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Dec. 22, 1998

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Statewide ballot question spending reaches almost \$10 million

Almost \$10 million was spent to promote the passage or defeat of three questions put before voters on the Nov. 3 state ballot, a figure that included record fundraising and spending by one committee, according to figures released today by the Office of Campaign and Political Finance.

The study showed a total of \$10,237,920 raised and \$9,999,284 spent on the three questions, which concerned public financing of political campaigns, the tax rate for “unearned” income, and regulation of the electric power industry. (No committees or other activity were reported for a fourth question, which concerned tying legislative pay to inflation.)

Of the total spending figure, \$9,975,863 was spent by the nine registered ballot question committees and \$23,421 was spent independently by other organizations, such as corporations and associations.

The totals above do not reflect in-kind contributions, which are things of value other than money such as staff, supplies and other materials that were provided to ballot question committees. Such expenditures were reported by the ballot question committees that benefited from them and totaled another \$911,729.

This year, the sides spending the greater amount of money came out on top in all three questions for which there was campaign finance activity.

The total spending in 1998 did not exceed the record of more than \$16 million that was set in 1992, when four questions were on the ballot. Two other records were set in 1998, however, as one committee established new highs for both fundraising and spending.

The new records, as well as the greatest amount of overall activity this year, were reported for **Question 4**, in which voters upheld the passage of the electric deregulation law earlier this year. A total of \$8,591,197 was raised and \$8,429,838 was spent – 84 percent of the total activity for all the questions.

While that aggregate for a single question is not a record, the Yes on 4 Coalition reported record single-committee levels in both receipts and expenditures: \$8,261,818 raised and \$8,164,406 spent. That level of activity surpasses the committee records of \$7.5 million raised and spent, set by a committee that successfully opposed a 1988 question banning power plants that produce nuclear waste. The \$9.1 million spent by all committees on the 1988 question is still the single- question record.

In contrast, the committee opposing passage of Question 4 this year, the Campaign for Fair Electric Rates, reported receipts of \$329,379 and expenditures of \$285,457.

On **Question 2**, the “Clean Elections Law,” which expanded the state’s system of providing public funds to political candidates, total receipts were \$1,248,834 and total expenditures were \$1,193,734. The greatest activity of the six committees was reported by Mass. Voters For Clean Elections, which raised \$1,082,823 and spent \$1,066,771. The sole committee organized against the question, the No on 2 Committee, reported raising \$62,195 and spending \$60,957.

There was only one committee organized on **Question 3**, which lowered the state’s tax rate on interest and dividend income from 12 to 5.95 percent. The Committee for Tax Fairness, which favored passage, reported receipts of \$397,889 and expenditures of \$335,615. Independent expenditures brought the spending total to \$348,712.

The total spending figures also do not include committee liabilities outstanding as of Nov. 3 (or in the case of the Yes on 4 Coalition, Dec. 1), which totaled \$240,599. However, they are included in the charts that follow, as are in-kind contributions and independent expenditures.

Reports filed by each of the committees, as well as by groups and corporations making expenditures concerning the questions, are on file at OCPF’s office in Room 411 of the McCormack State Office Building, One Ashburton Place, Boston.

A breakdown of activity for each question follows.

Campaign Finance Activity for the 1998 Statewide Ballot Questions

Question 1: Constitutional Amendment Regarding Legislative Salaries

No committees organized; no activity reported.

Question 2: Expanded Public Financing of Political Campaigns

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Favor/Oppose</i>	<i>Date of Organization</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Expenditures</i>	<i>In-Kind Contributions</i>	<i>Liabilities</i>	<i>Ending Balance</i>
Mass. Voters for Clean Elections	Favor	8/14/97	1,082,823.23	1,066,770.93	107,463.93	21,636.92	16,052.30
Common Cause Campaign for Clean Elections	Favor	6/30/98	68,165.23	30,444.52	71,570.80	41,515.00	37,719.91
League of Women Voters Campaign for Clean Elections	Favor	10/8/97	1,252.00	401.57	0	0	750.43
CPPAX for Clean Elections	Favor	3/23/98	7,202.00	7,202.00	13,731.26	0	0
Cape Codders for Clean Elections	Favor	4/16/98	27,197.00	24,607.74	0	0	2,589.26
Independent expenditures	Favor			3,349.43			
<i>Total in favor</i>			1,186,639.46	1,132,776.19	192,765.99	63,151.92	57,111.90
No on 2 Committee	Oppose	8/31/98	62,195.00	60,957.47	4,884.54	0	1,336.53
Independent expenditures	Oppose			0			
<i>Total opposed</i>			62,195.00	60,957.47	4,884.54	0	1,336.53
<i>Grand Total</i>			1,248,834.46	1,193,733.66	197,650.53	63,151.92	58,448.43

Question 3: Reduction in Tax on Unearned Income

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Favor/Oppose</i>	<i>Date of Organization</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Expenditures</i>	<i>In-Kind Contributions</i>	<i>Liabilities</i>	<i>Ending Balance</i>
Committee for Tax Fairness	Favor	8/6/97	397,889.00	335,615.22	141,918.50	77,038.16	62,273.78
Independent expenditures	Favor			13,096.72			
Total in favor			397,889.00	348,711.94	141,918.50	77,038.16	62,273.78
Total opposed			--	--	--	--	--
Grand Total			397,889.00	348,711.94	141,918.50	77,038.16	62,273.78

Question 4: Utility Deregulation

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Favor/Oppose</i>	<i>Date of Organization</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Expenditures</i>	<i>In-Kind Contributions</i>	<i>Liabilities</i>	<i>Ending Balance</i>
Yes on 4 Coalition*	Favor	2/24/98	8,261,818.07	8,164,406.35	570,759.65	17,499.07	97,410.83
Independent expenditures	Favor			6,485.92			
Total in favor			8,261,818.07	8,170,892.27	570,759.65	17,499.07	97,410.83
Campaign for Fair Electric Rates	Oppose	2/25/98	329,378.95	285,457.17	1,400.00	82,910.35	43,921.78
Independent expenditures	Oppose			488.50			
Total opposed			329,378.95	285,945.67	1,400.00	82,910.35	43,921.78
Grand Total			8,591,197.02	8,456,837.94	572,159.65	100,409.42	141,332.61

* Originally Keep the Electric Rate Reductions

Total Activity by Question

<i>Question</i>	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Committee Expenditures</i>	<i>Independent Expenditures</i>	<i>In-Kind</i>	<i>Ending liabilities</i>
1 - Legislative pay	--	--	--	--	--
2 – Clean Elections	1,248,834.46	1,190,384.23	3,349.43	197,650.53	63,151.92
3 – Interest Income Tax	397,889.00	335,615.22	13,096.72	141,918.50	77,038.16
4 – Electricity Deregulation	8,591,197.02	8,449,863.52	6,974.42	572,159.65	100,409.42
TOTAL	10,237,920.48	9,975,862.97	23,420.57	911,728.68	240,599.50

All figures are from organization of committee through Nov. 3, 1998, except those for the Yes on 4 Committee, whose figures run through Dec. 1, 1998.