

# PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

## **Fired ACORN affiliate staffer links donor list to Obama**

By Brad Bumsted  
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HARRISBURG -- A fired staffer for an affiliate of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now testified Wednesday the organization was provided a "donor list" from the presidential campaign of Barack Obama in late 2007 for fundraising efforts.

Anita Moncrief, a former Washington staffer for Project Vote, which she described as a sister organization of the community activist group ACORN, said her supervisor told her the list of campaign contributors came from the Obama campaign.

Moncrief said she has a copy of a "development plan" that outlines how Obama contributors who had "maxed out" under federal contribution limits would be targeted to give to Project Vote, and that it was her job to identify such contributors.

Moncrief testified for more than two hours in a Commonwealth Court hearing on a lawsuit brought by the state Republican Party, alleging voter fraud by ACORN in Philadelphia, Allegheny, Delaware and Dauphin counties.

The action mirrors efforts by GOP presidential nominee John McCain and national Republicans to discredit ACORN and attempt to tie Obama to the group.

The state lawsuit against ACORN, its affiliates and Secretary of the Commonwealth Pedro Cortes asks the court for a preliminary injunction. GOP lawyers want the court to force ACORN to make its voter database available and to require voter education efforts. They want the Department of State to make its voter registration database more readily available to counties, something a Department of State lawyer said Pennsylvania does.

The Obama campaign said it wasn't involved in ACORN registration drives.

"Our campaign has not coordinated with ACORN whatsoever on any voter registration activities," said Obama spokesman Sean Smith.

The McCain campaign later in a statement used Moncrief's testimony to criticize Obama. Her statement "proves Barack Obama is guilty of lying to the American people about his relationship with ACORN," the campaign said.

An Obama campaign spokeswoman last week said the campaign has "no ties"

to ACORN.

Project Vote national spokesman Michael McDunnah denied the donor list came from Obama's campaign, according to The Associated Press. Donor lists for candidates are public information and can be downloaded from the Federal Election Commission's Web site. The lists include how much individuals have given.

But Heather Heidelbaugh, a Pittsburgh lawyer representing state Republicans, said the computer disk she submitted to the court as evidence did not come from FEC documents.

"It's not an FEC document. I looked at the spreadsheet," Heidelbaugh said.

ACORN officials said Moncrief is not a credible witness. "Moncrief has no idea what she's talking about," said Pennsylvania ACORN spokeswoman Ali Kronley.

Moncrief acknowledged she was fired in January from Project Vote for running up more than \$3,000 in personal expenses on a credit card. She said she has paid half the money back, and "I am really sorry."

Moncrief testified that ACORN and Project Vote were virtually identical. Under cross-examination, she conceded she had no personal knowledge of how Pennsylvania ACORN workers registered voters.

Moncrief, 29, who lives in Virginia, said she took a call from an Obama campaign worker inquiring whether it was the same organization Obama worked with in the 1990s.

Moncrief said she received repeated warnings to "back off" from testifying by people she knows at ACORN.

"I thought it was powerful testimony. She took a great personal risk," said Heidelbaugh.

Carol Hemmingway of Philadelphia, another ACORN spokeswoman, said the group sets aside problematic voter registration forms and turns them over to authorities. She called the lawsuit "an attempt to suppress voters."

Hemmingway said Moncrief was not part of "senior management" at ACORN and can't speak for them.

Moncrief said she does not have a vendetta against ACORN. "I do not think it is a bad organization," she said.

Moncrief said she came forward and contacted Heidelbaugh because she believes vote canvassers were not trained and then were "thrown under the bus" -- facing possible criminal prosecution -- for fraudulent registrations. She said that workers needed to meet quotas for voter registrations and that some

were fired for not meeting them.

"The (voter) cards are tied to money. The more cards you get, the more money you get," Moncrief said.

ACORN officials denied that, saying in Pennsylvania canvassers are paid by the hour. They insisted the workers are trained.

Kira Gardner-Marshall, who oversees quality control for ACORN in Philadelphia, said in 2007-08 the organization fired 220 employees for voter fraud there. There were 1,100 voter registration canvassers statewide, but none of the ACORN spokeswomen attending the hearing could say how many were in Philadelphia.

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