To Your Avocados”](#)

In a letter sent to top officials on the Federal Election Commission (FEC) on August 5, Steil urged them to “immediately initiate an emergency rulemaking to require political campaigns to verify the card verification value (‘CVV’) of donors who contribute online using a credit or debit card, and to prohibit political campaigns from accepting online contributions from a gift card or other prepaid credit cards.”

In September, Steil [sent letters to five states](#), urging them to launch criminal investigations into ActBlue’s alleged illicit activities, citing three specific areas of concern:

– Donations significantly disproportionate to an individual’s net worth or previous giving history.

- Uncharacteristic donations from party-affiliated registered voters suddenly contributing to candidates of the opposing party.
- Unusually frequent donations from elderly individuals or first-time donors.

The number of GOP AGs involved in the effort has since swelled to 19.

On Tuesday, the 19 Republican Attorney's General sent [a letter](#) to ActBlue CEO and President Regina Wallace-Jones demanding information and explanations regarding the suspicious donations.

Recent reporting suggests that there may be donors across the country who are identified in filings with the Federal Election Commission as having donated to candidates through ActBlue (and other affiliated entities), but who did not actually make those donations. That raises a host of concerns about whether ActBlue's platform is being used to facilitate "smurfing"—a type of money laundering in which donors break up large donations and submit them under different names to disguise who the money comes from and thereby skirt contribution limits in violation of state and federal law.

As one former FEC commissioner recently explained, wealthy donors—some of whom are foreign nationals and therefore barred from donating to federal candidates at all—can employ complicated schemes like this to make donations in others' names. This concern is not hypothetical. Indeed, in an indictment filed last week in federal court, the U.S. Department of Justice alleged that a major U.S. political figure knowingly participated in such a scheme in a recent election cycle to receive contributions from a foreign national through straw donors. Further, the apparent irregularities in FEC filings also raise concerns about whether ActBlue's fundraising methods are deceptive and properly safeguard donor's data privacy.

Some of us and our colleagues have raised these concerns with you directly, and at least one senator has raised these concerns with the FEC. Independent investigations have shown that there are donors across the country who show up on FEC filings as having donated to candidates through ActBlue (and other affiliated entities) but deny having made those donations. Given the prominent role it plays in our elections, it is incumbent on ActBlue to address the serious questions created by apparent irregularities in ActBlue's FEC filings.

ActBlue is one of the largest fundraising platforms for election-related donations. Already during the 2024 election cycle ActBlue has raised billions of dollars. But there are concerns about where those dollars came from. It is essential that we know whether political donations—particularly in such large volumes—are being solicited, made, and processed consistent with campaign finance, consumer protection, and other state and federal laws. We, the chief legal officers of Iowa, Indiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming ask that you explain what measures you have in place to ensure that donations made through your platform follow State and federal law.

Just as important, we ask for clarification as to what measures you take to make sure that the donors identified as donating via the ActBlue platform are who they claim. If individuals are inadvertently donating to political campaigns, are misled into making repeat donations, or are having donations made in their name that they do not wish to make, that could violate election-related disclosures or state consumer fraud statutes. Our States' citizens deserve to know that those facilitating election-related financing are following State and federal laws. Thus we appreciate the assurances that you will provide in answering our questions promptly before the upcoming elections in November.

The AGs demanded a response to the the following requests for information no later than October 23, 2024:

1. Confirmation that ActBlue requires CVV numbers for all donations made via credit card.
2. A description of when and under what circumstances ActBlue first decided to require donors to submit CVV numbers.
3. Confirmation that ActBlue requires a legitimate address that is tied to the credit or debit card that a donor uses to make a contribution.
4. An explanation of how ActBlue ensures that all donors are persons legally allowed to make donations in the election to which they are donating.
5. An explanation of whether and how ActBlue's operations are consistent with industry standards for securely processing credit card or other payment transactions.
6. A description of any measures ActBlue utilizes to ensure compliance with 52 U.S.C. § 30121, including whether ActBlue follows the guidance provided by the FEC in FEC Advisory Opinion (AO) 1998-14 on how to identify the nationality of donors.
7. A description of how ActBlue's platform facilitates automatic, recurring donations from donors and what safeguards ActBlue has in place to ensure that donors do not inadvertently contribute more than they intend.