

Nikki Budzinski's campaign has been bankrolled by Mike Madigan's political cronies, including those who were under investigation as part of a corruption probe, and one that was involved in covering up an alleged rape in Champaign.

As a part an alleged patronage scheme, Mike Madigan actively lobbied Nikki Budzinski to help get jobs for his "clout list" of candidates:

- Shortly after their administration began, Nikki Budzinski, then top aid to Gov. Pritzker, was lobbied by Michael Madigan to give jobs to his "clout list" of recruits. "Madigan's successful recommendations far outnumbered those from other legislative leaders, with records showing the new governor made nearly three dozen hires and board appointments off the speaker's clout list... The documents yielded by the requests included a series of lists of job seekers that Madigan wanted to place in positions in the Pritzker administration. In December 2018, the first of the emails with these lists attached – titled 'Recommendations for New Administration' – was sent by top Madigan aide Jessica Basham to Pritzker chief of staff Anne Caprara and another top aide in the governor's office, Nikki Budzinski. Initially, the speaker recommended 35 people 'for permanent placement.' Over the next few months, Madigan's office sent 17 'updated' lists with an ever-increasing number of job requests, ultimately lodging a total of nearly 80 recommendations." (Dan Mihalopoulos, "Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker hired 35 people from House Speaker Madigan's clout list," [WBEZ Chicago \(NPR\)](#), 6/11/20)

In total, Nikki Budzinski has taken \$8,250 in donations from people associated with Madigan's "clout list:"

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Date	Donor	Amount
8/24/21	James Bennett	<a href="#">\$1,000</a>
9/13/21	Barbra Currie	<a href="#">\$1,000</a>
11/22/21	James Bennett	<a href="#">\$1,000</a>
12/8/21	Costello for Congress Committee	<a href="#">\$2,000</a>
12/8/21	Costello for Congress Committee	<a href="#">\$2,000</a>
12/31/21	Zalewski for State Representative	<a href="#">\$1,000</a>
1/13/22	Gregory Harris	<a href="#">\$250</a>
	Total:	\$8,250

Budzinski has taken money from Jim Bennett – a clout listee who got the job he wanted – and the man who recommended him to Madigan, Gregory Harris:

- According to his FEC receipt, Jim Bennett now works for the Illinois Department of Human Rights and has given Budzinski \$2000 this cycle.

NAME OF COMMITTEE (In Full) <b>Nikki For Congress</b>		
Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) <b>Bennett, James, , ,</b>		Date of Receipt M M / D D / Y Y Y Y 11 / 22 / 2021
A. Mailing Address 5353 N Magnolia Ave		Transaction ID : 11241820
City Chicago	State IL	Zip Code 60640-2204
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. <b>C</b>		Amount of Each Receipt this Period 1000.00
Name of Employer Illinois Department of Human Rights	Occupation Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Memo Item
Receipt For: 2022 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) ▼	Election Cycle-to-Date 2000.00	* Earmarked Contribution: See Below

(“itemized receipts,” [FEC](#), accessed 4/20/22)

- According to Budzinski’s Q1 2022 filings, Greg Harris donated \$250 dollars to her on March 8, 2022 (“Itemized receipts for filing 1586956”, [ProPublica](#), accessed 4/19/22)
  - Greg Harris made multiple recommendations that made it onto Madigan’s “clout list” including Jim Bennett. “[redacted] – interested (and experience) in youth-serving organizations \*\*Greg Harris recommendation; Jim Bennett – interested in the Director of Human Rights position (resume sent) \*\*Greg Harris recommendation...

**29. Jim Bennett – interested in the Director of Human Rights position (resume sent) \*\*Greg Harris recommendation**

(Dan Mihalopoulos, “Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker hired 35 people from House Speaker Madigan’s clout list,” [WBEZ Chicago \(NPR\)](#), 6/11/20)

**Budzinski has also taken donations from clout listers Barbra Currie and Jerry Costello II – from his father’s defunct congressional campaign committee:**

- Jerry and Barbra were featured on Madigan’s “clout list.”

**1. Barbara Flynn Currie – something part-time**

**12. Jerry Costello – ██████████ Dept of Natural Resources; DNR Director of Law Enforcement (sent resume)**

(Dan Mihalopoulos, “Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker hired 35 people from House Speaker Madigan’s clout list,” [WBEZ Chicago \(NPR\)](#), 6/11/20)

- Costello II was appointed as the Department of Natural Resources Director of Law Enforcement in May 2019. “Costello has served as the Law Enforcement Director with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources since May 2019.” (“Press Release: Costello appointed to lead Illinois Department of Agriculture,” [Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#), accessed 4/20/22)

- According to her FEC receipt, Barbra Currie serves as the Chair of the Illinois Pollution Control Board (“itemized receipts,” [FEC](#), accessed 4/20/22)

- Barbra Currie donated \$1000 to Budzinski on September 13, 2021.

Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) <b>B. Currie, Barbara, , ,</b>			Date of Receipt MM / DD / YYYY 09 / 13 / 2021		
Mailing Address 5650 S Harper Ave			Transaction ID : 10689676		
City Chicago	State IL	Zip Code 60637-1832	Amount of Each Receipt this Period 1000.00		
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. C		Memo Item <input type="checkbox"/>			
Name of Employer Illinois Pollution Control Board		Occupation Chair			
Receipt For: 2022 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) ▼		Election Cycle-to-Date 1000.00			

(“itemized receipts,” [FEC](#), accessed 4/20/22)

*Editor’s Note:* GOP Data Center was used to verify that this donor is Barbara Flynn. It shows Barbara Flynn Currie at 5650 S Harper Ave. Chicago, IL 60637

- On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Budzinski received two donations of \$2000 (primary/general) from Costello for Congress.

Recipient	Donor	Date	Amount
Nikki for Congress	Costello for Congress Committee	<a href="#">12/8/21</a>	\$2,000.00
Nikki for Congress	Costello for Congress Committee	<a href="#">12/8/21</a>	\$2,000.00

- Costello for Congress Committee is the campaign committee registered to the Honorable Jerry F. Costello (IL-12) (Ret.).

**Committee name:** COSTELLO FOR CONGRESS COMMITTEE

**Mailing address:** PO BOX 8250  
BELLEVILLE, IL 622228250

**Treasurer:** SHALAPIN, MARY

**Committee type:** House

**Statement of organization:**  Current version (PDF)  
FEC-522845  
Filed 12/05/2010

**Authorizing candidate:** **COSTELLO, JERRY F**  
House candidate | Illinois - 12 |  
Democratic Party

(“Costello For Congress Committee: About this Committee,” [FEC](#), accessed 4/20/22)

- **The Honorable Jerry F. Costello is Costello II’s father.** “Costello, whose father is a former Congressman also named Jerry Costello, is a veteran both of the Army in Iraq, and of law enforcement. The appointment is pending Senate confirmation.” (Dave Dahl, “Costello is appointed to lead Illinois Department of Agriculture,” [WJBC](#), 2/28/20)

**Nikki Budzinski has taken hundreds from individual lobbyists whose payments to a former high-ranking aide of Mike Madigan were under Federal Investigation regarding the ComEd Scandal:**

- Nikki Budzinski took contributions from hundreds from individual lobbyists, whose payments were at the center of the ComEd scandal.

Contributor	Recipient	Date	Amount
William Cousineau	Nikki for Congress	9/16/2021	<u>\$250</u>
Mike McClain	Nikki for Congress	11/6/2021	<u>\$50</u>
John E. Bradley Law Firm	Nikki for Congress	12/22/2021 (Contribution was Returned)	<u>\$250</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>\$550</b>

- On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, Nikki Budzinski received and returned a \$250 contribution from John E. Bradley Law Firm. ([Federal Election Commission](#), Accessed: 1/31/2022)
- **HEADLINE: “Feds investigating \$10,000 in checks from ComEd lobbyists to ousted Madigan Operative.”** (Ray Long and Jason Meisner, “Feds investigating \$10,000 in checks from ComEd lobbyists to ousted Madigan operative,” [the Chicago Tribune](#), 7/24/2019)



(Ray Long and Jason Meisner, “Feds investigating \$10,000 in checks from ComEd lobbyists to ousted Madigan operative,” [the Chicago Tribune](#), 7/24/2019)

- In 2019, Federal Agents were investigating payments from “current or former lobbyists for utility company Commonwealth Edison” to a former high-ranking aide of Mike Madigan. “Federal agents are investigating \$10,000 in payments to former high-ranking Madigan political aide Kevin Quinn from accounts linked to five current or former lobbyists for utility company Commonwealth Edison, including one of Madigan’s closest confidants, according to the Chicago Tribune.” (Austin Berg, “Feds Investigating Lobbyist Checks cut to fired Madigan Political Lieutenant,” [Illinois Policy](#), 7/25/19)
- The checks being investigated came from the following lobbyists: Mike McClain, Tom Cullen, Michael Alvarez, Will Cousineau’s lobbying firm, and John Bradley’s Law Firm. “The checks to Quinn came from accounts linked to five current or former lobbyists for ComEd, according to the Tribune, including:
  - \$1,000 from close Madigan ally Mike McClain, whose wife signed the check from the couple’s joint bank account.
  - \$1,000 from Tom Cullen, a former Madigan political operative and current lobbyist.

