



To: The Democratic National Committee, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and interested parties

From: Katie Bethell, MoveOn Political Action

Date: April 8, 2026

Re: The Iran war and the Democratic base

The proliferation of pro-war dark-money PACs seeking to gain outsized control over Democratic primaries and politics is a crisis that cannot be ignored. War Hawk groups including AI companies such as OpenAI, defense contractors such as Lockheed Martin, and AIPAC are flooding money into primaries to stack the deck for their preferred candidates, as most recently seen in Illinois and New Jersey. As illustrated by a recent survey of our membership, the grassroots Democratic base strongly rejects the influence of these groups in primaries—and candidates who accept their support.

This crisis compounds two issues that depress trust and engagement from the grassroots: support for costly and deadly forever wars and big corporations and special interests undermining our democracy with huge amounts of dark money. By not addressing these issues head-on, you risk alienating the base and further eroding support from less engaged Democratic-leaning voters who are tired of politicians ignoring their pressing health care and affordability concerns. As you are most certainly aware, depression of turnout was a major factor leading to Democratic losses in the 2024 elections.

MoveOn is one of the largest national progressive organizations, and our members are more active than most in supporting, volunteering for, and donating to candidates and causes that they care about. Collectively, MoveOn's base can be a robust turnout engine for the Democratic Party. However, their support is waning for candidates who embrace War Hawks over an affordability agenda.

A recent survey of MoveOn members shows:

- 96% are opposed to current military interventions in Iran.
- 89% are concerned about War Hawks intervening in Democratic primaries.
- 90% would not support a candidate who accepts War Hawk money in the primary.
- 88% are ready to take action to limit the influence of pro-war groups in primary elections.

Here's a sample of what members have to say about this issue:

Any candidate who takes AIPAC or other pro-war organizations' money should leave the money behind or leave the Democratic Party behind. As we have been working long and hard for "MONEY OUT OF POLITICS." –Pat, East Bridgewater, MA

I am disgusted we are spending billions on war, there are so many people that could be helped and housed with the amount they've spent thus far. –Tabby, Portland, OR

No more status quo Democrats. We should never support a candidate who takes corporate money of any kind. –Audrey, San Diego, CA

I'm anti-Republican, but if Democrats are capitalizing on the war, they also will not have my support –Joseph, Queens, NY

Pro-war interests are the reason why no one trusts the Democratic Party and why there is little to no faith in them. –Layla, Altoona, IA

I am shocked that any Democrat would betray their constituents like this. –Jean, Albuquerque, NM

Those who profit from war make sure there are wars going on. They don't really care who is killing who or for what reason. –Dale, Poulsbo, WA

Responding to this overwhelming member energy, MoveOn is launching a "Stop the War Hawks" campaign, launching endorsements, investing in paid media, and organizing direct voter contact in key primaries to educate the Democratic base about who is trying to buy their support and why.

MoveOn members can be the entire margin of victory in these close primary races, and we've seen that war hawk contributions immediately cause backlash once members understand what the candidates stand for, which companies and groups are backing them, and why.

We invite you to join in this effort by committing to swearing off contributions from AIPAC, defense contractors, and AI companies looking for support for costly forever wars, and encouraging Democratic candidates up and down the ballot to do the same. Rejecting War Hawk money and focusing instead on galvanizing solutions to improve the lives and livelihoods of everyday Americans is both good politics and good policy. Doing so will keep the party in line with the base—energizing grassroots voters, volunteers, and donors before the crucial upcoming midterm elections.