

# Dark money groups' donor revealed

By **Brad Cooper** - July 31, 2020



Evergy has helped fund two dark-money groups that are campaigning for moderate Republicans in hot state Senate races that could ultimately determine the chamber's leadership next year.

The company last year gave \$100,000 to Future Vision, a nonprofit social welfare group that has been involved in at least five key Senate races where moderate Republicans are fending off challenges from conservatives.

It also contributed \$25,000 to [Alliance for a Secure Kansas](#), which also is involved on behalf of moderates in several legislative races.

Since Future Vision is [incorporated](#) as a 501(c)4 it is not required to disclose its donors, so it is impossible to get an idea of how much it has raised overall or how much Evergy's contribution makes up of the group's overall fundraising.

However, the utility disclosed the contributions in a [report](#) to investors. The report covered all of Evergy's political activity for 2019, listing \$250,000 in contributions in Missouri and Kansas.

The significance of the report is not so much that Evergy is involved in Kansas political races, but rather it gives some glimpse into a couple of the dark-money groups that are playing in Kansas legislative races.

“We have given broadly to multiple ideological blocks and political parties in Kansas,” Evergy spokeswoman Gina Penzig said in a statement.

“As a major Kansas company with thousands of employees who live and work in our state, it’s important for us to engage in the political process on all sides.”

Two years ago, for instance, KCP&L – before it became Evergy – [contributed \\$100,000](#) to a [political action committee](#) started by former state Rep. Marvin Kleeb.

Penzig pointed out that Evergy discloses all of its contributions from the previous calendar year, although it’s not required.

This year, Future Vision and Alliance for a Secure Kansas have joined with [highway contractors](#) and the [wind industry](#) to aid moderates in the Senate primary.

They counterbalance the money being spent by PACs affiliated with the [Kansas Chamber of Commerce](#), [Americans for Prosperity](#) and [Kansas for Life](#) helping conservatives.

The chamber spent about \$153,000 through July 23, but on Friday reported that it had spent another [\\$235,000](#) since July 24.



*Future Vision ad against Fagg*

Future Vision has left its footprints in races where moderate Republican Sens. John Skubal, Mary Jo Taylor, Dan Goddard, Bruce Givens and Ed Berger are defending their seats.

The outcome of those races could very well determine whether Senate Vice President Jeff Longbine or Republican Sen. Ty Masterson could emerge next year as the next president of the chamber.



*Future Vision ad against Warren*

Future Vision has purchased a number of ads on Facebook that have criticized Givens’ opponent Michael Fagg for missing meetings when he was a member of the El Dorado City Council.

It also ran digital ads opposing Skubal's opponent Kellie Warren for not supporting schools and Berger's opponent Mark Steffen for not voting in the GOP primaries in 2016, 2014 and 2012.

It also has been sending mailers out for state Sen Randall Hardy, who is facing state Rep. J.R. Claeys in the primary.

Future Vision was incorporated in 2018. Its president and treasurer is [listed](#) as Gary Yager, president and CEO of VisionBank in Topeka. Lobbyist Bill Sneed is listed as the organization's secretary.

Yager could not be reached for comment. Sneed declined comment.



*Future Vision ad against Steffen*

Future Vision's [Facebook page](#) is owned by Axiom Strategies, a Kansas City political consulting firm founded by Jeff Roe, who also [contributed](#) \$500 to Claeys' Senate campaign.

Alliance for a Secure Kansas, meanwhile, was formed as a [not-for-profit](#) in 2017 with a Topeka post office box.

While it, too, doesn't have to show how it is spending its money, the group, at the very least, has been running digital ads supporting state Rep. Jim Karleskint in House District 42, Rep. Mark Samsel in House District 5 and Rep. Jan Kessinger in House District 20 and a handful of others.

Karleskint, Samsel and Kessinger are facing conservative Republican challengers.

Lawyer Charles Rayl of Strong City is listed as its president. Mark Coberly of Gove is listed as its vice president. And Tom Roberts of Manhattan is listed as the treasurer.

The same three people were involved with another dark money group that backed moderate Republicans in 2016 called the [Kansas Freedom Alliance](#).