

Investing in Influence

Business Groups Pay for Forty Percent of California Lawmakers'
Campaigns

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Overview

MAPLight.org is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research group illuminating the connection between money and politics. In this study, we examined all campaign contributions given to members of the California Assembly and Senate since January 2007 to determine whether each contribution came from a business, labor union, other organization, or private citizen. We analyzed contribution data provided by the National Institute on Money in State Politics.

Business and business trade organizations were the dominant group in funding lawmakers, paying for 40% of candidate campaigns.

Individuals – private citizens – provided just 17% of campaign funds. Labor unions provided 16% of funds.

Political parties and contributions from other candidates contributed 12% of all campaign funds to candidate campaigns. (Spending by parties that doesn't get directed to the candidate campaign committee is not included in this study, nor are candidate self-financed funds.)

Native American tribes contributed 2% of all funds. Advocacy groups contributed less than 1% of all funds.

Within the 17% of funds contributed by private citizens (individuals), individuals contributing \$1,000 or more over the three-year period accounted for 74% of all funding given by individuals. Just 1% of money from private citizens came from “unitemized contributions,” i.e. contributions of less than \$100.

Within the 40% of total funds contributed by businesses and trade associations, the top 500 firms made up 92% of all business contributions.

Uncategorized organizations gave 13% of all funds. Many of these organizations appeared to be businesses, but additional research would be needed to definitively categorize them as such.

Individual lawmakers' funding varies widely

There was wide variation among lawmakers in their sources of funds. Sen. Ron Calderon received less than 1% of his contributions from private citizens, the lowest of any lawmaker. Only one lawmaker (Sen. Fran Pavley) received most of her money from private citizens.

Examining the share of contributions from businesses, Sen. Sam Aaenestad topped the list with businesses providing 87% of his funding. Forty-eight lawmakers (41% of those receiving contributions) received more than half of their funds from businesses.

No lawmakers received more than half of their funds from unions. Looking at share of contributions from unions, Asm. Sandré Swanson topped the list, with unions providing 47% of his funding. Eleven lawmakers (9% of those receiving contributions) received more than one-third of their funds from unions.

Political parties favor just a handful of lawmakers: only 13 lawmakers received more than 10% of their funds from political parties.

Advocacy organizations played a small role, funding less than 2.5% of any lawmaker's campaign.

Sources of Legislator Campaign Funds, January 2007-March 2010

Source	Contributions	Share
Businesses	\$47,292,467	39.8%
Private Citizens	\$20,157,110	17.0%
Labor Unions	\$18,804,400	15.8%
Political Parties	\$13,974,188	11.8%
Native American Tribes	\$2,792,990	2.3%
Advocacy Organizations	\$797,794	0.7%
Uncategorized Organizations	\$15,100,607	12.7%
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$118,919,557</i>	<i>100%</i>

Top Contributors in Each Category

Business Organizations	Total
California Medical Association	\$1,019,007
AT&T	\$881,913
California Dental Association	\$762,747
California Association of Realtors	\$740,600
PG&E Corp	\$612,678
Farmers Insurance Group	\$570,590
California Building Industry Association	\$492,488
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway	\$463,100
California Cable & Telecommunication Association	\$452,200
Consumer Attorneys of California	\$450,600

Private Citizens	Total
<i>Unitemized Donations</i>	<i>\$209,120</i>
Pipkin, Chester John	\$77,600
Girardi, Thomas V.	\$54,550
Welinsky, Howard S.	\$54,000
Girardi, Erika	\$48,550
Doerr, L. John	\$34,400
Moores, John J.	\$33,400
Clark, Louise Harvey	\$31,500
Yin, Chei Chen	\$31,000
Decker, Dwight W.	\$30,300
Chambers, Constance E.	\$29,300

Labor Unions	Total
California State Council of Laborers	\$1,007,258
California Professional Fire Fighters	\$899,998
California State Council of Service Employees	\$889,800
California Teachers Association	\$727,200
California State Pipe Trades Council	\$578,733
Professional Engineers in California Government	\$566,750
California School Employees Association	\$558,663
AFSCME California	\$492,100
California Correctional Peace Officers Association	\$468,613
Building & Construction Trades Council of California	\$438,189

Ideology	Total
Californians Allied for Patient Protection	\$144,070
Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association	\$92,500
California League of Conservation Voters	\$79,400
Technet California	\$56,396
Edvoice	\$50,200
New Majority California	\$48,375
Womens Political Cmte	\$44,600
EMILY's List	\$43,200
California Water PAC	\$32,300
Fieldstead & Co	\$24,000

Native American Tribes	Total
Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians	\$793,700
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	\$477,600
Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians	\$245,991
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	\$230,900
Rumsey Indian Rancheria	\$166,800
Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation	\$165,820
Barona Band of Mission Indians	\$138,200
Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians	\$89,423
California Tribal Business Alliance	\$89,397
Morongongo Band of Mission Indians	\$87,800

Political Parties	Total
California Democratic Party	\$6,176,114
California Republican Party	\$3,355,661
Mendocino County Democratic Central Cmte	\$307,100

Sacramento County Democratic Central Cmte	\$291,093
Democratic Central Cmte of Marin	\$190,163
Republican Party of Riverside County	\$168,200
San Joaquin County Republican Central Cmte	\$148,500
Republican Central Cmte of Orange County	\$145,200
Stanislaus County Democratic Central Cmte	\$134,000
Republican Party of Stanislaus County	\$112,500

Methodology

This study includes reported contributions from January 1, 2007 through March 17, 2010 to campaign committees for Assembly and state Senate, but excludes self-funded contributions. We used campaign contribution data from the National Institute on Money in State Politics (NIMSP) as of April 29, 2010, whose data is based on reports that candidates and contributors are required to file with the California Secretary of State.

