Money Crunch: This Is Why You’re Getting Hounded for Donations

You might have noticed your favorite presidential candidates have been hounding you a lot lately for donations.

The reason why is pretty simple: Thursday, at midnight—while the ball is dropping in Times Square—every campaign is trying to squeeze every last dime they can out of their donors. And if they don’t get the kind of response they need, come Monday, they just might not be candidates anymore.

One of the best indicators of the overall financial health of a campaign is its ability to raise money—and lots of it—throughout the course of the election cycle. If you can’t bring in enough to pay the bills, or if your fundraising drops off significantly, these are easy signs of trouble.

The quarterly fundraising reports are often used to determine how well a campaign is doing. A bad report, in spite of solid polling numbers, is an indication that something is very wrong with that particular campaign.

The quarterly reporting periods end at midnight on Jan. 1, April 1, July 1 and Oct. 1, respectively, but the campaigns then have about 15 days to file their reports with the FEC. Those numbers, then, usually aren’t made public for a few more days, so you likely won’t hear about them officially until just before the Iowa Caucus on Feb. 1.

The October reports were the first chance outside observers had to see all of the announced campaigns on an even playing field. Without breaking them down too deeply, the following is a summary of the financial statuses of the 11 remaining Republican candidates for president, ranked in order of their remaining cash reserves going into the fourth quarter:

1. Donald Trump—The businessman from New York is unique in the race because he has declared he is self-funding his campaign. As required by law, however, he has filed quarterly fundraising reports in July and October. According to those documents, going into the further quarter, he had raised $5.8 million—almost entirely out of his own pocket—and spent about $5.6 million. He reported $255,000 cash on hand at the end of the third quarter, but in reality, he still has access to hundreds of millions, and has indicated he intends to begin spending some of that in the weeks ahead.

2. Ted Cruz—The senator from Texas filed quarterly fundraising reports with the FEC in April, July, and October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $26.5 million and spent about $12.8 million. He reported $13.8 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

3. Ben Carson—The retired neurosurgeon from Virginia filed quarterly fundraising reports with the FEC in April, July, and October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $31.3 million and spent about $20.1 million. He reported $11.3 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

4. Marco Rubio—The senator from Florida filed quarterly fundraising reports with the FEC in April, July, and October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $15.5 million and spent about $7.9 million. He reported $11 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

5. Jeb Bush—The former Florida governor filed quarterly fundraising reports with the FEC in July and October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $24.8 million and spent about $14.5 million. He reported $10.3 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

6. Carly Fiorina—The former Hewlett-Packard CEO from California filed quarterly fundraising reports with the FEC in

July and October. Going into the fourth quarter, she had raised $8.5 million and spent about $2.9 million. She reported $5.5 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

7. John Kasich—The Ohio governor filed his first quarterly fundraising report with the FEC in October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $4.4 million and spent about $1.7 million. He reported $2.7 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

8. Rand Paul—The senator from Kentucky filed quarterly fundraising reprts with the FEC in July and October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $9.4 million and spent about $7.3 million. He reported $2.1 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

9. Chris Christie—The New Jersey governor filed his first quarterly fundraising report with the FEC in October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $4.2 million and spent about $2.8 million. He reported $1.4 million cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

10. Mike Huckabee—The former Arkansas governor filed quarterly fundraising reports with the FEC in July and October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $3.2 million and spent about $2.5 million. He reported $761,000 cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

11. Rick Santorum—The former senator from Pennsylvania filed quarterly fundraising reports with the FEC in April, July and October. Going into the fourth quarter, he had raised $58,600 and spent about $64,500. He reported $13,300 cash on hand at the end of the third quarter.

These numbers do not reflect donations made to the candidates' various Super PACs, as it is illegal for campaigns and Super PACs to coordinate. Greater detail on any candidate's finances may be found by going to the FEC's candidate and committee viewer website.