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# 'Super PAC' for Gingrich to Get \$5 Million Infusion

By NICHOLAS CONFESSORE

A wealthy backer of [Newt Gingrich](#) will inject \$5 million into a “super PAC” supporting his presidential bid, two people with knowledge of the contribution said on Monday, providing a major boost to Mr. Gingrich as he seeks to fend off aggressive attacks from [Mitt Romney](#), his main Republican rival.

The supporter, Dr. Miriam Adelson, is the wife of [Sheldon Adelson](#), a longtime Gingrich friend and a patron who this month contributed \$5 million to the super PAC, [Winning Our Future](#). Dr. Adelson's check will bring the couple's total contributions to [Winning Our Future](#) to \$10 million, a figure that could substantially neutralize the millions of dollars already being spent in Florida by Mr. Romney and [Restore Our Future](#), a super PAC supporting him.

Mr. Adelson's initial check financed a barrage of negative ads against Mr. Romney in South Carolina, helping Mr. Gingrich to an upset victory in Saturday's Republican primary there. But those attacks, which focused on Mr. Romney's wealth and [private equity](#) career, also drew condemnation from many conservatives, who said Mr. Gingrich's allies were undercutting free-market capitalism and amplifying class-warfare arguments being made by Democrats and Occupy Wall Street demonstrators.

In making the couple's second \$5 million contribution, Dr. Adelson expressed a wish to [Winning Our Future](#) officials that the money be used “to continue the pro-Newt message,” one of the people familiar with the contribution said, rather than attack Mr. Romney.

The Adelsons' contributions on Mr. Gingrich's behalf illustrate how rapidly a new era of unlimited political money is reshaping the rules of presidential politics and empowering individual donors to a degree unseen since before the Watergate scandals.

The wealth of a single couple has now leveled the playing field in two critical primary states for Mr. Gingrich, a candidate who ended September more than \$1 million in debt, finished out of the running in Iowa and New Hampshire and, unlike Mr. Romney, has yet to attract the broad network of hard-money donors and bundlers that traditionally propel presidential campaigns.

The contribution also underscored how the advantages built by Mr. Romney's campaign, including a potent get-out-the-vote operation in Florida and tens of millions of dollars in campaign contributions raised in chunks of no more than \$2,500, are being challenged by new forces, including the

high-profile debates that have elevated Mr. Gingrich and the emergence of new campaign finance rules in the wake of the Supreme Court's landmark [Citizens United](#) ruling.

That decision paved the way for super PACs, including the kind that have spent more than \$30 million in the Republican primary so far: political committees run by each candidate's former aides and financed by a few wealthy supporters. Because they are technically independent of the candidate, the groups can raise and spend unlimited amounts of money, rendering less relevant the limits that Congress imposed in the 1970s on contributions to candidates.

The decision has been hailed by advocates of looser campaign regulation, who see [Citizens United](#) as a victory for robust debate and a long overdue roll-back of years of encroachment on political speech. But critics warn that the new rules have reopened avenues for the very wealthy to exert undue influence over campaigns and candidates.

"To me, the amounts of money and the directness with which wealthy individuals give it is even more excessive than it was in the days of Watergate," said Ellen S. Miller, executive director of the [Sunlight Foundation](#), which advocates for tighter restrictions on political money. "The contributions that spurred those reform bills were few and far between. What we are seeing now is a systematic breaking of the floodgates, effectively eliminating any firewalls between candidates and unlimited political giving."

Rick Tyler, a longtime Gingrich aide and now a senior adviser for Winning Our Future, declined to comment on the latest contribution. But the prospects of the group's getting another cash infusion from the Adelsons appeared in doubt as recently as Sunday night, when Mr. Tyler said he would like to spend \$10 million in Florida to aid Mr. Gingrich but did not have the money to do so.

And early Monday, as Mr. Romney and his allies signaled the start of an aggressive anti-Gingrich effort in Florida, Winning Our Future placed only a small, short-term advertising buy: \$392,000, relatively little in a state with large numbers of expensive media markets.

News of the contribution came in a Twitter message on Monday evening by Jon Ralston, a columnist for [The Las Vegas Sun](#).

Dr. Adelson's contribution was made after days of public and private pressure from allies of Mr. Romney, who hoped to stem the flow of money to Mr. Gingrich and viewed Mr. Adelson's continued help as potentially devastating to Mr. Romney's chances.

One of Mr. Romney's chief backers, John H. Sununu, a former New Hampshire governor, referred to Mr. Adelson in a recent television interview as "not so bright" and suggested that he would face retribution from investors in his casino empire. "Does he think people don't remember when you attack them and pay for the attacks in the primary? Especially when one of the parties receiving that attack is the same investment community that he likes to go to to finance his expansions?" he said.

Just how dependent Winning Our Future is on the Adelsons' money is impossible to say. Federal Election Commission rules do not require Winning Our Future and other candidate-specific super PACs to publicly report donors until Jan. 31— the same day as Florida's Republican primary.

Through Monday, the group had reported spending \$3.9 million in the primaries, three-quarters of it on advertisements attacking Mr. Romney.

Restore Our Future, the super PAC supporting Mr. Romney and run by a trio of his former aides, has spent far more: about \$11.1 million through Monday, including millions of dollars on ads in Iowa against Mr. Gingrich widely credited with crippling his campaign there. On Monday, the group booked several million dollars' worth of additional advertising time in Florida.

It is unclear if the group has attracted contributions at the Adelsons' level; through the end of June, when it filed a midyear disclosure report with the commission, the group's largest donors had given checks of \$1 million.

*Jeremy W. Peters contributed reporting.*