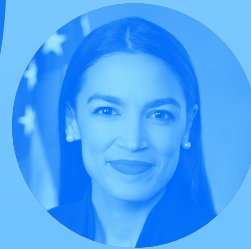
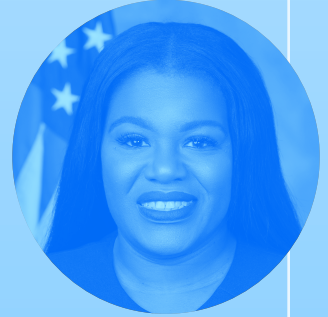
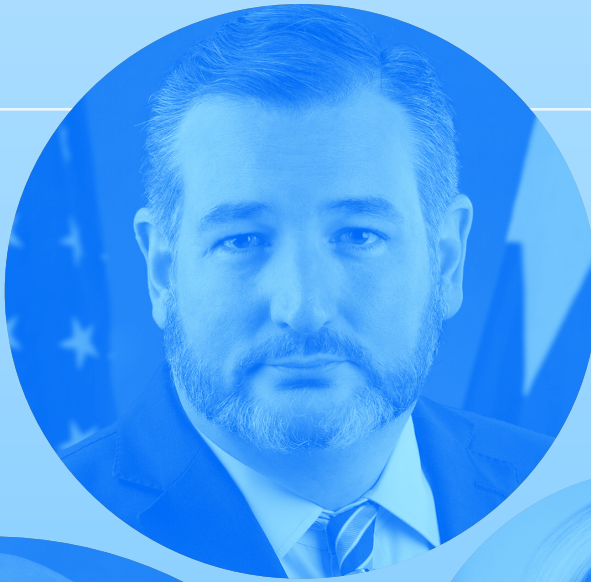


**ACCESS & USAGE:  
AUGUST 2025**

A data-driven report  
on a structural  
solution to support  
caregiving candidates.



# Campaign Funds for Security



# about

## organization & team

**Vote Mama Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization**, is the leading source of research and analysis on the political participation of moms. We are normalizing moms running for office, breaking the barriers they face, and building a political system that is *truly* family-friendly.

**Authors:** Louisa Duggan, Policy Director; Camryn Toner, Programs Associate

**Editors:** Liuba Grechen Shirley, Founder and CEO; Sarah Hague, Chief Program Officer; Kristy Pagan, Political Director; Maria Wilson, Research Manager

**Designer:** Comotion

## data & methodology

The data in this report includes campaign finance expenditures from January 2014 to December 2024. We used the Federal Election Commission's (FEC) campaign disbursement database—searching the following keywords: “security,” “bodyguard,” “protection,” “personal security,” “alarm system,” “cyber security,” and “cybersecurity.” Any transactions with descriptions outside of these search terms are not captured in this dataset. The level of office sought and political party data were downloaded from the FEC's bulk data download section. Race and gender data were retrieved from news articles, candidate websites, the LGBTQ+ Victory Institute, the Center for American Women in Politics, and Wikipedia.

Given the data limitations, we do not claim this report to be a comprehensive or exhaustive record of the use of Campaign Funds for Security (CFS) at the federal level, and we suspect that actual usage likely exceeds reported totals.

# introduction

Stepping up to run for office and representing your community should never come at the expense of you or your family's safety. Unfortunately, there has been a steady increase in harassment, abuse, attempts at violence, and stalking targeting various candidates for public office at the federal, state, and local levels.<sup>1</sup>

For parents of young children, persistent abuse and threats of violence go far beyond their individual role as a candidate, and often, can profoundly impact the safety and well-being of both themselves and their families. As a result, we could see more parents forgo political leadership altogether, leaving a parent gap in our representative democracy. We need parents at the decision-making table now more than ever, yet increasing threats are driving them out of politics altogether.

