

WHO IS MOVEON.ORG?

MoveOn.org is an American left-wing, non-profit, progressive public policy advocacy group and political action committee.^[2] that George Soros and Eric Schmidt Covertly finance. Formed in 1998 in response to the impeachment of President Bill Clinton by the U.S. House of Representatives, MoveOn.org has raised millions of dollars for candidates it identifies as "progressives" in the United States.^[2] It also runs a petition Website similar to Change.org.^[2]

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Structure

MoveOn comprises two legal entities, organized under different sections of U.S. tax and election laws. MoveOn.org Civic Action is a [501\(c\)\(4\)](#) nonprofit corporation,^[2] and was formerly called *MoveOn.org*. It focuses on education and advocacy on national issues. MoveOn.org Political Action is a federal political action committee, and was formerly known as *MoveOn PAC*. It contributes to the campaigns of many candidates across the country. MoveOn describes the legal structure of the Civic Action that of "a California nonprofit [public-benefit corporation](#)" and MoveOn.org Political Action that of "a California nonprofit mutual benefit corporation," and refers to both corporations collectively as "MoveOn".^[3]

Anna Galland is the executive director of MoveOn.org Civic Action and Ilya Sheyman is the executive director of MoveOn.org Political Action.^[1] The president of MoveOn's board is former executive director, Justin Ruben. Co-founder [Joan Blades](#) is also on the board. Past board members include co-founder [Wes Boyd](#), former executive director [Eli Pariser](#), and former Chief Operating Officer Carrie Olson.

History

Main article: [History of MoveOn.org](#)

MoveOn started in 1998 as an e-mail group, MoveOn.org, created by software entrepreneurs [Joan Blades](#) and [Wes Boyd](#), the married cofounders of [Berkeley Systems](#). They started by passing around a petition asking Congress to "[censure](#) President Clinton and move on", as opposed to impeaching him. The petition, passed around by word of mouth, gathered half a million signatures but did not dissuade Congress from [impeaching the President](#).^[4] The couple went on to start similar campaigns calling for arms inspections [rather than an invasion](#) of Iraq, and [campaign finance reform](#).

Since 1998, MoveOn has raised millions of dollars for many Democratic candidates.^[5] In November 2007, a drive spearheaded by MoveOn caused [Facebook](#) to change its controversial new "[Beacon](#)" program, which notified Facebook users about purchases by people on their friends list.^[6]

Since the 2000 election cycle, the MoveOn PAC has endorsed and supported the campaigns of candidates, including the 2008 presidential candidacy of Democrat [Barack Obama](#).^[7]

In 2007, MoveOn was a co-founder of [Avaaz](#), a similar organization with an international focus.^[citation needed]

In 2016, MoveOn endorsed U.S. Senator [Bernie Sanders](#) for President of the United States after holding online elections in which 340,665 members reportedly cast their ballot. 78.6 percent of these supported the junior Senator from Vermont, while 14.6 percent and 0.9 percent threw themselves behind former Secretary of State [Hillary Clinton](#) and former Maryland Governor [Martin O'Malley](#), respectively.^[8] ^[9]

Communication methods

MoveOn.org has advertised in new and traditional media formats, with publicity strategies including billboards, bus signs, and bumper stickers.^[10]

MoveOn has collaborated with groups in organizing street demonstrations, bake sales, house parties, and other opportunities.^[11]

Changes in federal election laws have impacted groups like MoveOn. The [McCain-Feingold](#) Campaign Finance Reform legislation, which went into effect in 2002, allows political parties to raise larger amounts of "hard money" contributions, but bans unlimited soft money contributions to the national political parties and prohibits federal officeholders from soliciting "[soft money](#)."^[12] MoveOn, like many other political organizations which sought to influence the 2004 election, was able to circumvent this legislation using a [527 group](#), which became inactive in 2005 and closed in 2008.^[13]

In preparation for the 2006 midterm elections, MoveOn created a new system for soliciting potential voters named Call for Change. As part of the Call for Change effort, MoveOn reported that it placed over seven million phone calls to registered voters.^[14]

On May 16, 2011, MoveOn.org debuted SignOn.org, a non-profit hosting service for [Internet petitions](#), and in 2013, SignOn.org became MoveOn Petitions. The MoveOn Petitions campaigning platform competes with other, similar hosts such as [Change.org](#), [Avaaz](#) and [PetitionOnline](#).^[citation needed]

