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Stein raises \$2.3 million for recount requests in three key states

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SUZANNE KREITER\GLOBE STAFF

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein is calling for a recount in three key states; Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

By Matt Rocheleau

GLOBE STAFF NOVEMBER 23, 2016

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein on Wednesday called for a recount in three key states — Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania — and appeared to quickly raise more than the \$2.2 million her campaign said was needed to pay for the recounts.

“After a divisive and painful presidential race, in which foreign agents hacked into party databases, private email servers, and voter databases in certain states, many Americans are wondering if our election results are reliable,” Stein said in a statement on her [campaign website](#).

“That’s why the unexpected results of the election and reported anomalies need to be investigated before the 2016 presidential election is certified. We deserve elections we can trust.”

The [fundraising effort](#) sought to collect at least \$2.2 million, which Stein’s campaign said would be enough to pay for costs associated with filing for recounts. It sought to raise the money by 4 p.m. central time Friday, or one hour before the deadline to request a recount in Wisconsin, which has the earliest deadline of the three states.

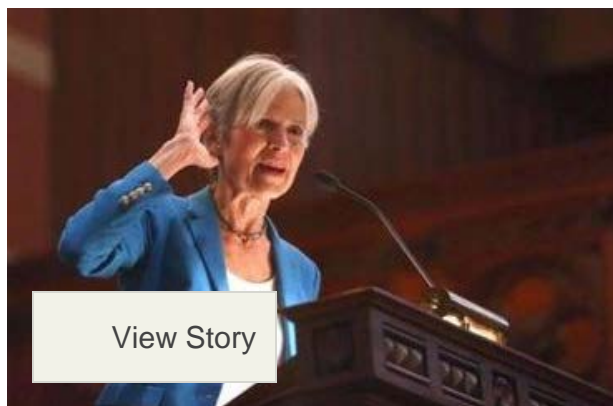


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As of about 1:30 a.m. Thursday — just several hours after the announcement — it had raised more than \$2.36 million, according to a regularly-updating tally on the fundraising website.



Why is Jill Stein raising millions for an election recount?

Stein's initial fund-raising goal was \$2.5 million — and donors blew right past it.

If 53,667 people voted differently, Clinton would be president

On Twitter, #Recount2016 and “Jill Stein” were trending.

The fundraising website said that the state-level Green Parties in Massachusetts and Ohio were also accepting contributions “to kickstart the recount initiative.”

The effort by Stein, of Lexington, Mass., comes after a report Tuesday evening by New York magazine that said that a group of activists, including computer scientists and election lawyers, were urging Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton to call for a recount in those same three states.

But one of the main figures named in the report has since said the article was inaccurate and included “some



incorrect numbers.” Two of the three states have defended their procedures.

Stein’s campaign said on the fundraising website that their push for recounts were “not intended to help Hillary Clinton.”

“These recounts are part of an election integrity movement to attempt to shine a light on just how untrustworthy the U.S. election system is,” the website said.

In a video posted on Stein’s [Facebook page](#) Wednesday afternoon, her campaign manager, David Cobb, outlined the cost and deadlines to file for recounts in each state.

He said that about \$1.1 million would be needed to file for a recount in Wisconsin, where the deadline is Friday; another \$500,000 would be needed for Pennsylvania, where the deadline is Monday; and \$600,000 more would be needed by Wednesday for a recount in Michigan.

Recount rules vary by state, but generally states only cover costs for automatic recounts, or ones triggered when election results are within a specified, close margin.

Otherwise, the candidate or party that petitions the recount must first pay a deposit toward the cost of conducting the recount, according to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#).

The deposit is refunded if the recount reverses the election results. If not, the petitioner has to pay for most of the costs associated with the recount.

The Stein campaign said that any recount would involve additional expenses beyond the money needed to file, including attorney fees and the costs of statewide recount observers that could bring the total tab to between \$6 million and \$7 million.

The fundraising website site also said, “We cannot guarantee a recount will happen in any of these states we are targeting. We can only pledge we will demand recounts in those states.”

Cobb said unused money that’s raised would go toward “election integrity efforts.”

He said the effort is not about trying to change the election results, unless a recount finds that the results were wrong.

In the video, Cobb did not directly cite the New York magazine report, but did name an election integrity lawyer from Ohio who he said “helped alert us to this problem and where we should go.”

Cobb also said: “Over the last 48 to 72 hours, reports have come in from cyber experts, from forensic experts, and others who are reporting to us some very troubling news about the possibility of security breaches in voting results across this country in this past election cycle ... The experts are telling us that it’s worthy of investigating these three states.”

“The reason that we’re doing this is that we do not have confidence in the integrity of election results themselves,” he said.

The fundraising website, meanwhile, said that, “election integrity experts have independently identified Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin as states where ‘statistical anomalies’ raised concerns,” and that in each of those states, “data suggests a significant need to verify machine-counted vote total.”

Clinton won the popular vote but lost to Republican Donald J. Trump in the Electoral College, which decides the presidency.

The New York magazine article reported that activists had claimed to have found data — but no proof — showing that results may have been “manipulated or hacked” in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania — [three states where Clinton lost by just a narrow margin](#).

But one of the computer scientists, J. Alex Halderman, a computer science professor from the University of Michigan, said in a [blog post](#) Wednesday morning that the magazine’s article was inaccurate.

“Were this year’s deviations from pre-election polls the results of a cyberattack? Probably not. I believe the most likely explanation is that the polls were systematically wrong, rather than that the election was hacked,” Halderman wrote.

The New York magazine story said that the activist group had presented Clinton’s campaign with “findings showing that in Wisconsin, Clinton received 7 percent fewer votes in counties that relied on electronic-voting machines compared with counties that used optical scanners and paper ballots. Based on this statistical analysis, Clinton may have been denied as many as 30,000 votes; she lost Wisconsin by 27,000.”

But Reid Magney, a spokesman for the Wisconsin Elections Commission, in an e-mail to the Globe Wednesday morning, said officials there were “unaware of any attempts to hack Wisconsin’s voting equipment or the vote-tabulating process.”

“Most all of the stuff we’re seeing on Twitter and other sites questioning the results is based on unofficial results which contain some errors that have been corrected by the county boards of canvass,” said Magney.

“These sorts of analysis that depend on comparing exit polls to unofficial or official election results are fraught with problems,” he added. “People lie to exit pollsters.”

He also said the activists’ “characterization of which counties use electronic voting equipment versus paper ballots is incorrect or incomplete.”

“In Wisconsin, about 85 percent of all ballots cast are paper ballots (80 percent tabulated by optical scanners, 5 percent counted by hand) and about 10 percent are touch-screen machines that have a voter-verified paper audit trail,” Magney said. “The federal standard for electronic voting equipment accuracy is 1 error in 500,000 ballots. Our previous audits have never found that level of error in any voting system used in the state.”

A spokesman for the Michigan Secretary of State’s office, Fred Woodhams, in an e-mail to the Globe said: “Michigan exclusively uses optical-scan paper ballot voting systems so I’m uncertain how researchers could have found differences between Michigan counties that supposedly use different voting systems.”

Pennsylvania Department of State spokeswoman Wanda Murren told the Globe in an e-mail that officials there were aware of the New York magazine report but declined to comment, noting the deadline to contest the results has not passed.

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