

The Delray Democrat

Rick Scott: One of the “Most Corrupt Politicians Running for Reelection”¹

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It’s been 14 years since the 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* “reversed century-old campaign finance restrictions and enabled corporations and other outside groups to spend unlimited funds on elections.”

End Citizens United is a grassroots organization that’s been fighting *Citizens United* and exposing political corruption ever since. Rick Scott tops their recently published list of [“Most Corrupt Candidates in 2024.”](#)

Scott is a bland kind of guy. Postcard-flat affect. Stick-on smile. No memorable quotes. Although he served as Florida’s governor from 2010 to 2018, and was elected its junior senator in 2018, whatever name recognition he has doesn’t come from any leadership achievements. It’s from scandal, conflicts of interest, and lies about protecting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

But his banal mien serves him well, masking a cunning businessman who has made millions through symbiotic business/government investments. And with the use of his wife’s convenient portfolio to create the illusion of “blind trusts.”

Scott is very rich. But millions of other Americans live paycheck-to-paycheck and/or rely on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Scott calls these safety nets “socialism,” either ignorant or deliberating choosing to misrepresent the actual meaning of the term. Most likely, it’s not ignorance. Scott is not stupid and attacking Democrats as socialists is effective scare-mongering. Of course, as my colleague Michael Cantwell, noted in a previous article, [The Threat Isn’t Socialism. It’s Fascism](#), “What Republicans call “socialism” is legislation that benefits ordinary Americans rather than the bank balances of the top 0.01 %.”

Scott has never tried to help ordinary Americans. He voted against the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which is providing Florida with more than \$6 billion in federal funds to invest in roads, bridges, public transit, ports and airports. One of Scott’s first acts as governor was to refuse \$2.4 billion in federal money for a high-speed train line. He later invested with his wife in a fund that has links to Brightline, a private company building a new high-speed rail line.

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), July 2024, page 1.

Multibillion Dollar Medicare/Medicaid Fraud

Scott's notoriety began with Columbia/HCA, a multimillion-dollar chain of for-profit-by-fraud hospitals that Scott, as CEO, grew into the biggest such chain in America.

Following a massive, multi-agency federal investigation, the company pled guilty to 14 felonies and paid the government a total of \$1.7 billion in fines and damages. At the time, it was the largest Medicare and Medicaid health care fraud case in U.S. History.

The company profited off the sick and injured by bribing doctors with all kinds of swag to send their patients, not to facilities that best met their needs but to Columbia/HCA hospitals that would overcharge Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE, the military's health care program.

The company billed the government for tests doctors never ordered, for exaggerated diagnosis codes that brought greater reimbursement and for home health care for people not qualified to receive it.

HCA [admitted](#) "submitting inflated bills and expenses to the government; exaggerating the seriousness of diagnoses to increase Medicare reimbursement; illegally structuring business deals so that Medicare picked up the cost of corporate expenses; and providing doctors with kickbacks for patient [referrals](#)."

Doctors were offered "free rent and office refurbishment and free drugs from hospital pharmacies. One of HCA's most controversial business practices involved providing partnership investments in company hospitals for doctors, who could then [refer patients to them](#)."

During a deposition in a separate but related case, Scott [pleaded the fifth 75 times](#).

We don't know why Scott was never indicted. Of course, that could be because the government found no wrongdoing on his part. But Scott claims he wasn't even interviewed and that seems true. So, how was he eliminated from blame if he was never questioned?

"I fought Hillarycare, and guess what happened . . . Justice came after me and attacked me and my company."

Scott has dismissed the fraud investigation as old news but resurrected it recently in a press conference outside the Manhattan courthouse where Donald Trump was being tried (and later convicted) for 34 felonies. Perhaps seeing something to be gained by adopting Trump's phony victimization, he compared the HCA Medicare fraud to the charges against Trump. As the Miami Herald [reported](#), he had earlier appeared on "Fox & Friends," where he bragged, "I fought Hillarycare, and guess what happened when I fought Hillarycare? Justice came after me and attacked me and my company."