## **No parent should ever have to worry about their family's safety while on the campaign trail.**

Federal candidates have been able to use their campaign funds on security expenses on a case-by-case basis dating back to 2009. To streamline candidate requests and ensure candidates can tap into their campaign funds to pay for immediate security needs, the Federal Election Commission issued a final rule change on September 19th, 2024, clarifying that all federal candidates and officeholders **may use campaign funds to pay for security measures so long as the security measures address ongoing dangers or threats that would not exist irrespective of the individual's status or duties as a federal candidate or officeholder.**<sup>2</sup>

Permissible security expenses that campaign funds may be used for include, but are not limited to:

- **Non-structural security devices** such as hardware, locks, alarm systems, motion detectors and security camera systems.
- **Structural security devices** such as wiring, lighting, gates, doors and fencing, so long as such devices are intended solely to provide security and not to improve the property or increase its value.
- **Security personnel** that are bona fide, legitimate and professional.
- **Cybersecurity software**, devices and services.

Allowing candidates to use campaign funds to pay for security expenses directly related to campaign activity or holding public office is a concrete step we can take to empower everyday Americans to run for and remain in office once elected. Importantly, this common-sense solution comes at no cost to taxpayers.

**Vote Mama Foundation is the only organization tracking the usage of Campaign Funds for Security (CFS) at the federal level.**

<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Dresden and Liliana Mason, "Assessing the Effect of Political Violence on American Democracy: A Report on the Violence and Democracy Impact Tracker" (Protect Democracy and the SNF Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University, 2023), <https://snfagora.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/23.11.06-Political-Violence-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Paul Stoetzer, "Commission Approves Regulations Regarding Use of Campaign Funds for Candidate and Officeholder Security." (Federal Election Commission, 2024), [www.fec.gov/updates/commission-approves-regulations-regarding-use-of-campaign-funds-for-candidate-and-officeholder-security/](https://www.fec.gov/updates/commission-approves-regulations-regarding-use-of-campaign-funds-for-candidate-and-officeholder-security/)

# key findings

Vote Mama Foundation has conducted **extensive research on the usage of campaign funds spent on security expenses** directly related to campaign activities by federal candidates and officeholders.

This report, the first in its series, shows a substantial increase in the use of Campaign Funds for Security (CFS) at the federal level over the past decade. Throughout this period, more than 800 candidates for federal office spent over \$41 million on security measures necessitated solely by their status as candidates for public office.

**Spending levels spiked in 2020 and 2024; these two years accounted for 48.36% of the total spending over the ten-year period.**

The information in this report reflects campaign finance data from January 2014 to December 2024.

**\$41,228,562.85**

spent by federal candidates from all 50 states and 3 territories

**864**

individual candidates utilized CFS in at least 1,324 federal races<sup>3</sup>

**\$18,984,045.91**

spent by Democrats

**\$14,755,867.26**

spent by Republicans

<sup>3</sup> Due to data limitations, we expect that there were more races that we were unable to capture in our findings.



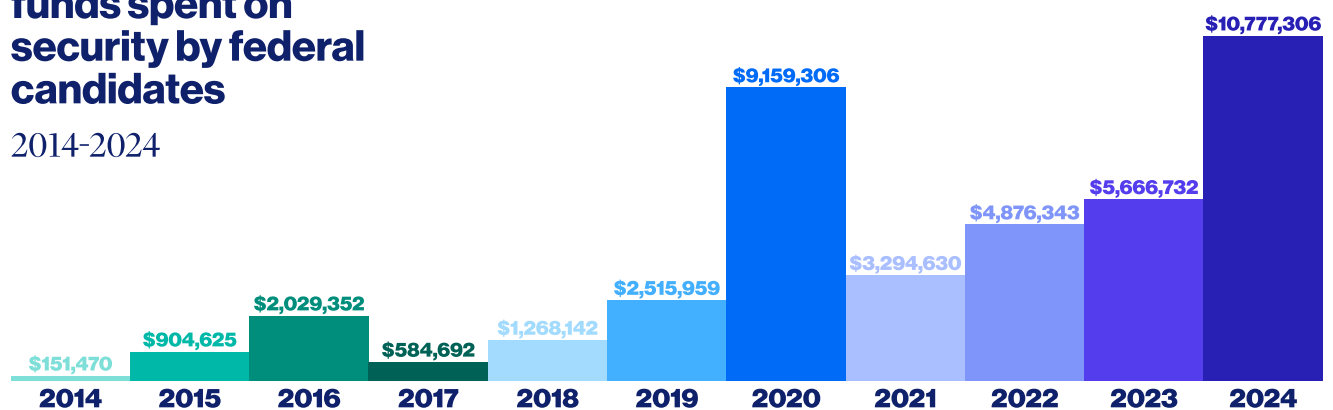
federal overview:

