

Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance

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Contact: Jason Tait
Director of Communications
617-979-8300

PACs break spending and contribution records during the 2009-10 election cycle

BOSTON – Massachusetts Political Action Committees broke several expenditure and contribution records during the 2009-10 state election cycle, which included statewide races and the largest number of legislative candidates since 1992, according to OCPF’s biennial study of PAC activity.

PACs reported a total of \$6.8 million in expenditures for the 2009-10 election cycle, breaking the previous record of \$5.8 million set during the 2007-08 cycle. PACs make expenditures to donate to candidates, political parties and ballot question committees, and pay for administrative and other costs.

During the 2009-10 cycle, \$2,744,437 was donated by PACs to state and county candidates, a new high for that category. The previous contribution record was \$2,684,944, set during the 2007-08 cycle.

PACs are political committees organized to receive and expend funds to support or oppose candidates, generally based on a unifying principle or purpose. PACs are limited to \$500 contributions to individual candidates annually, and disclose these expenditures on campaign finance reports filed with OCPF. The total number of PACs is a fluid number, but is generally more than 300 at any one time. A total of 302 PACs were organized at the end of 2010.

The 2009-10 OCPF PAC study, available at <http://www.mass.gov/ocpf/studies.htm>, identifies how PACs made contributions by office, party and other categories, and also identifies which PACs donated the most money to candidates.

Union and labor PACs were the top contributors in the 2009-10 cycle, accounting for 17 of the top 20 PACs in terms of contributions to state and county candidates. The Retired Public Employees PAC was the top contributor, donating \$134,900 to state and county candidates during the two-year cycle.

Legislative candidates received \$2,024,558 from PACs during the 2009-10 cycle, and statewide candidates received \$471,099. There were 433 legislative candidates in 2010, the most since 1992.

The average PAC contribution to an individual candidate in both 2009 and 2010 was \$314 and \$335, respectively. The \$335 average is the highest ever recorded, surpassing the previous high of \$331 posted in 1983.

PACs also gave to party committees, other PACs, ballot question committees and county and municipal candidates.

By party, Democratic candidates received \$2,562,227, or 89 percent of the total donated by PACs. A total of \$235,045 went to Republican candidates and committees.

The Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance is an independent state agency that administers the state campaign finance law. The agency website is www.mass.gov/ocpf.

Breakdown of PAC Contributions by Type of Recipient 2009-10

<i>From PACs To:</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>Cycle</i>
State and county candidates	\$1,117,471	\$1,626,966	\$2,744,437
Local candidates*	\$141,878	\$138,085	\$279,963
PACs, parties and BQs	\$130,925	\$160,592	\$291,517
TOTAL: Contributions to all candidates and committees	\$1,390,274	\$1,925,643	\$3,315,917

* This category is mostly made up of candidates for mayor and councilor-at-large in Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Springfield and Worcester, who report their campaign finance activity to OCPF, but also includes some candidates for mayor in cities with populations between 40,000 to 100,000 and other local candidates.