

# SUPER TUESDAY WITH G.O.P.'S DEEPEST POCKETS



A seven-month, \$220 million surge of spending on behalf of mainstream Republican candidates has yielded a primary battle dominated by Donald J. Trump and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, two candidates reviled by most of the party's leading donors.

Now, as they approach a pivotal and expensive stage of the campaign, the two insurgent candidates — who have won the first three contests — appear to be in the best position financially to compete in the 11 states that will vote on Super Tuesday, according to reports filed with the Federal Election Commission on Saturday.

Mr. Cruz is the best financed candidate in the Republican race, beginning February with \$13.6 million in cash on hand. Mr. Trump, a billionaire, has raised millions of dollars from small donors and lent himself millions more, including nearly \$5 million in January. He paid out more than \$11.5 million that month, the most sustained spending of his presidential bid so far.

The outcome is a rebuke to the party's traditional donor class, which poured record-breaking amounts of money into the race last spring and summer in the hope of grooming a nominee with broad national appeal and a chance at winning over more Hispanic and other nonwhite voters. Instead, the candidates backed most lavishly by wealthy establishment-leaning Republican donors burned through much of the cash they accumulated last year, beginning the month deeply depleted. Those remaining in the race on Sunday, Gov. John Kasich of Ohio and Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, had less than \$7 million in cash between them.

Jeb Bush, who entered the race last summer with more money behind him than every other Republican candidate combined, ended his campaign on Saturday with just \$2.9 million in the bank and a fourth-place finish in South Carolina, a state the Bush family once considered a political stronghold.

Much of the donor class's money was spent on a shootout among its favored candidates. Groups backing Mr. Bush, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Kasich and Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey devoted almost three-quarters of the money they spent on negative advertising to attacking those other candidates rather than Mr. Trump or Mr. Cruz, according to the commission's data. The outside group aligned with Mr. Bush, Right to Rise, spent an astonishing \$34 million in January alone, with little impact on Mr. Bush's own fortunes.

"The establishment G.O.P. is lying to itself. This election at its core is a rejection of their globalist economic agenda and failed immigration policies — and of rule by the donor class," said Laura Ingraham, the conservative talk-radio host and political activist. "Millions want the party to go in a more populist direction."

That proposition will be tested in the coming weeks, as Republican donors begin to organize more strategically against Mr. Trump. Our Principles PAC, a group devoted to highlighting his past support for Democratic positions like universal health care, higher taxes and abortion rights, is now spending significantly to persuade Republicans that Mr. Trump is not a reliable conservative.

On Saturday, filings revealed that Marlene Ricketts, a prominent Republican donor who previously supported the campaign of Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, provided the group with \$3 million in January. Richard Uihlein, a wealthy Chicago-area businessman and conservative patron, also contributed to the group.

Katie Packer, a Republican strategist overseeing Our Principles, said the group's ads had helped reduce Mr. Trump's margin of victory in South Carolina. "Our hope is that the field will winnow and conservatives will coalesce behind a candidate that believes in conservative principles and can unite the party," Ms. Packer said. "We intend to keep the heat on in Nevada and the March 1 states and as long as it takes for that to occur."

Mr. Kasich had just \$1.4 million on hand at the end of January — virtually dry against the scale of modern presidential campaigns — while Mr. Rubio had \$5 million, though both campaigns were expected to capitalize on strong showings in the first two contests. After spending tens of millions of dollars between them, the "super PAC" backing Mr. Kasich reported only \$2.4 million in cash on hand, while the group backing Mr. Rubio had \$5.6 million.

The disparity between traditional and insurgent candidates was echoed to some extent on the Democratic side, where Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont raised almost \$6.5 million more than Hillary Clinton in January — the first reporting period in which his campaign has taken in more money. Virtually all of that money came from donors giving small checks.

But Mr. Sanders also spent heavily to win in New Hampshire and fight Mrs. Clinton to a virtual tie in Iowa, dropping \$35 million in January, reports filed late on Saturday showed. He ended the month with less than half as much cash on hand as Mrs. Clinton.

A super PAC backing Mrs. Clinton, Priorities USA Action, also continues to stockpile cash, reporting \$45 million in cash on hand at the end of last month. The group took in almost \$10 million in January, including \$3.5 million from James H. Simons, a retired hedge fund founder from New York.

Mr. Kasich and Mr. Rubio are now hoping to take advantage of Mr. Bush's decision to quit the race, leaving them to divvy up his remaining large donors. Both have been heavily dependent on donors making large contributions: Mr. Kasich raised just 17 percent of his contributions from donors giving \$200 or less in January, and Mr. Rubio 19 percent.

“South Carolina is the political equivalent of the parting of the Red Sea,” said Theresa Kostrzewa, a Bush fund-raiser in North Carolina, who predicted most of Mr. Bush's supporters would flow to Mr. Rubio. “Republicans: This is your sign from God.”

Jeff Sadowsky, a spokesman for the pro-Rubio group, Conservative Solutions PAC, said on Saturday that he expected the race to “go on for quite some time.” The group is planning to begin what Mr. Sadowsky described as a “multistate, multimillion-dollar advertising effort” on Tuesday.

Mr. Kasich's chief strategist, John Weaver, told reporters on Saturday that Mr. Kasich's fund-raising had increased “dramatically” since his second-place finish in the New Hampshire primary, but did not specify by how much. And Mr. Kasich faces perhaps the biggest challenge. He is bypassing this week's Republican caucuses in Nevada, and he is counting on strong performances in Michigan, whose primary is March 8, and his home state of Ohio, which votes on March 15. He is not likely to have another attention-grabbing finish before those contests.

“We’re confident we’re going to get enough to run the kind of campaign we need,” Mr. Weaver said after results came in on Saturday. “The days of us being outspent 10 to 1 are over because of what happened tonight.” (Contributor: By Nicholas Confessore and Sarah Cohen for The New York Times – Maggie Haberman, Rachel Shorey and Thomas Kaplan contributed reporting)

**This NY Times analysis suggests that money paves the way to the U.S. presidency — and lots of it. Intercessors understand that today’s political campaigns are very costly, with wide-range travel and constant media exposure. For people of faith, however, the most valuable currency is not gold and silver but character. Pray for God’s will to be fulfilled. Then, study the issues, and plan to vote.**

*“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Tim. 6:10)*