



Who Profited from Election Deniers?

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Issue One is the leading crosspartisan political reform group in Washington, D.C. We unite Republicans, Democrats, and independents in the movement to fix our broken political system and build an inclusive democracy that works for everyone. We educate the public and work to pass legislation on Capitol Hill to bolster U.S. elections, strengthen ethics and accountability, increase government transparency, and reduce the corrosive influence of big money in politics.

Issue One's ReFormers Caucus of more than 200 former members of Congress, governors, and Cabinet officials is the largest coalition of its kind ever assembled to advocate for political reform. Our National Council on Election Integrity is the leading bipartisan voice on protecting elections and combating efforts to undermine our democratic process.

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Who Profited from Election Deniers?

As election-denying secretary of state candidates raised large sums in 2022, political consultants behind the scenes were raking in the dough.

By Amisa Ratliff

As election-denying secretary of state candidates spouted rhetoric that eroded people's faith in our free and fair elections, political operatives behind the scenes were raking in the dough.

A new Issue One review of state campaign finance filings reveals a slice of which companies and political consultants across the country converted election denialism into profit during the 2022 midterm elections.

Some of these companies were new firms specializing in “America First” candidates. Some had long-established reputations in GOP circles. Three election-denying secretary of state candidates even spent money at properties owned by former President Donald Trump — the Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida; the Trump Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada; and a Trump golf course in New Jersey.

As Issue One has previously detailed, election-denying secretary of state candidates — who were running to oversee the very elections they sowed doubt about — [raised large sums of campaign cash](#) for races that, in the past, have often not been in the limelight.

On Election Day last year, voters rejected many of the [12 election-denying secretary of state candidates](#) who emerged as the Republican Party's nominees. But election deniers prevailed in a handful of secretary of state races in heavily Republican states — as well as in elections for other offices, from state legislatures to the halls of Congress.



As election-denying secretary of state candidates spouted rhetoric that eroded people's faith in our free and fair elections, political operatives behind the scenes were raking in the dough.

This analysis focused on the campaign spending of 11 of these 12 election-denying secretary of state nominees: Wes Allen of Alabama, Mark Finchem of Arizona, Dominic Rapini of Connecticut, Diego Morales of Indiana, Rayla Campbell of Massachusetts, Kristina Karamo of Michigan, Kim Crockett of Minnesota, Jim Marchant of Nevada, Audrey Trujillo of New Mexico, H. Brooke Paige of Vermont, and Chuck Gray of Wyoming.

Seven of these candidates competed in races widely considered to be competitive, where one prevailed and six lost on Election Day. Two lost in Democratic-leaning states, and two ran — and prevailed — in Republican-leaning states.

Monae Johnson, the election-denying secretary of state candidate who ran and won in Republican-leaning South Dakota, was unable to be included in this analysis because South Dakota does not require the itemized reporting of campaign spending. The state only requires the disclosure of aggregate sums in broad categories such as “consulting,” “advertising,” and “event expenses.”

Historically, secretary of state elections have not seen the same level of massive, multimillion-dollar spending as competitive gubernatorial or congressional elections.

The top-spending election-denying secretary of state candidate in 2022 was Mark Finchem of Arizona, who spent roughly \$2 million during his competitive — but ultimately unsuccessful — race against Democrat Adrian Fontes. Most election-denying secretary of state candidates spent far less than that.

Election deniers like Chuck Gray of Wyoming and Wes Allen of Alabama prevailed in their races in Republican-leaning states after spending between \$700,000 and \$800,000. Election denier Monae Johnson of South Dakota spent just \$67,000 in her successful secretary of state campaign, while election denier Audrey Trujillo of New Mexico spent \$65,000 in her unsuccessful secretary of state bid.

The following paragraphs highlight nine of the most notable companies that profited from election-denying secretary of state candidates during the 2022 election cycle — including the top vendors of the campaigns of Mark Finchem of Arizona, Kristina Karamo of Michigan, Jim Marchant of Nevada, and Audrey Trujillo of New Mexico.

Most of the vendors highlighted below received payments from multiple election-denying secretary of state candidates.



State campaign finance filings reveal which companies and political consultants across the country converted election denialism into profit during the 2022 midterm elections.

Go Right Strategies

\$1.5 million

Go Right Strategies, a political consulting firm based in Florida, received more than \$1.5 million in payments from election-denying secretary of state candidates during the 2022 election cycle.

Most of that came from Mark Finchem, the unsuccessful GOP nominee for secretary of state in Arizona. The \$1.5 million in payments to Go Right Strategies account for 76% of Finchem's campaign expenditures — making the firm the top recipient of his campaign's spending.

Kristina Karamo, the unsuccessful GOP nominee for secretary of state in Michigan, also spent approximately \$5,600 at Go Right Strategies.

