

## NEWSMAKERS: ELECTION DAY 2018

# HEAD OF THE PAC

SOME POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES ARE MORE SUPER THAN OTHERS

► BY EMMA BACCELLIERI



**MONEY IN** politics is generally big money—millions, flowing from mega-corporations to big-name candidates.

But there's also activity on the other end of the scale. A handful of political action committees are formed every day that raise or spend little more than a handful of dollars. One such committee, which popped up this month, has the aspirational name of "The Mets Are a Good Team Super PAC." Its headquarters is not in Queens, but rather the suburbs of New York City. The chairman, treasurer and custodian of records has been interested in politics since middle school—which was just a few years ago.

The thing started as a joke. As 15-year-

old Ben Aybar grew interested in politics, he grew more suspicious of money in politics. Approaching this year's midterms, he thought he'd try to get involved, even though he's not old enough to vote. "I was interested in using the idea that I could form a Super PAC as being a point *against* Super PACs," he says. "Look how easy this is to do. If I could do it, anyone can." Within minutes of completing the application, Aybar got an email from the Federal Election Commission: The committee had been verified.

As for the name of Ben's Super PAC, he loves the Mets, just as his parents do. His parents were at Shea Stadium for the 1986 World Series and took Ben to the 2015 playoffs. Now Ben has to consider where to direct the funds. Among his options: Push famously cheap Mets ownership to spend in the offseason, support candidates who



share his fandom, or embrace his favorite baseball team's political equivalent—underdogs who refuse large corporate donations. Perhaps that will be his best shot at backing a winner. □

## ▼ BETTING LINES



**IT'S BEEN** five months since a U.S. Supreme Court decision essentially legalized sports gambling nationwide, and while betting is up and running in Delaware, Mississippi, New Jersey and West Virginia, bills are creeping through other state legislatures. But results from Election Day could accelerate things. Voters in

Florida and Idaho will decide on ballot initiatives that could allow for expanded gambling, and a number of gubernatorial races pit candidates who diverge on the issue. In Alabama, Walt Maddox, a Democrat, says profits from sports betting would shore up state coffers. In the close Georgia race, Democrat Stacey Abrams is in favor of sports betting, but only if revenue goes toward need-based aid for college students. In Ohio, both candidates—Democrat Richard Cordray and Republican Mike DeWine—recognize that sports betting is here to stay. In other words, their constituents should be free to lose money betting on the Browns. —Dan Falkenheim



## BALLOT INITIATIVE

Some former athletes are taking a shot at public office in some hotly contested races. Here's a rundown. —Sam Brief



### COLIN ALLRED (D)

► Texas: 32nd District

The former Baylor and Tennessee Titans LB is looking to upset and unseat Pete Sessions.

### BOB FLANDERS (R)

► Rhode Island: U.S. Senate

A two-sport star at Brown—his 94-yard run is one of the longest in Ivy history—he was a Tigers draft pick.

### ANTHONY GONZALEZ (R)

► Ohio: 18th District

A former WR and first-round pick of the Colts, Gonzalez (above) has Peyton Manning's backing.

### ADAM GREENBERG (R)

► Connecticut: State Senate

Gunning for Ted Kennedy Jr.'s seat, Greenberg (below) had his MLB career derailed by a hit by pitch in 2005.

### J.D. SCHOLTEN (D)

► Iowa: 4th District

The former ace of the Nebraska baseball team trails eight-term incumbent Steve King by 6% in the polls.

