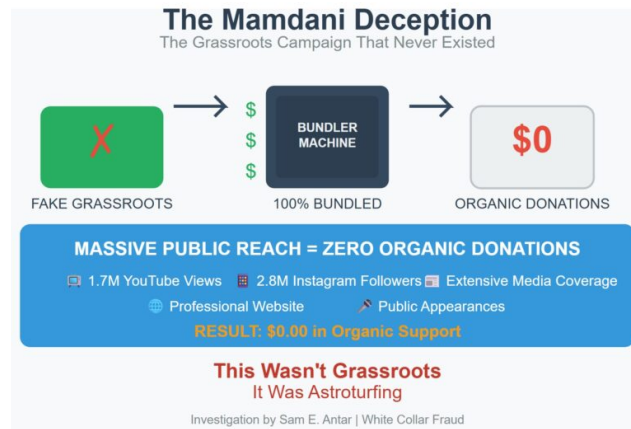


The Mamdani Deception: The Grassroots Campaign That Never Existed

June 30, 2025 / 7 minutes of reading

Zohran Mamdani has built his political brand on a simple promise: that his campaign is powered by the people. He calls it grassroots. He markets it as revolutionary. But when you strip away the slogans and look at the structure — the website, the bundlers, the Super PACs, the money — a very different picture emerges: astroturfing masquerading as authentic public support.



Mamdani has had extensive public exposure — a polished campaign website featuring a prominent orange “DONATE” button right on the [homepage](#), a [YouTube channel](#) with over 1.7 million views, [Instagram](#) with 2.8 million followers, favorable media coverage, public appearances, and interviews designed to mobilize small-dollar donors. But despite that massive reach and professional infrastructure designed to capture grassroots enthusiasm, the campaign’s fundraising came entirely through political intermediaries rather than from inspired members of the public.

Key Finding: Despite extensive public exposure and massive reach designed to capture grassroots donations, the actual fundraising data reveals zero organic public support — exposing the “people-powered” narrative as complete political theater.

As of June 27, 2025, out of 27,674 individual [contributions](#) made to Mamdani’s campaign, exactly 77 had no bundler attribution — and collectively, they amounted to \$0.00. These entries appear to be refunds, chargebacks, or bookkeeping adjustments rather than legitimate standalone donations.

Quantified: Every single dollar raised came through a bundler. The “grassroots” campaign routed 100% of real donations through political intermediaries.

This wasn’t a bug. It was the blueprint. And by the end of this article, we’ll walk you through the source code, the fundraising records, and the public finance structure that proves it.

The Donation Infrastructure

At first glance, the donation system looked like any other campaign site. Professional design. Prominent orange “DONATE” button featured right on the homepage. Clear messaging about helping “working class New Yorkers.” Everything appeared designed to capture small-dollar grassroots enthusiasm.



Behind the scenes, the source code reveals that donate button connected to the official NYC Campaign Finance Board donation platform:

Source: Mamdani Campaign Donation Portal

<https://contribute.nycvotes.org/campaigns/zohranmamdani/contributions/new>

That’s the official NYC Campaign Finance Board donation platform. It processes contributions for publicly funded candidates and makes sure everything gets disclosed.

But here’s the crucial detail: the NYC Votes system tracks whether donations come through bundlers (via custom tracking links) or directly from members of the public who found the campaign through any public channel – online videos, social media, media coverage, interviews, campaign appearances. When political operatives collect contributions, they get special URLs that credit them when donors contribute. When regular people donate after discovering a candidate through any of these public channels, those show up as direct contributions with no intermediary listed.

This tracking capability means we can see exactly what happened when people clicked that prominent orange button. And what the data reveals is devastating to the grassroots narrative.



The YouTube Link

Mamdani’s [YouTube channel](#) – with over 1.7 million views and 37,700 subscribers – appeared to be a genuine public outreach tool. It hosted over 50 campaign-style videos with movement messaging, volunteer appeals, and calls to action.

But the YouTube page doesn’t directly solicit donations. Instead, it simply links viewers to his campaign website at zohranfornyc.com – which then connects to the same NYC Votes platform that can distinguish between bundled and organic contributions.

The YouTube Test: If Mamdani’s videos were genuinely inspiring grassroots support, we’d see thousands of small donations from viewers who followed the link to his campaign site. The tracking system reveals exactly what happened.

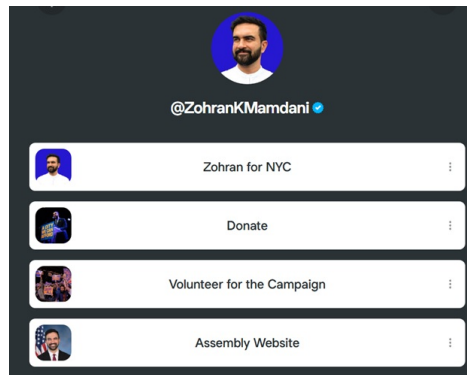


The Instagram Funnel

Mamdani’s [Instagram](#) presence is even more impressive than his YouTube reach – 2.8 million followers across 954 posts. Instagram is a

platform designed for personal connection and visual engagement, making it potentially the most powerful tool for inspiring grassroots donations.