Go Right Strategies is run by [Spence Rogers](#), the nephew of Wendy Rogers, an Arizona state senator [with ties to white nationalists](#). She [has praised](#) the white supremacist Nick Fuentes and was [censured last March](#) by a bipartisan majority of the Arizona Senate after calling for public executions in a speech to a white nationalist convention.

McShane LLC

\$696,000

McShane LLC — a political consulting firm based in Las Vegas, Nevada, that [describes itself](#) as “rebels with no respect for the status quo” — received \$696,000 in payments from election-denying secretary of state candidates during the 2022 election cycle.

Much of that money came from Jim Marchant, the unsuccessful GOP nominee for secretary of state in Nevada, who spent nearly \$500,000 on their services — representing 56% of his overall campaign spending. This ranked the company as Marchant's top vendor.

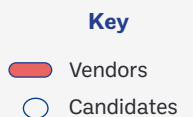
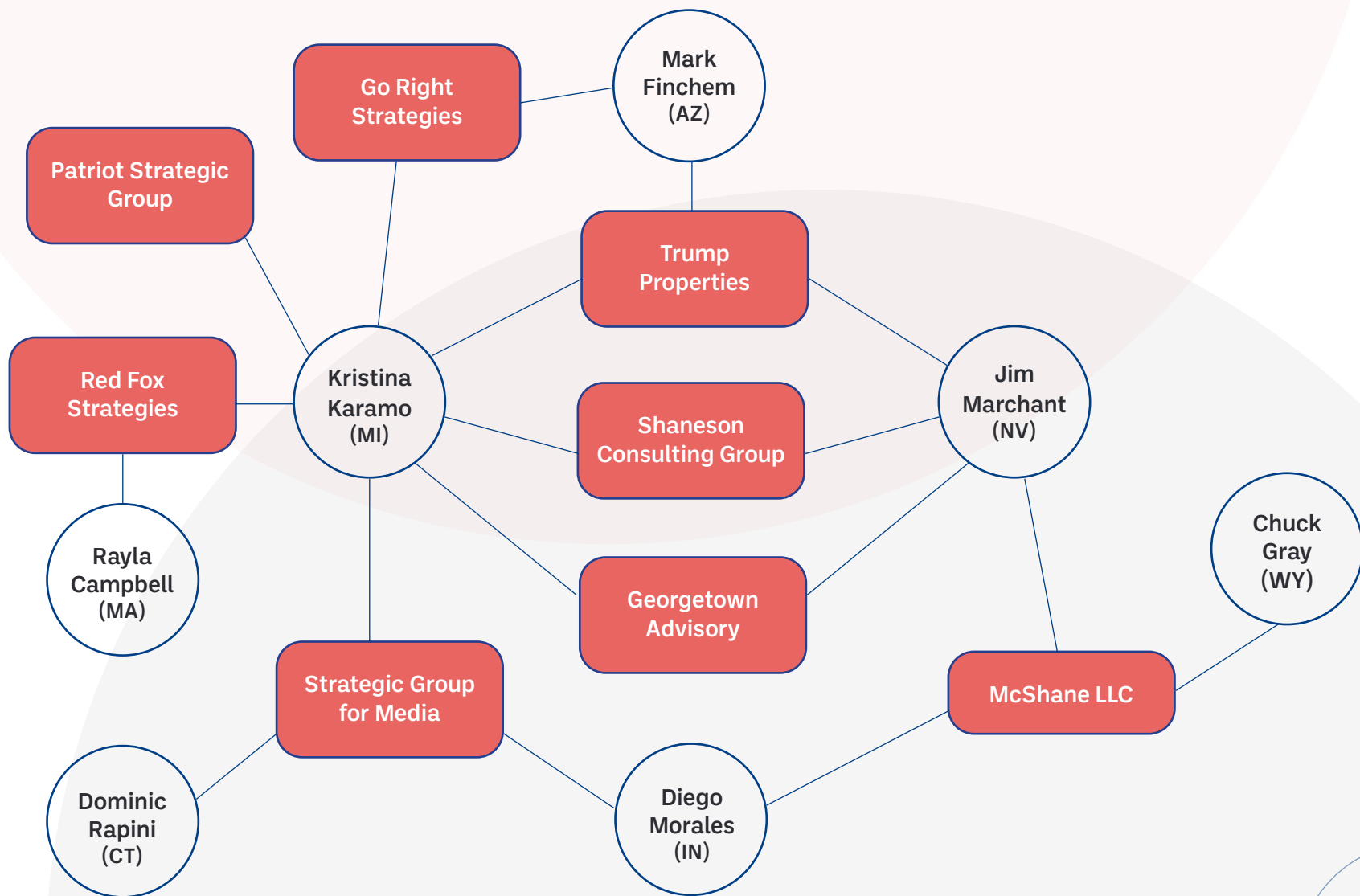
Additionally, Chuck Gray, the election denier who prevailed in Wyoming's secretary of state election in November, spent nearly \$200,000, or 28% of his overall campaign spending, at McShane LLC. And Diego Morales, the election denier who prevailed in Indiana's secretary of state election in November, spent more than \$7,000 on their political consulting services.