- \$2,000 from Chicago City Hall lobbyist and former Metropolitan Water Reclamation District board member Michael Alvarez.
  - \$2,000 from Cornerstone Government Affairs, a lobbying firm that employs former Madigan political director Will Cousineau.
  - \$4,000 from former Democratic state Rep. John Bradley’s law firm. The southern Illinois lawmaker is a former member of Madigan’s House leadership team.” (Austin Berg, “Feds Investigating Lobbyist Checks cut to fired Madigan Political Lieutenant,” [Illinois Policy](#), 7/25/19)
- **Will Cousineau was “the longest-serving political director to Madigan.”** “Two other checks for \$1,000 each came from Cornerstone Government Affairs, a Washington-based firm that has among its ranks Will Cousineau, who bills himself on the company website as the longest-serving political director to Madigan and Illinois House Democrats. Cousineau joined the firm in June 2017, and ComEd is a Cornerstone client. The checks were both issued in January 2019.” (Ray Long and Jason Meisner, “Feds investigating \$10,000 in checks from ComEd lobbyists to ousted Madigan operative,” [the Chicago Tribune](#), 7/24/2019)
  - **John Bradley is “a former state representative from Marion who was part of Madigan’s House Democratic leadership team.”** “A check for \$1,000 went to Quinn from the law firm of John Bradley, records show. Bradley, a former state representative from Marion who was part of Madigan’s House Democratic leadership team, is now a registered lobbyist for ComEd. Bradley’s firm also wrote three more checks to Quinn, each for \$1,000, In January, February and March 2019, according to the records.” (Ray Long and Jason Meisner, “Feds investigating \$10,000 in checks from ComEd lobbyists to ousted Madigan operative,” [the Chicago Tribune](#), 7/24/2019)
  - **McClain is considered to be “one of Madigan’s closest confidants.”** “It’s unclear why ‘McClain’ is written on the check. But the records show that McClain, a former legislator and retired ComEd lobbyist who for decades has been considered one of Madigan’s closest confidants, also gave a \$1,000 check to Quinn. The check was signed by McClain’s wife from the couple’s joint account. Quinn deposited it in January 2019.” (Ray Long and Jason Meisner, “Feds investigating \$10,000 in checks from ComEd lobbyists to ousted Madigan operative,” [the Chicago Tribune](#), 7/24/2019)

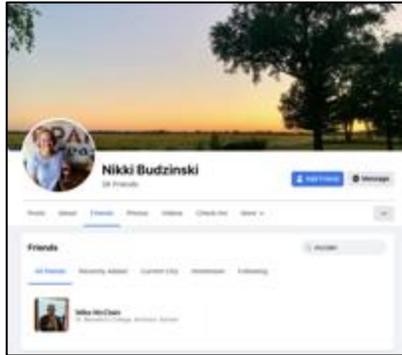
**Nikki Budzinski has taken campaign cash from her friend Mike McClain:**

- **In November 2021, Nikki Budzinski took \$50 from Mike McClain.** ([Federal Election Commission](#), 11/6/2021)

Source information	
Name	MCCLAIR, MIKE AND CRINA
City and state	QUINCY, IL, 62305
Occupation	NOT EMPLOYED
Employer	NOT EMPLOYED
Year to date	\$50.00
Receipt information	
Amount	\$50.00
Receipt date	November 6, 2021
Report year	2021
Memo	EARMARKED FOR NIKKI FOR CONGRESS (COORDINATED)
Reported on	Form 28X on line T&E
Election type	

([Federal Election Commission](#), 11/6/2021)

- **Nikki Budzinski is friends with Mike McClain on Facebook.** (Nikki Budzinski, [Facebook](#), Accessed: 2/22/2022)



(Nikki Budzinski, [Facebook](#), Accessed: 2/22/2022)

**Recently released emails show Budzinski working with Madigan associate Michael McClain and sending him well-wishes after his house was raided by the FBI:**

- **Emails released by the Sullivan-Murphy campaign show Nikki Budzinski exchanging compliments and well wishes with longtime Madigan ally, Michael McClain, on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.** McClain: “I will not be at your speech... I am sorry. I know you charm them. Best, Mike.” Budzinski: “That’s very nice Mike. Thank you! I appreciate your kind note. Hope you’re well and safe travels.” McClain: “I’m a fan of yours. My best, Mike.” (McClain Email Log, Sullivan-Murphy Campaign, [pg 9](#), 3/17/22)

From: [Michael McClain](#)  
To: [Budzinski, Nikki](#)  
Subject: Re: [External] My apologies...  
Date: Thursday, October 3, 2019 4:16:18 PM

I am a fan of yours.