# funds spent

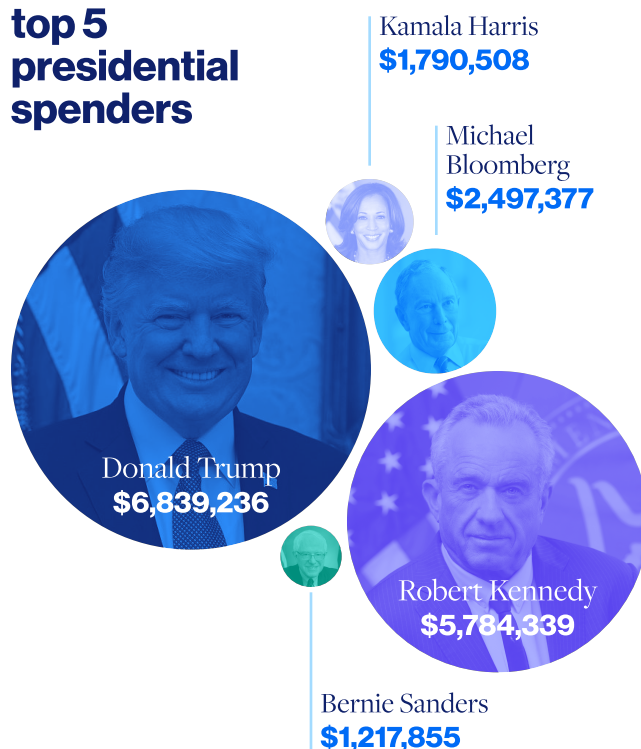
From 2014 to 2024, federal candidates spent **\$41,228,562.85** on security expenses. Nearly half of all security spending occurred in the years 2020 and 2024.

## funds spent on security by federal candidates

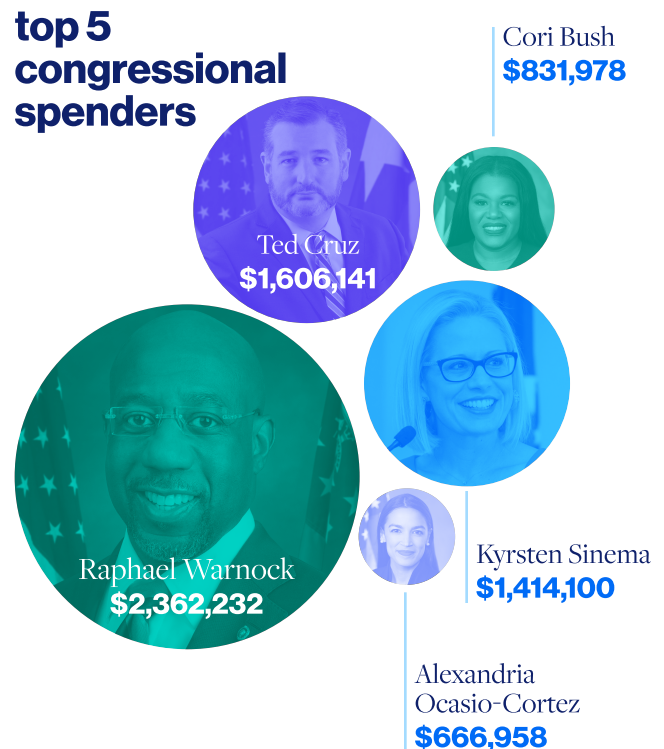
2014-2024



## top 5 presidential spenders



## top 5 congressional spenders



federal overview:

# candidate spending data

Federal candidates spent over **\$41 million** on security expenses **between 2014 and 2024**.