McShane LLC is led by Rory McShane, a key player in the election denier movement. After the 2020 election, McShane [reportedly set up](#) the Take Back the West PAC, which had the stated goal of uncovering voter fraud in the election. The PAC raised nearly \$80,000 and spent nearly \$75,000 — [all](#) of it [to McShane LLC](#). And a related federal super PAC formed by people with ties to McShane LLC — also called Take Back the West — paid McShane LLC [nearly \\$570,000](#) to make TV ads and mailers during the 2020 election that supported President Donald Trump and opposed Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

Woodrow Johnston, the vice president of McShane LLC, [made news](#) when he arranged to recruit Proud Boys to attend a protest in front of the Clark County Election Department in Las Vegas while they were counting votes in 2020.

The Election Deniers' Network

Notable companies and political consultants that profited from election-denying secretary of state candidates in 2022



Recently, the company [hired Sam Peters](#), an unsuccessful 2022 congressional candidate in Nevada and former client of McShane LLC, to be its CEO. Peters has [peddled conspiracy theories](#) about Dominion voting machines and has said he does not believe the country's elections are secure.

Patriot Strategic Group | \$400,000

Kristina Karamo, the unsuccessful GOP nominee for secretary of state in Michigan, paid \$400,000 to Patriot Strategic Group during the 2022 election, all for advertising. This represented 33% of her overall campaign spending, making the firm the top beneficiary of her campaign.

Patriot Strategic Group is a Michigan-based company that [formed in April](#) of 2022. Its agent is Dom Theodore, who [works for](#) the conservative Glenn Beck radio program, and the address on its corporate filings is that of a [radio station](#) in Cadillac, Michigan.

The Strategy Group for Media | \$103,000

The Strategy Group for Media, an Ohio-based company that has been [described](#) as “one of the country's largest political media firms,” received \$103,000 from election-denying secretary of state candidates in 2022: \$76,000 from Diego Morales of Indiana, \$22,000 from Dominic Rapini of Connecticut, and \$5,000 from Kristina Karamo of Michigan.

Rex Elsass is the founder and chairman of the board of the Strategy Group for Media, and he's no stranger to scandal. Elsass [urged then-Rep. Todd Akin \(R-MO\)](#) to stay in his 2012 U.S. Senate race after Akin's offensive comments about “legitimate rape,” and Elsass was [once called](#) “a ringleader of a GOP dirty-tricks group labeled the ‘nasty boys’” by the *Columbus Dispatch*.

Trump Properties | \$81,000

Trump's own properties received payments totaling \$81,000 from election-denying secretary of state candidates ahead of the 2022 elections.

Mark Finchem of Arizona spent more than \$53,000 at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club in 2022, where Trump spoke at [at least one fundraiser](#) with the Arizona Republican and election denier.

Kristina Karamo of Michigan spent nearly \$22,000 at the Trump National Golf Course in New Jersey in 2022. Trump appeared at a fundraiser for Karamo there in [August](#), the same month as Karamo's spending there.

And Jim Marchant of Nevada spent more than \$6,000 at the Trump Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Georgetown Advisory | \$80,000

Georgetown Advisory, a consulting firm run by Trump advisor Boris Epshteyn, received \$80,000 from election-denying secretary of state candidates ahead of the 2022 elections. The firm received \$60,000 from Kristina Karamo of Michigan and \$20,000 from Jim Marchant of Nevada.

Epshteyn is considered one of Trump's closest advisors, making news for [being close to Trump](#) in 2022. According to *Politico*, "Epshteyn helms a particularly important place in Trump's inner circle these days." And Epshteyn is getting rich off of his ties to Trump.

Federal campaign finance filings show Georgetown Advisory earned roughly \$1 million from Trump-aligned candidates during the 2022 election cycle, and the company received an additional \$165,000 from Trump's Save America PAC. An aide on one candidate's campaign [told the Washington Post](#) they hired Epshteyn explicitly in the hopes of securing Trump's endorsement, as Epshteyn would reportedly talk up his clients to Trump and share positive news articles and polling.

While Karamo's payments to the Georgetown Advisory Group came after Trump endorsed her campaign, Marchant's payments to the firm came prior to receiving Trump's endorsement.