New York Magazine responded to Scott's "outlandish" claim by observing that, "Many prominent people from both political parties opposed 'Hillarycare' and somehow didn't find themselves or their businesses under investigation for criminal fraud." It also noted

“the little matter that the record fines imposed on Columbia/HCA were part of a settlement in which the company admitted all sorts of wrongdoing.”

“If only “somebody told me something was wrong.”

Unbelievably, Scott claimed he would have stopped the fraud— if only “somebody told me something was wrong.” Was he in a coma?

Three major federal agencies spent nine years on the massive case with the help of eight whistleblowers. One of them, John Schilling, a former HCA accountant who alerted the FBI and worked with them from 1996 through 2003 had a different view:

The fraud at Rick Scott’s company hurt seniors, it hurt taxpayers, it hurt everyone . . . Fraud was in the DNA of Rick Scott’s company from the very beginning and he was the father.”

Although the Justice Department’s final settlement with the company was announced June 26, 2003, it noted that the fraud went decades: “HCA had systematically defrauded Medicare, Medicaid and other federally funded health care programs through schemes dating back to the late [1980s](#).”

Instead of being appalled by Scott, voters made him governor of Florida twice and then senator. He’s the richest member of the US Senate. With serious conflicts of interest.

“Past Is Prologue”

Scott is running for a second term as senator, so a dive into his symbiotic business-political ventures is essential—and illuminating.

Scott’s forced resignation from HCA came with a bespoke parachute of \$300 million in stock, \$5.1 million in severance pay, and a five-year, \$950,000-per-annum consulting contract. Scott has a talent for investing, and he used his good-bye bonanza to vastly multiply his personal wealth.

While still a private citizen, and despite his HCA scandal, Scott co-founded Solantic, a chain of walk-in clinics in Northeast Florida that became the dominant group of emergency clinics in Florida.

In 2008, he decided to run for public office. He poured \$73 million into his campaign and barely beat Alex Sink. The ante was big, but he may have figured on even bigger rewards.

But he knew that serving as Florida’s new governor come January 2011, he would have to answer growing accusations about conflicts of interest between his holdings and the state’s business. So, just before he took office, he put his shares of Solantic into his wife’s revocable trust. But critics charged that didn’t qualify as the legally necessary “blind” trust because Scott could see the account.

On March 22, 2011, Scott signed an order mandating drug tests for all state employees, a profitable

service Solantic could have performed, trust or not.

Then-Attorney General Bill McCollum's campaign questioned how a Scott administration would handle Solantic, which is regulated by the state Agency for Health Care Administration and hires doctors licensed by the Department of Health. Both agencies are run by the governor's [appointees](#).” So, in April of that year, Scott sold his [Solantic](#) stock to Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe, a New York firm that already owned a 30% share of the company.

He continues to claim there is no conflict of interest concerning his vast investments and holdings. But his federal financial disclosure reveals, *Scott and his wife have millions of dollars invested in the same companies*. As [Politico](#) reported:

Hundreds of investments are held simultaneously in both Scott’s blind trust and by Ann Scott . . . There are numerous examples of official Scott administration actions that benefit more than just Ann Scott’s investments, which Rick Scott could see while in office.

Since then, Scott was reelected as governor in 2014 and elected as Florida’s junior senator in 2018. He spent \$73 million of his own [money](#) (nearly 86% of the total campaign funds!) for his first gubernatorial race in 2010, yet defeated Democrat Alex Sink by only 68,000 votes or 1.2%.

He contributed even more money in 2014 to compete against Democrat Charlie Crist with even less of a return—61,000 votes— just 1%. For his Senate run in 2018, despite another massive infusion of personal cash, the race against incumbent Democratic Senator Bill Nelson was so close it needed a squirt of WD40: [0.2 percent!](#)

He’s currently the top, self-funded Republican candidate, donating more than [\\$20 million](#).

These are some of the reasons why groups like [End Citizens United](#) see red, and what Floridians should remember when voting come November is, “Who will truly serve the will of the people?”