**\$41,228,562.85**

total funds spent by federal candidates

**7,015%**

increase in spending from 2014 to 2024

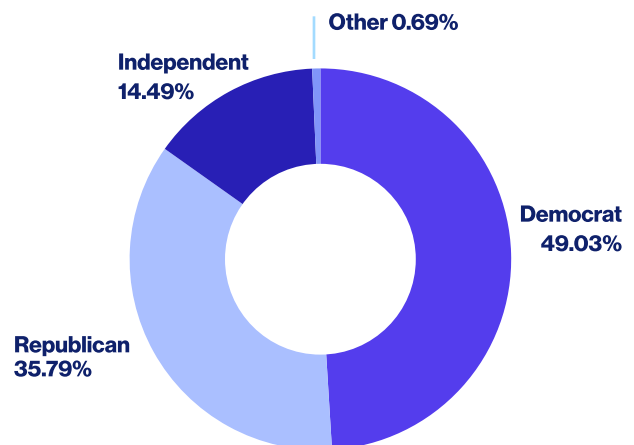
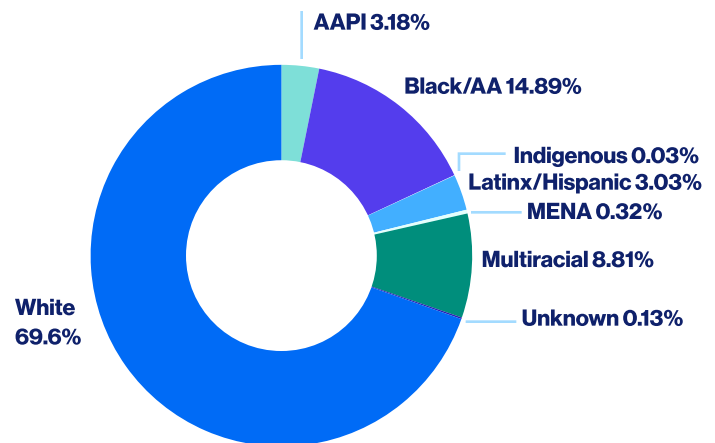
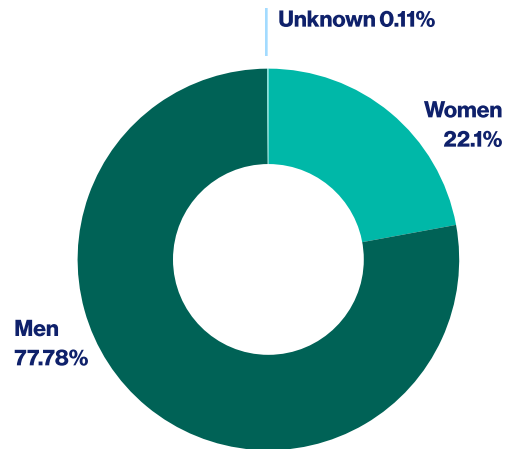
**78%**

of the total spending was by men  
of that amount, **79%** was spent by white men

**22%**

of the total spending was by women  
of that amount, **63%** was by women of color

While white men accounted for **nearly 80%** of men's CFS spending, women of color represented **almost two-thirds** of women's CFS spending.



federal overview:

# candidates

More than **860 candidates** collectively spent over **\$41 million** on security in at least **1,324 federal races**.