Red Fox Strategies | \$60,000

Red Fox Strategies, a fundraising consulting group based in Virginia, was paid more than \$60,000 by election-denying secretary of state candidates — nearly \$49,000 from Mark Finchem of Arizona, more than \$10,000 from Kristina Karamo of Michigan, and nearly \$1,000 from Rayla Campbell of Massachusetts. The company, which formed [shortly after the 2020 election](#), is led by Steven Thomas, a [self-described](#) "conservative/libertarian activist and fundraiser."

Shaneson Consulting Group | \$32,000

Shaneson Consulting Group LLC, a political consulting group with a minimal digital footprint, received nearly \$32,000 from election-denying secretary of state candidates during the 2022 election cycle. The group is [headed by Adam Shaneson](#), who works out of [a residential address](#) in Boynton Beach, Florida. He states that his firm "only represents America First candidates."

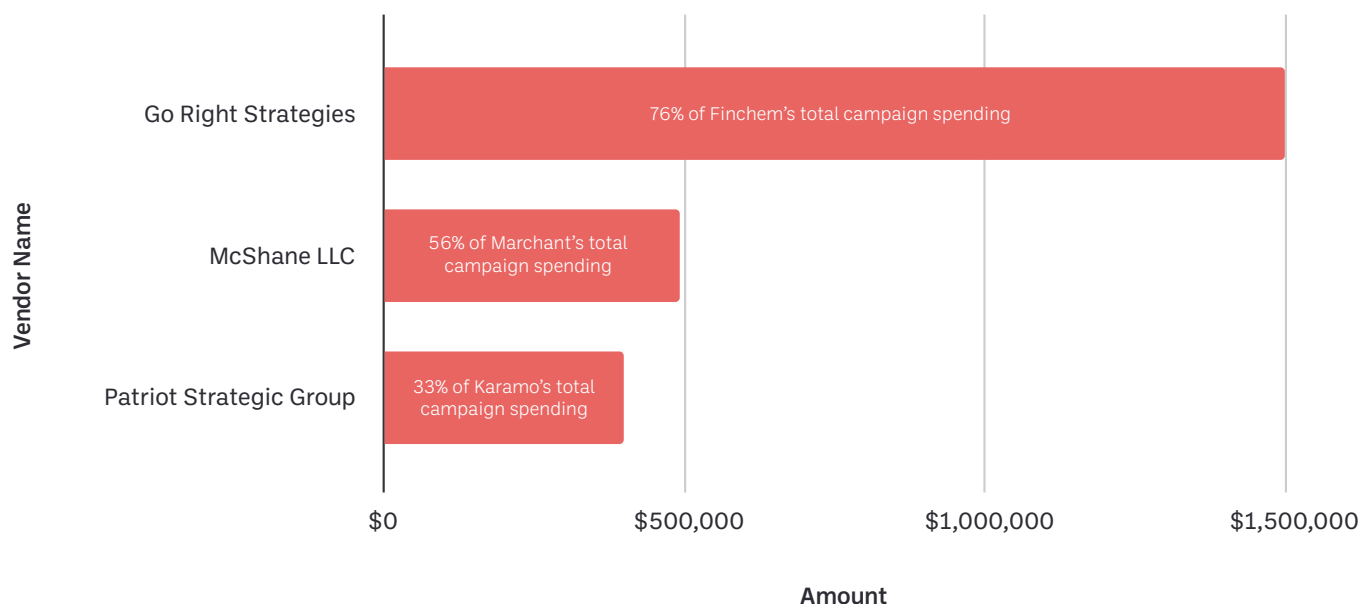
Kristina Karamo of Michigan paid \$28,000 to Shaneson Consulting Group. Mark Finchem of Arizona spent nearly \$3,000 on the firm’s services. And Jim Marchant of Nevada spent roughly \$600.

According to Shaneson’s [LinkedIn](#) profile, he worked as the deputy campaign manager for the 2018 campaign of Angie Chirino, a Republican who ran for Congress in Florida’s 27th Congressional District and was defeated in the GOP primary. Shaneson has also operated another company with nearly the same name — Shaneson Consulting Group Inc. — which he says [has provided](#) “Israeli Counter Terrorism training” to police and military forces.

Milk Consulting | \$16,000

Audrey Trujillo, the unsuccessful GOP nominee for secretary of state in New Mexico, spent 24% of her campaign money (nearly \$16,000) at Milk Consulting. This ranked the company as the top beneficiary of her campaign’s spending. Milk Consulting is a political consulting firm based in Las Vegas, Nevada, that specializes in social media and advertising. [Its website](#) refers to the company’s CEO, Robert Duran, as “the only true America First News Influencer” who “champions the forgotten men and women of the United States.” The company also [sells pro-Trump merchandise](#).

Top Beneficiaries of Spending by Election-Denying Secretary of State Candidates Mark Finchem, Kristina Karamo, and Jim Marchant





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