

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Campaign and Political Finance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 4, 2005

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Fundraising and spending by legislative candidates reached record highs in 2004 election

Candidates for the House and Senate raised and spent record amounts in the 2004 election, according to a study released today by the Office of Campaign and Political Finance.

The 390 candidates were not the highest number ever, but the contenders posted all-time highs in several categories, including aggregate fundraising and spending for both chambers and average fundraising and spending per candidate.

Total receipts and expenditures by legislative candidates in 2004 each rose almost 50 percent over the 2002 figures, which were posted by 372 candidates. House and Senate candidates raised a total of \$17,275,537, up 49 percent from 2002. Total spending was \$17,640,644, an increase of 47 percent from two years before and more than \$5 million higher than any previous spending total. The new spending record eclipses the previous high of \$12.3 million recorded in 1992.

The substantial increases in fundraising and spending were also reflected in averages in both chambers, which also rose to new records.

The greatest jump in activity was in the races for the **Senate**, which saw a 33 percent increase in the number of candidates over 2002. Total fundraising by the 81 candidates almost doubled from two years before to \$7,562,984. Total spending increased 82 percent to \$7,620,649. The average amount raised by a candidate for the Senate was \$93,370, an increase of 49 percent over 2002, and average expenditures were \$94,082, a rise of 37 percent. The aggregate and average figures were all new records.

In the **House** elections, the number of candidates dropped two from 311 in 2002 to 309 in 2004, but aggregate receipts and expenditures increased. Total receipts were \$9,712,553, up 25 percent, and total expenditures were \$10,019,995, an increase of 28 percent. This is the first time total expenditures have cracked the \$10 million mark; in fact, it's the first time they have

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exceeded \$8 million. Average receipts rose 26 percent to \$31,432 and average expenditures rose 29 percent to \$32,247, marking new all-time highs for both averages.

Of the 200 legislative seats, 130, or 65 percent, were contested by more than one candidate. That rate is up 14 percentage points from 2002 and 21 percentage points from 2000. The legislative candidate spending the most money in his or her race in 2004 won in 117 of the 130 contested races, for a success rate of 90 percent. That is an increase of two percentage points over 2002 and 9 percentage points over 2000.

As in past years, Democrats and incumbents showed significantly more campaign finance activity than their opponents. Candidates who won their races in 2004 usually started and finished the year with more money than their opponents. The lists of the top ten most active individual candidates in terms of fundraising and spending was made up mostly of incumbents and other candidates who won their elections.

Of the 390 candidates for the General Court, 186, or 48 percent, were incumbents and 204, or 52 percent, were non-incumbents. Of the 186 incumbents, 183, or 98 percent, were re-elected, 70 after running unopposed. Seventeen non-incumbents were elected: four new senators and 13 new representatives.

A copy of the study may be found on OCPF's website at www.mass.gov/ocpf. Click on the "OCPF Studies" tab. The direct link is www.mass.gov/ocpf/legrpt04.pdf.