My best, Mike

Michael F. McClain  
[mccclain@adams.net](mailto:mccclain@adams.net)  
[REDACTED]

On Oct 3, 2019, at 1:11 PM, Budzinski, Nikki <[Nikki.Budzinski@Illinois.gov](mailto:Nikki.Budzinski@Illinois.gov)> wrote:

That's very nice Mike. Thank you! I appreciate your kind note. Hope you're well and safe travels.

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 3, 2019, at 12:44 PM, Michael McClain <[mccclain@adams.net](mailto:mccclain@adams.net)> wrote:

I will not see you or hear your speech at the Tri-State Summit. My sister, Molly, has a daughter getting married that weekend in Denver.

I am sorry.

I know you charm them!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Best, Mike

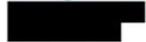
Michael F. McClain  
[mccclain@adams.net](mailto:mccclain@adams.net)  
[REDACTED]

(McClain Email Log, Sullivan-Murphy Campaign, [pg 9](#), 3/17/22)

- **Michael McClain’s house was raided by the FBI as part of their investigation into ComEd’s influence scheme – a company that he represented as a lobbyist – in May 2019.** “The FBI has raided the downstate home of a high-powered former Springfield lobbyist who for decades served as one of House Speaker Michael Madigan’s closest confidants, the Chicago Tribune has learned. The raid of Mike McClain’s home in Quincy took place in mid-May, around the same time the FBI executed search warrants at the homes of two other Madigan associates – former 23rd Ward Ald. Michael Zalewski and political operative Kevin Quinn, according to a source with knowledge of the investigation... On Friday, ComEd filed a report with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission acknowledging that both ComEd and Exelon “received a grand jury subpoena from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Illinois” (Jason Meisner, Ray Long, “FBI raids downstate home of longtime ComEd lobbyist who is close confidant of Speaker Madigan,” [Chicago Tribune](#), 7/18/19)
- **In a series of emails that took place on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Nikki Budzinski proposed a 6-year hike to \$13 to Michael McClain.** Budzinski: “Here’s a proposal for you. \$8 (2020); \$8.50 (2021); \$9.25 (2022); \$10.50 (2023); \$12 (2024); \$13 (2025). Appreciate your consideration.”

From: [Michael McClain](#)  
 To: [Budzinski, Nikki](#)  
 Subject: [External] Re: Youth ramp  
 Date: Monday, February 4, 2019 4:57:24 PM

Nikki, I know one of his questions will be the effective date?

Michael F. McClain  
[mcclain@adams.net](mailto:mcclain@adams.net)  


On Feb 4, 2019, at 4:47 PM, Budzinski, Nikki <[Nikki.Budzinski@Illinois.gov](mailto:Nikki.Budzinski@Illinois.gov)> wrote:

Here's a proposal for you

\$8 (2020)  
 \$8.50 (2021)  
 \$9.25 (2022)  
 \$10.50 (2023)  
 \$12 (2024)  
 \$13 (2025)

Appreciate your consideration .

Sent from my iPhone

State of Illinois - CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this communication is confidential, may be attorney-client privileged or attorney work product, may constitute inside information or internal deliberative staff communication, and is intended only for the use of the addressee. Unauthorized use, disclosure or copying of this communication or any part thereof is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail and destroy this communication and all copies thereof, including all attachments. Receipt by an unintended recipient does not waive attorney-client privilege, attorney work product privilege, or any other exemption from disclosure.