The data set we used, from NIMSP, omits a small portion of contributions that candidate committees report to the Secretary of State, specifically:

- Contributions to campaign committees for races where the candidates haven't officially registered to run. For example, Assemblymembers who have received contributions in 2009 and early 2010 in preparation for a 2012 state Senate campaign are not included since it is not yet possible to officially register for a 2012 campaign.
- Contributions to campaigns run during a special election.
- Contributions not filed electronically (for the 2010 cycle).

We examined contributions given to 79 Assemblymembers and 40 Senators: all legislators who were serving as of August 31, 2009. Some notes about how this date range affects certain legislators:

- Asm. Felipe Fuentes, who took office May 25, 2007, is included.
- Asm. Warren T. Furutani, who took office February 7, 2008, is included.
- Sen. Curren D. Price, Jr., who represented AD-51 until moving to the Senate on June 8, 2009, is included.
- Asm. Michael Duvall, who left office September 9, 2009, is included.
- Asm. Steven Bradford, who took office September 10, 2009, is excluded.
- Sen. John J. Benoit, who left office November 30, 2009, is included.
- Asm. Paul Krekorian, who left office January 5, 2010, is included.
- Asm. Chris Norby, who took office January 29, 2010, is excluded.
- Sen. Abel Maldonado, who left office April 27, 2010, is included.
- Sen. Denise Moreno Ducheny, who is term-limited, did not raise money after 2006 and is excluded from calculating percentages.
- Sen. Roy Ashburn, who is term-limited, did not raise money after 2006 and is excluded from calculating percentages.

Campaign contribution reports filed with the Secretary of State indicate whether a contribution came from a private citizen's personal funds.

Unitemized contributions that appear in the data set are grouped in the "private citizens" category, rather than the "uncategorized" category. These are contributions under the \$100 reporting threshold that the candidate committee has chosen to lump together in a single dollar amount. Campaigns can choose to itemize contributions under \$100.

We chose to subdivide the data into seven categories to provide a sense of how this large amount of money is distributed among different types of groups. The categories we used in the study are based on the categories that NIMSP assigns to the contributions data it receives from the Secretary of State:

- **Businesses** consists of large corporations, trade associations, professional associations, small businesses, sole proprietorships and any other organization not included in one of the other categories. The bulk of the money in the business category comes from large corporations and trade associations. Contributions from individuals employed by businesses are included in the "private citizens" category.
- **Private Citizens** includes contributions from the personal funds of individual people.
- **Labor Unions** includes contributions from union organizations such as the California Teachers Association and the California Correctional Peace Officers Association. Contributions from individuals employed by labor organizations are included in the "private citizens" category.
- **Native American Tribes** is a distinct category. Contributions that explicitly reflect gaming interests are included in the "businesses" category.
- **Political Parties** includes contributions from statewide and county parties (e.g., California Democratic Party, Monterey County Republican Party). This category also includes contributions from one candidate committee to another, which made up 22% of the total contributions in this category.
- **Advocacy** represents contributions from groups aligned with a specific ideological focus but independent of a political party, such as the California League of Conservation Voters and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.
- **Uncategorized** are organizations for which we did not definitively determine any of the aforementioned categories. As previously mentioned, many of these organizations appear to be businesses, but additional research would be needed to definitively categorize them as such.

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About the National Institute on Money in State Politics

The National Institute on Money in State Politics is the only nonpartisan, nonprofit organization revealing the influence of campaign money on state-level elections and public policy in all 50 states. The Institute's comprehensive and verifiable campaign-finance database and relevant issue analyses are available for free through their website FollowTheMoney.org. The group encourages transparency and promotes independent investigation of state-level campaign contributions by journalists, academic researchers, public-interest groups, government agencies, policymakers, students and the public at large.

About MAPLight.org

MAPLight.org is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization based in Berkeley, California. Its search engine at MAPLight.org illuminates the connection between Money And Politics (MAP) via a database of campaign contributions and legislative outcomes. Data sources include: GovTrack.us; Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets.org); Federal Election Commission; and the National Institute on Money in State Politics. To learn more visit <http://maplight.org>.

In 2009 MAPLight.org settled a freedom of information lawsuit against the state of California, winning public access to the state's database of how lawmakers vote. In May 2010, the group launched MAPLight.org California, a new website tracking campaign contributions to all California lawmakers. Later in 2010, MAPLight.org will launch a new state site connecting campaign contributions, interest groups, and votes in the California legislature.

Tables

The top ten recipients of contributions from businesses and trade organizations, as ranked by percentage of total contributions.

The complete table is available for download at maplight.org/investing-in-influence-610

State Legislator	Party	Office	% from Businesses	% from Private Citizens%	% from Labor Unions
Aanestad, Sam	R	Senate	87.4%	1.4%	0.4%
Hollingsworth, Dennis	R	Senate	79.3%	1.5%	3.0%
Cogdill, Dave	R	Senate	77.6%	5.0%	4.3%
Cox, Dave	R	Senate	75.5%	10.9%	2.4%
Adams, Anthony	R	Assembly	75.2%	4.0%	6.6%
Smyth, Cameron	R	Assembly	73.7%	3.2%	3.9%
Duvall, Michael	R	Assembly	72.5%	8.6%	3.4%
Florez, Dean	D	Senate	70.9%	3.1%	10.5%
Negrete McLeod, Gloria	D	Senate	70.9%	1.4%	14.7%
Villines, Mike	R	Assembly	70.8%	7.2%	4.1%