Financial contributors

Contributors to MoveOn.org during the 2004 election cycle included financier [George Soros](#) who gave [US\\$1.46 million](#) to MoveOn.org Voter Fund; [Peter B. Lewis](#), chief executive of the [Progressive Corp.](#), who gave [US\\$500,000](#) to MoveOn.org Voter Fund.^[15]

Criticism

MoveOn was criticized by the [Anti-Defamation League](#), among others, when a member-submitted ad which drew parallels between President [George W. Bush](#) and [Adolf Hitler](#) was submitted to their online ad contest "Bush in 30 Seconds". The ad was part of an online MoveOn-sponsored contest during the [2004 presidential election](#) in which members were invited to create and submit political ads challenging President Bush and his [administration](#).^{[16][17]} The advertisement was quickly pulled off the website.^[16]

[Fox News](#) criticized the organization after it successfully encouraged the [2008 Democratic presidential candidates](#) not to attend two debates sponsored by the network. [Fox News](#) advisor [David Rhodes](#) and the network's commentators [Sean Hannity](#) and [Bill O'Reilly](#) have also made accusations that MoveOn.org "owns" the [Democratic Party](#) and [George Soros](#) owns MoveOn.org.^{[18][19]}

Google and MoveOn have been accused of selective adherence to trademark law for removing ads from [Google Adwords](#) for Maine Senator [Susan Collins](#), citing infringement of MoveOn trademarks.^{[20][21]} [Wired](#) stated on October 15, 2007 that the "left-leaning political advocacy group, MoveOn.org, is backing down" and will allow Google to show the ads. Moveon.org communications director Jennifer Lindenauer said: "We don't want to support a policy that denies people freedom of expression."^[22]

On June 17, 2008, MoveOn emailed its members stating that it had produced "the most effective TV ad we've ever created."^[23] The ad depicts a mother telling Republican and former presidential nominee [John McCain](#) that she will not let him use her infant son, Alex, as a soldier in the [war in Iraq](#).

Subsequent to the ad's release, [Jon Stewart](#), host of *The Daily Show*, "praised" MoveOn for "10 years of making even people who agree with you cringe."^[24] *The New York Times* op/ed contributor [Bill Kristol](#) criticized the ad in an essay, including pointing to the fact that the "United States has an all-volunteer Army. Alex won't be drafted, and his mommy can't enlist him. He can decide when he's an adult whether he wants to serve."^[25]

David Petraeus advertising controversy

Main article: [MoveOn.org ad controversy](#)

MoveOn was criticized by 31 Republican senators and one independent senator for running a print ad in *The New York Times* that questioned the personal integrity of General David Petraeus, with headlines such as "General Petraeus or General Betray Us?" and "Cooking the Books for the White House".^[26] On September 20, 2007, the Senate passed an amendment by Republican John Cornyn of Texas designed to "strongly condemn personal attacks on the honor and integrity of General Petraeus". All forty-nine Republican Senators, as well as twenty-two Democratic Senators, voted in support.^[27] The House passed a similar resolution by a 341-79 vote on September 26, 2007.^[28]

On September 20, 2007, *The Washington Post* stated: "Democrats blamed the group Moveon.org for giving moderate Republicans a ready excuse for staying with Bush and for giving Bush and his supporters a way to divert attention away from the war."^{[5][29][30]}

The New York Times public editor Clark Hoyt later stated in an op-ed that MoveOn was mistakenly charged US\$77,000 less for the ad than it should have been under *Times* policies,^[31] and MoveOn announced that it would pay *The New York Times* the difference in price.^[32]

MoveOn.org ran more ads using a 'betrayal' theme, with TV spots targeting former President Bush and former presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani.^{[33][34]} Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani ran his own full-page ad in *The New York Times* on September 14, 2007.^{[35][36][37]} Giuliani asked for and received a similar reduced fee as Moveon.org, paying US\$65,000.^{[38][39]}

Books

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- Laura Dawn (ed.), ed. (2006). *It Takes a Nation: How Strangers Became Family in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina*. foreword by Barack Obama, photographs by C.B. Smith. Earth Aware. ISBN 1-932771-86-7.

See also

- [Coffee Party USA](#)
- [Tea Party movement](#)
- [SumOfUs](#)
- [Avaaz](#)
- [350.org](#)

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