

Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance

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More than \$9 million spent on statewide ballot questions in 2010

More than \$9 million was spent to influence three questions put before the voters on the 2010 statewide ballot, according to disclosure reports filed by ballot question committees with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance.

OCPF's review of ballot question committee activity showed a total of \$9,098,307 spent on questions concerning the repeal of sales tax on alcohol, the repeal of the state's affordable housing law (MGL Chapter 40B), and a reduction in the state sales tax to 3 percent. The question on alcohol sales tax passed while the other two were defeated.

Total spending in 2010 fell short of the record aggregate of \$16.1 million set in 1992, when four questions were decided. The 2010 amount ranks seventh overall, and is \$2.4 million less than the total amount spent on three questions in 2008.

More than half of the 2010 total was spent to influence **Question 3** concerning a reduction in the sales tax. The Massachusetts Coalition for our Communities Ballot Question Committee spent \$4.4 million to defeat the question, leading all ballot question committees in spending. Another ballot question committee that also opposed Question 3, Business Leaders Against Question 3, spent \$159,250. On the other side, the Alliance to Roll Back Taxes spent \$251,844 in support of the question.

A total of \$4.8 million was spent on Question 3. The total is far below the \$13 million record for a single question, set in 2006 concerning alcohol sales in grocery stores.

Placing second in total spending in 2010 at \$3.1 million was **Question 1** concerning the repeal of the sales tax on alcohol. The Vote Yes on One Committee reporting spending \$2.9 million to support the question, and the Committee Against Repeal of the Alcohol Tax spent \$196,973.

Question 2, which sought to repeal the state's affordable housing law (MGL Chapter 40B), had the least amount of financial activity in 2010. Two opposing committees reported spending a total of \$1,191,947 – the Committee Against Repealing the Housing Law spent \$1.14 million to defeat the question, and the Repeal 40B Ballot Question Committee spent \$53,316 to support the question.

A total of nine active ballot question committees reported raising \$9,264,847 and receiving a total of \$565,686 in in-kind contributions to support or oppose statewide ballot questions in 2010. Additionally, the Service Employees International Union of Washington, D.C., reported spending \$14,044 to defeat Question 1.

The figures in this study are based on reports filed by committees covering the period through Nov. 15, and are subject to change due to any subsequent corrections, deletions or additions made as a result of any review conducted by OCPF or amendments filed by committees. Ballot question committees still in operation after Nov. 15 must file year-end reports with OCPF on or before Jan. 20, 2011. Those reports may include additional financial activity.

Reports filed by each of the committees may be found on OCPF's Electronic Filing System, a searchable database accessible on the office's website at www.mass.gov/ocpf.

A breakdown of activity for each question follows.

Campaign Finance Activity for the 2010 Statewide Ballot Questions

Totals include receipts and expenditures by each ballot question committee organized with OCPF, as well as in-kind contributions to a committee.

Question 1: Repeal sales tax on alcohol (Adopted)

Committee	Receipts	Expenditures	In-Kind Contributions	Liabilities
	<i>Support</i>			
Vote Yes on One Committee	\$2,905,031	\$2,892,949	--	\$270,839
<i>Total expenditures in favor</i>		\$2,892,949		
	<i>Oppose</i>			
Committee Against Repeal of the Alcohol Tax	\$197,072	\$196,973	\$50,372*	--
<i>Total expenditures in opposition</i>		\$196,973		
Question 1 Totals	\$3,102,103	\$3,089,922	\$50,372	\$270,839

Note: The MassVote No on All Three Committee raised \$2,695 and spent \$2,203 to oppose all three questions on the ballot.

** Additionally, the Service Employees International Union of Washington, D.C., reported spending \$14,044 to defeat Question 1.*

Question 2: Repeal M.G.L. Chapter 40B, the affordable housing law (Defeated)

Committee	Receipts	Expenditures	In-Kind Contributions	Liabilities
	<i>Support</i>			
Repeal 40B Ballot Question Committee	\$58,494	\$53,316	\$287,100	--
<i>Total expenditures in favor</i>			\$53,316	
	<i>Oppose</i>			
Committee Against Repealing the Housing Law	\$1,150,318	\$1,138,631	\$99,530	--
<i>Total expenditures in opposition</i>		\$1,138,631		
<i>Question 2 Totals</i>	\$1,208,812	\$1,191,947	\$386,630	--

Note: The MassVote No on All Three Committee raised \$2,695 and spent \$2,203 to oppose all three questions on the ballot.

Question 3: Reduce the sales and use tax rate to 3 percent (Defeated)

Committee	Receipts	Expenditures	In-Kind Contributions	Liabilities
	<i>Support</i>			
Alliance to Roll Back Taxes	\$253,437	\$251,844	\$232	\$25,800
<i>Total expenditures in favor</i>		\$251,844		
	<i>Oppose</i>			
MA Coalition for our Communities	\$4,538,550	\$4,391,300	\$114,437	--
Massachusetts Hospital Association	--	--	\$2,648	--
Business Leaders Against Question 3	\$159,250	\$159,250	\$11,367	--
<i>Total expenditures in opposition</i>		\$4,550,550		
Question 3 Total	\$4,951,237	\$4,802,394	\$128,684	\$25,800

Note: The MassVote No on All Three Committee raised \$2,695 and spent \$2,203 to oppose all three questions on the ballot

Statewide Ballot Question Expenditures

1988 – 2010

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Questions</i>	<i>Number of Committees</i>	<i>Total spent</i>
1988	4	18	\$13,317,952
1990	6	20	\$ 5,661,062
1992	4	8	\$16,139,661
1994	9	23	\$11,155,835
1996	1	3	\$ 1,210,777
1998	3	9	\$ 9,999,283
2000	8	16	\$15,340,199
2002	3	6	\$ 2,332,880
2006	3	6	\$15,320,327
2008	3	7	\$11,516,215
2010	3	9	\$ 9,098,307

Note: There were no questions on the statewide ballot in 2004.

End