

www.nationaljournal.com

How Donald Trump Capped Off His Fundraising

Many of Trump's small-dollar donors may in fact have been buying thousands of hats, which Trump's campaign spent nearly \$750,000 to buy along with other merchandise last quarter.

S.V. Dátc

@SVDATC

🕒 October 19, 2015

Were there really 72,000 Americans willing to hand Trump \$30 or \$40 this summer so he can run for president?

SHARE



Were there really 72,000 Americans willing to hand a self-proclaimed billionaire \$30 or \$40 this summer so he can run for president? Or were many of them just buying a “Make America Great Again” baseball cap?

The Donald Trump campaign is boasting that it received donations from 73,942 individual donors in the third quarter, per a bulletin released on the night it filed its quarterly financial report with the Federal Election Commission. The average contribution was \$50.46, the Trump campaign said.

“The Trump Campaign will continue to accept small dollar donations as people across the country proudly invest in Mr. Trump’s vision to Make America Great Again,” the campaign said.

A *National Journal* analysis of Trump's contributions for the three months that ended Sept. 30 found 2,215 donations of \$200 or more, including 120 who gave the maximum \$2,700 allowed for the Republican primary.

The remaining 71,727 donors combined to give \$2.8 million, or an average \$38.72—just a little more than the cost of a T-shirt (“The softest, smoothest, best-looking short sleeve tee shirt”) or a hat (“As seen in the *New York Times*”) at Trump's online campaign store.

Trump's total raised from under-\$200 donors (whose names do not need to be publicly disclosed) compared to his merchandise costs suggests a large number of his donors may actually be buying something.

On the other side of the campaign's FEC filing, the expenditures section shows \$749,155 in payments to two vendors supplying the campaign with hats, the “Make America Great Again”-emblazoned campaign swag that Trump has bragged about on the trail. “You can't get these!” Trump said at a rally last month on the deck of the *U.S.S. Iowa*, referring to the fact that the campaign was having a hard time keeping them in stock.

A sales representative at one of those two vendors, Cali-Fame, said the per-hat cost—purchased in bulk, with a customized logo—would be about \$8.

On the Trump campaign website (<http://shop.donaldjtrump.com/>), hats cost \$25 and \$30 each. Visors go for \$20, and “Make America Great Again” T-shirts sell for \$20 and \$25.

On the site's “check-out” page, a disclaimer states: “Transactions on this site are contributions to Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. and are not commercial transactions for the sale or purchase of goods.”

The Trump campaign did not respond to a *National Journal* query asking how many small-dollar donors made pure contributions to Trump, rather than purchases of campaign souvenirs.

Most presidential campaigns sell products from their websites. It's possible to buy a \$55 Hillary Clinton throw pillow (“A Woman's Place is in the White House”), a \$5 “Jeb! 2016” koozie, or a \$10 “We ‘C’ Ted Cruz for President” coloring book.