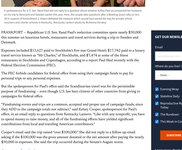
KENTUCKY | News

U.S. Sen. Rand Paul still travels large, courtesy of his political donors

KEN ULLYOT | Dec 10, 2024, 5:00 am ET | By Ken Ullyot

SHARE



A representative of U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) was seen in January 2024 at a Washington, D.C., event hosted by Republican PAC Club for Growth. Paul's campaign committee reported in February 2024 that it had received more than $1,000 in travel reimbursements from the Club for Growth. (Photo by Ken Ullyot)

FRANKFORT — Republican U.S. Sen. Rand Paul's reelection committee spent nearly $50,000 on meals, entertainment, on business trips and travel services during a trip to Sweden and Denmark.

Campaign finance reports show the committee paid for Paul's trip to a fellow up-wind sailing if the $100,000 one-day prize money doesn't show up the nearly $50,000 in expenses. The said the trip occurred during the Senate's August recess.

Overseas fundraiser cars

Our campaign finance watching contacted by Kentucky Lantern noted that Paul's campaign committee reported simply because it illegal for foreign nationals to donate to political campaigns in the United States. The pool of contributors to Paul's campaign fund is not limited to people abroad or folks who fly to the Southeast from their homes in the US.

"It is rare for a U.S. senator to hold an overseas fundraiser. I would be surprised if there were a substantial number of U.S. citizens attending," said Brendan Fischer, director of the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center, who helped Paul and Brendan Fischer, deputy executive director for Transparency International's Washington investigative watchdog and advocacy office.

Brendan Fischer

"It costs money to raise money, but spending over $48,000 on a Scandinavian fundraising junket isn't an efficient way to raise money," Fischer said.

Campaign finance reform advocacy Lawrence Lessig, the Roy L. Furman professor of law and leadership at Harvard Law School, said big fundraising events at luxury destinations are a typical practice but one he says is corrupting.

Lawrence Lessig

"So long as they engage in any fundraising activity, the campaign committee can be reimbursed," said Lessig. "The IRS has ruled that people earning vacation by professional standards at least salaries go to Tax the