(McClain Email Log, Sullivan-Murphy Campaign, [pg 8](#), 3/17/22)

**Mike McClain was involved in the coverup of a “rape in Champaign”:**

- **In an email from Michael McClain seeking leniency for a state employee, it was revealed that the employee assisted in covering up a “rape in Champaign,” something McClain appears to have known about.** “The email from McClain, a longtime associate and friend of the powerful House speaker, was revealed in a report Tuesday by WBEZ Radio. The email asks Gary Hannig, a top aide to Democrat Quinn, for leniency for a state employee facing disciplinary action because he ‘is loyal to the administration.’” (John O’Connor, “Madigan says he was unaware of rape cited in friend’s email,” [Associated Press](#), 1/8/2020)

- **“The 2012 email from lobbyist Michael McClain to one of Quinn’s top aides mentions an apparent cover-up of the sexual assault that allegedly happened in the central Illinois city of Champaign.”** (John O’Connor, “Madigan says he was unaware of rape cited in friend’s email,” [Associated Press](#), 1/8/2020)
- **““This man is a good compliance person, as I told you,’ wrote McClain. ‘The AG’s (attorney general’s) office and the Sheriffs love working with him. He has kept his mouth shut on Jones’ ghost workers, the rape in Champaign and other items.”** (John O’Connor, “Madigan says he was unaware of rape cited in friend’s email,” [Associated Press](#), 1/8/2020)

**Nikki Budzinski was involved in the appointment of Madigan backed Carrie Zalewski to the Illinois Commerce Commission:**

- **Nikki Budzinski was included on correspondence regarding Michael Madigan’s recommendation of Carrie Zalewski.** “Madigan recommended Carrie Zalewski for the ICC in December 2018 and in a series of other emails between the speaker's chief of staff, Jessica Basham, and top Pritzker aides Anne Caprara and Nikki Budzinski during the governor's first months in office. Carrie Zalewski was one of 35 people who got hired after their names appeared on the clout lists from Madigan's office to Pritzker's aides, a WBEZ investigation in June found.” (Dan Mihalopoulos, “Gov. Pritzker Defends Appointee With Family Ties To Key Figure In ComEd Scandal,” [NPR](#), 7/21/2020)
- **Governor JB Pritzker appointed Carrie Zalewski to the Illinois Commerce Commission.** “Pritzker's appointee as chairwoman of the Illinois Commerce Commission is Carrie Zalewski – whose father-in-law, former 23rd Ward Ald. Michael Zalewski – profited from the broad and long-running bribery scheme ComEd has admitted to perpetrating in Illinois politics.” (Dan Mihalopoulos, “Gov. Pritzker Defends Appointee With Family Ties To Key Figure In ComEd Scandal,” [NPR](#), 7/21/2020)
- **The Illinois Commerce Commission is responsible for regulating ComEd.** “Madigan recommended Zalewski to the governor, and Pritzker put her in charge of the ICC – which regulates public utilities such as Commonwealth Edison. She has remained in that position as federal investigators conduct an ongoing criminal probe into the giant power company’s ties to the speaker’s allies.

**Carrie Zalewski is the daughter-in-law of former 23rd Ward Ald. Michael Zalewski who profited from the broad and long-running bribery scheme ComEd:**

- **Carrie Zalewski is the daughter-in-law of former 23rd Ward Ald. Michael Zalewski who profited from the broad and long-running bribery scheme ComEd.** “Pritzker's appointee as chairwoman of the Illinois Commerce Commission is Carrie Zalewski – whose father-in-law, former 23rd Ward Ald. Michael Zalewski – profited from the broad and long-running bribery scheme ComEd has admitted to perpetrating in Illinois politics.” (Dan Mihalopoulos, “Gov. Pritzker Defends Appointee With Family Ties To Key Figure In ComEd Scandal,” [NPR](#), 7/21/2020)

**Carrie’s Husband, Michael Zalewski, used his campaign committee to donate \$1000 to Budzinski on December 31, 2021:**

- **Carrie is married to Michael Zalewski.** “Mike’s an attorney by trade, practicing law at the firm of Taft, Stettinius & Hollister, LLP and lives in west suburban Riverside with his wife Carrie, and their four children, Reese, Henry, Ellamae, and Cecilia.” (“Biography,” Mike Zalewski’s Official [Website](#), accessed 4/20/22)
- **Michael Zalewski donated \$1000 to Budzinski on December 31, 2021 using his state house campaign committee.**

NAME OF COMMITTEE (In Full) Nikki For Congress		
Full Name (Last, First, Middle Initial) Zalewski for State Representative		
Mailing Address 437 Repton Rd		
City Riverside	State IL	Zip Code 60546-1621
FEC ID number of contributing federal political committee. C		Date of Receipt MM / DD / YYYY 12 / 31 / 2021
Name of Employer	Occupation	Transaction ID : 11420087
Receipt For: 2022 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) ▼	Election Cycle-to-Date 1000.00	Amount of Each Receipt this Period 1000.00
		<input type="checkbox"/> Memo Item
		* Earmarked Contribution: See Below Permissible Funds Confirmed

(“itemized receipts,” [FEC](#), accessed 4/20/22)