**864**

candidates used CFS in at least 1,324 federal races

**274**

candidates used CFS in multiple federal races

**68%**

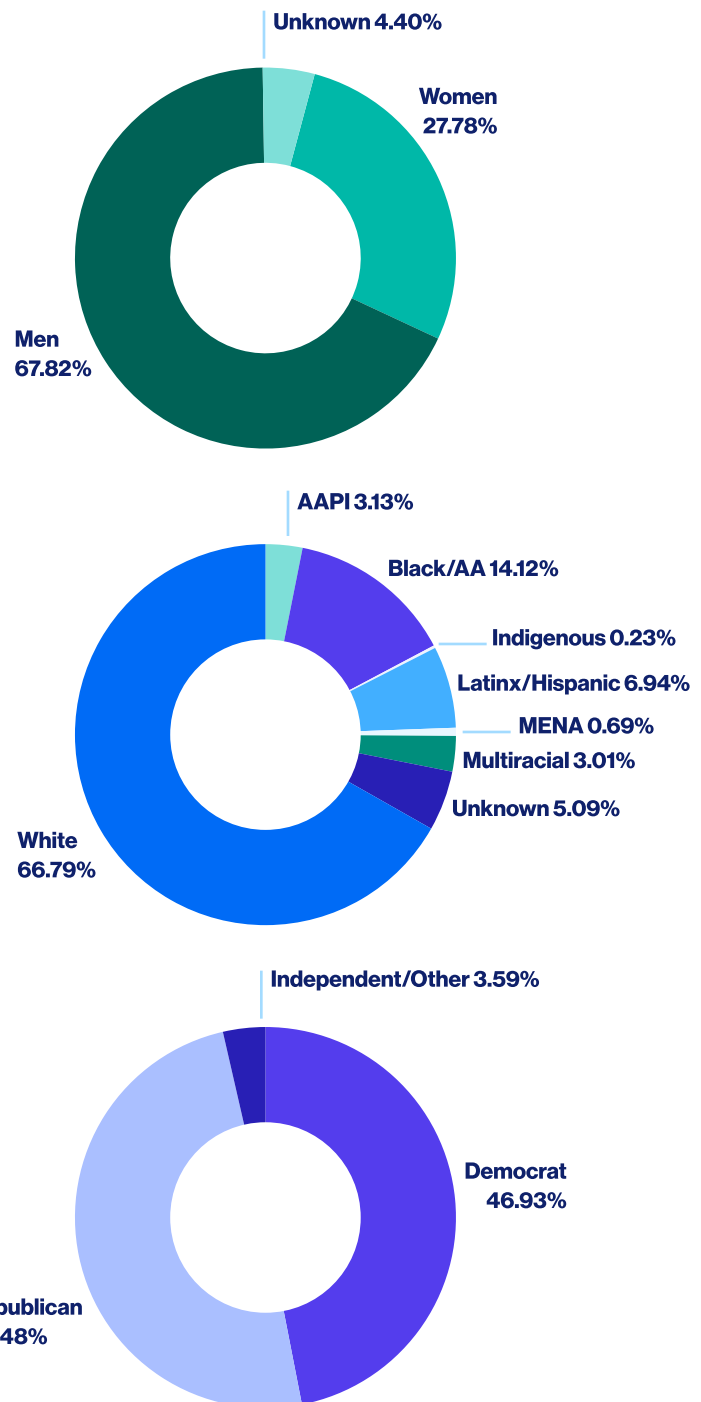
of candidates who used CFS were men

Among male CFS users, **74%** were white<sup>4</sup>

**28%**

of candidates who used CFS were women

Among female CFS users, **59%** were white<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Due to data limitations, we were unable to identify the racial identity of 1% of male and 1% of female CFS users.

The rise in security-related campaign spending reflects a deeply concerning political landscape that is particularly consequential for candidates with young children. As this report illustrates, CFS is widely used by candidates across the political spectrum and with differing backgrounds and policy platforms. The increasing need for CFS creates a barrier to entry for caregivers seeking office and discourages a new generation of candidates with young families from running for office up and down the ballot nationwide. **No candidate should ever have to worry about their family's safety while on the campaign trail.** To create more equitable and representative governing bodies, we must ensure that every candidate has the tools, resources, and institutional support needed to run safely and sustainably.

# Campaign Funds for Security 2025