Instagram follows an even more direct path to donations than YouTube. The bio uses a Linktree with a prominent “Donate” button that goes straight to the NYC Votes donation portal — no campaign website detour required.



What the Instagram Linktree Reveals:

- “Zohran for NYC” button links to [campaign website](#)
- “Donate” button links directly to [NYC Votes donation portal](#)
- “Volunteer for the Campaign” button links to [campaign volunteer signup](#)
- “Assembly Website” button links to his [official Assembly](#) page
- 2.8 million followers have one-click access to give
- Same bundler-tracking system captures all contributions

This makes the failure even more spectacular: despite 2.8 million followers having direct, one-click access to donate, his so-called grassroots appeal generated zero spontaneous financial support from the public.

💰 The Bundler Monopoly

Here’s where the grassroots narrative completely collapses. In campaign finance, a bundler is someone who collects contributions from multiple donors and delivers them to a campaign, often using special tracking links that credit them for their work. It’s a standard practice — but typically represents a portion of a campaign’s fundraising, not literally all of it.

100% of Mamdani’s individual contributions were bundled. Out of 27,674 individual donors, only 77 entries showed no bundler attribution — and those totaled exactly \$0.00, appearing to be refunds or bookkeeping adjustments rather than real donations.

That’s not speculation. That’s straight from NYC Campaign Finance Board records.

And of the \$1.7 million raised in private funds, a **staggering 94% was funneled through a single professional fundraiser** — Jerrod MacFarlane, a Development Associate at a taxpayer-funded nonprofit called The Action Lab.

But the non-grassroots support doesn’t end there. As documented in our [June 29 investigation](#), allied PAC spending (\$1.9 million) actually exceeded even this unprecedented bundling operation (\$1.7 million) — meaning outside political groups spent more supporting Mamdani than his supposed “grassroots” donors ever did.

Reality Check: Despite viral videos, massive Instagram following, and extensive media coverage, no one was inspired to donate organically. Meanwhile, outside PACs spent more than the entire bundled operation. The “people-powered” campaign was actually powered by professional political operatives and allied organizations.

The Gatekeeper Model

NYC Votes uses attribution logic that credits intermediaries based on:

- Referral links,
- Session metadata,
- Manual selections during checkout.

Campaigns and bundlers routinely share *customized donation URLs*—some of which silently tag the donor as part of a specific bundle. This allows them to unlock **public matching funds at up to an 8-to-1 ratio**.

In Mamdani’s case, bundlers weren’t an occasional assist. **They were the entire infrastructure**. And that includes the website itself.

The Smoking Gun

Let’s be explicit about what the records show across Mamdani’s entire public presence:

- **1.7 million YouTube views** generated zero organic donations
- **2.8 million Instagram followers** generated zero organic donations
- **Extensive media interviews and favorable coverage** failed to inspire a single spontaneous donation
- **Campaign appearances and public events** produced no grassroots financial support
- **A polished website with prominent homepage donate button** generated zero direct contributions
- **77 unbundled entries out of 27,674 total** — all \$0.00 (refunds/adjustments)
- **Every single dollar** of the \$1.7 million came through bundlers

These numbers don’t describe a grassroots movement. They describe a professional political operation that generated zero organic support despite massive public investment and exposure across multiple platforms.

The Website as Theater

So what was the website actually doing?

It was performing. The donation button existed not to facilitate genuine public giving — but to maintain the illusion of grassroots accessibility while credit flowed entirely to political professionals behind the scenes.

A real grassroots campaign would show thousands of \$5, \$15, and \$25 donations from people who watched a video, visited the homepage with its prominent donate button, followed him on Instagram, or heard about the candidate from a friend. Instead, we see a sophisticated bundling operation with zero organic public participation.

It’s the political equivalent of a restaurant that advertises “open to the public” but somehow only serves people who made reservations through the *maître d’*.



The Broader Deception

This discovery doesn't just expose a centralized fundraising operation. It dismantles the entire "grassroots" narrative at its foundation.

You can't call a campaign grassroots when **100% of your financial support comes through political intermediaries** rather than from people who discovered you organically. You can't claim to represent the people when none of them were inspired to support you after encountering your message across any platform or media appearance.

Mamdani's campaign was designed to *look* spontaneous and people-powered. But the fundraising data reveals it was **architected to simulate grassroots energy while generating zero**.

Bottom Line: This wasn't grassroots. It was astroturfing with a professional PR campaign.



Final Word

So the next time a candidate tells you their revolution is powered by the people, ask to see the data.

Because in Mamdani's case, **the people weren't powering anything**.

Despite 1.7 million video views, 2.8 million Instagram followers, media coverage, and a slick website, not a single person was inspired to donate.

The revolution didn't start with a \$10 donation from someone who watched a video, saw an Instagram post, or read an interview. It started with a spreadsheet full of bundlers.

Our article is sourced from official NYC Campaign Finance Board (CFB) records, source code from Mamdani's websites, and CFB rules governing intermediary reporting.

 For daily updates, follow @SamAntar on [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#).

Written by,

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