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It turns out that next Tuesday's Democratic primary election in the City of Falls Church and neighboring Arlington County is going to be of far greater consequence than previously thought.

Campaign contribution data for the last two months made public by the Virginia Board of Elections this Monday has shown an eye-popping \$583,237 has donated by a nebulous "dark money" Washington, D.C.-based source to a challenger in the June 11 primary in the race for Arlington-Falls Church Commonwealth's Attorney.

According to the Washington Post, the money comes from billionaire George Soros, who has also lobbed another whopping \$392,000 into Fairfax County in an effort to unseat the incumbent commonwealth attorney there.

In Falls Church and Arlington, the \$583,237 sum is far and away the most contributed in the race pitting its beneficiary, public defender Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, against two-term incumbent Theo Stamos.

The contributions officially come from a Washington, D.C.-based entity called the "Justice and Public Safety Political Action Committee," as current dark money rules do not require the disclosure of actual human contributors behind any nondescript PAC name.

The big money puts challenger Dehghani-Tafti way ahead of incumbent Stamos in funding to date, \$744,000 to \$546,000, with escalating TV, mailer and other campaign advertising focusing on which candidate is more fair-minded, progressive and qualified for the job.

In the other race on the ballot Tuesday, incumbent State Senator Richard Saslaw is seeking the Democratic nomination for another four-year term against two challengers, Yasmine Taeb and Karen Torrent.

Falls Church's three polling locations will be open from 6 a.m. – 7 p.m. Tuesday, and no proof of party affiliation is required to cast a ballot. The polling locations are at the Thomas Jefferson Elementary, 601 S. Oak (for Ward 1), the newly renamed Falls Greens Apartments (formerly Oakwood), 501 Roosevelt Blvd. (for Ward 2) and the Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls (for Ward 3).

Winners in Tuesday's primary will represent the Democratic Party in the November general election.

In the war for endorsements in the hotly contested commonwealth attorney race, the incumbent Stamos has won the support of two predecessors in the commonwealth attorney office, Richard Trodden and Helen Fahey, as well as former U.S. Rep. Jim Moran, State Del. Patrick Hope, Arlington Sheriff Beth Arthur, the Arlington Association of Police, Police Beneficiaries Association and Professional Firefighters, former Arlington Democratic Committee chairs Dan Steen, Peter Rousselot, John Millikan, Mike Leiberman, Jim Gondles and Kevin Appel, and all three of Falls Church's current elected constitutional officers, Treasurer Jody Acosta, Commissioner of the Revenue Tom Clinton and Sheriff Steve Bittle.

The challenger Dehghani-Tafti has the backing of F.C.'s current State Del. Marcus Simon, former State Sen. Mary Margaret Whipple, State Sen. Adam Ebbin, State Del. Mark Levine, Arlington School Board members Nancy Van Doren and Monique O'Grady and former Arlington County Board members and chairs Walter Tejada, Mary Hynes and Chris Zimmerman.

Arguments in favor the candidates of their choice by Del. Simon and Treasurer Acosta appear in this week's edition of the paper.. The News-Press has endorsed incumbents Stamos and Sen. Saslaw for re-election.

From the website of commonwealth's attorney challenger Dehghani-Tafti, it is noted that she "has a 20-year record of working to reform the criminal justice system as a public defender, an innocence protection attorney, a victims' advocate, and a law professor," adding that as the

commonwealth attorney, "She will pursue justice for all, serve the community equitably, and build a criminal justice system that promotes safety, fairness, transparency, and accountability."

"As a public defender, Parisa litigated cases of systemic and constitutional issues, advocated to eliminate race, class, and gender bias in criminal proceedings, represented clients in parole proceedings, and obtained the first DNA exoneration in Washington, D.C., which led to the discovery of false testimony by an FBI analysis and resulted in the FBI reviewing thousands of past cases. As the legal director of an innocence protection organization, Parisa works to exonerate individuals wrongfully convicted of crimes they did not commit by investigating and solving decades-old cold cases involving such serious crimes as murder, rape, and arson. As a law professor, Parisa has authored a law review article, demonstrating the need for meaningful national reforms to ensure the reliability of criminal convictions," according to the website.

From Stamos' website, it quotes the incumbent saying, "Prosecuting is not just about putting people behind bars. It's about keeping the community safe, giving voice to crime victims and appreciating that people make mistakes," Theo said in announcing her 2019 bid for re-election. "Prosecutors in my office are not measured by the number of convictions, but rather in whether their decisions are just, fair, and ethical."

It added that Stamos "has prosecuted thousands of cases including capital murder, robbery, violent sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and drunk driving. Under her leadership, a staff of dedicated prosecutors, victim/witness specialists, and paralegals, work daily to make the criminal justice system in Arlington and Falls Church an example for the region." adding that she "proudly describes herself as a criminal justice reformer. One of her first reforms was to push for the creation of the county's Drug Court, which gives participants an opportunity to avoid incarceration through rigorous substance abuse treatment, testing and wrap around services to help stay clean and sober and not to re-offend. Theo also supported the creation of the county's Second Chance program — a drug and alcohol prevention initiative aimed at keeping students in school instead of being suspended."