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**TRAVEL REWARDS: WHAT THE CROW FAMILY MAY HAVE BOUGHT
BY HOSTING THOSE LUXURY TRIPS FOR JUSTICE THOMAS**

*New Information Shows His Vote for Citizens United Allowed the Billionaire Clan
To Pump Tens of Millions of Dollars More Into Political Campaigns*

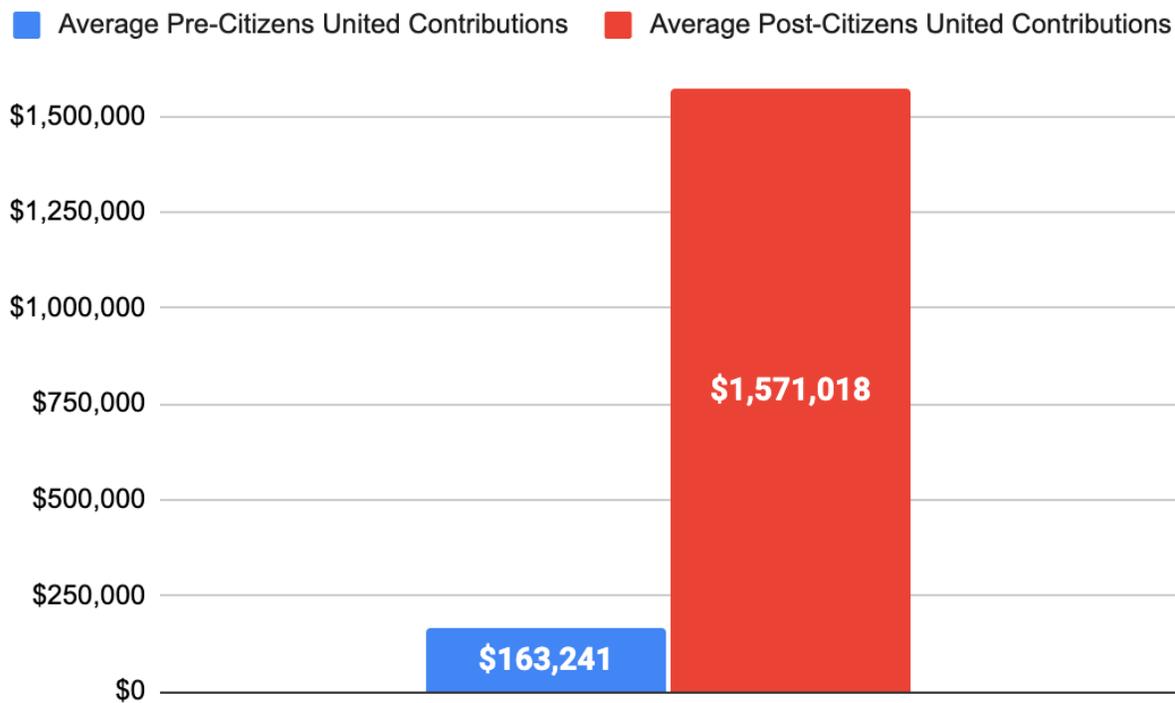
WASHINGTON – A nearly nine-fold increase in their ability to influence federal elections is one benefit the billionaire Crow family might ascribe to the [years of luxurious hospitality](#) they’ve provided to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, according to campaign-finance data compiled by Americans for Tax Fairness (ATF). Thomas was a deciding vote in the 5-4 ruling by the Court in the controversial 2010 [Citizens United case](#) that opened the floodgates to unlimited political spending by the wealthy.

The Crows immediately used the new rules to dramatically increase their average annual political spending to more than \$1.5 million after *Citizens United*, versus \$163,241 pre-*Citizens United*. Their total post-*Citizens United* political spending is \$20.5 million, versus \$5.3 million in all the reported years prior.

“The Crows used their fortune to buy access to and curry favor with one of the most powerful officials in Washington, then benefitted from his central role in loosening rules meant to limit the influence of money over politics and policy,” said **David Kass, ATF’s executive director**. “It’s a vicious cycle that can only be short-circuited by restoring meaningful campaign-finance rules and by demanding a much fairer share of taxes from billionaires, which, among other good results, will leave them less money to distort our democratic process.”

The Crows, whose family fortune is estimated to be [at least \\$2.5 billion according to Forbes](#), have been big campaign donors for the last half century or so. But until *Citizens United*, their ability to throw political money around was relatively limited. According to the data compiled by ATF, between 1977 and 2009 the Crow family (defined as Harlan, his wife, parents, siblings, and their family-owned businesses) spent an average of \$163,000 a year on federal campaigns.

But since the Thomas-backed Supreme Court decision in 2010 gutted campaign-finance curbs, their political spending has skyrocketed over 862% to almost \$1.6 million annually. Of the nearly \$26 million in political contributions made by the Crows over the past 46 years, almost 80% has come in just the first 12 years post-*Citizens United*.



[ProPublica recently revealed](#) that Justice Thomas has failed to report hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of lavish trips over the past 20 years funded by Texas business mogul Harlan Crow. Thomas also failed to report his gain in a sale to Crow of property [worth over \\$130,000](#). In the past, Thomas revealed exotic gifts from Crow [valued at over \\$10,000 each](#). Ethics experts have stated Thomas should have revealed the trips and sale proceeds as well.

The Crows' influence-buying and political spending are emblematic of a larger problem: the ongoing attempt by billionaires to purchase our democracy. Over the past year, ATF has [issued](#)

[several reports](#) on billionaires trying to buy elections and the risk that poses to our country. The group has called for both campaign-finance reform—beginning with the overturning of *Citizens United*—and fairer taxes on billionaires to reduce the resources available to them to buy candidates and campaigns.

[\[New Analysis Shows Crows' Election Giving Increased Ninefold After Citizens United Ruling\]](#)