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Senate, House winners outpace unsuccessful candidates in 2008 campaign expenditures

The 200 winners in last year's legislative elections reported expenditures that were twice the average of unsuccessful candidates, according to an OCPF analysis of legislative campaign finance activity.

In Senate races, the 40 winners reported expenditures of \$88,827 on average, while unsuccessful candidates each spent \$43,897. The average House winner had \$40,223 in expenditures compared to \$19,029 for unsuccessful candidates.

The 311 legislative candidates in 2008 had total expenditures of \$12.55 million, 5.6 percent greater than the 2006 election total. Eleven candidates in 2008 reported no receipts or expenditures and all were unsuccessful.

OCPF has compiled campaign finance studies for legislative candidates since 1990, focusing on receipts, expenditures, starting balances and ending balances.

Historically, perhaps the most consistent gauge of electoral success is the size of a candidate's beginning balance at the start of an election year.

In 2008, the 10 Senate candidates with the largest starting balances were reelected. The only opposed candidate in the top 10, incumbent Mark Montigny, had a starting balance of \$1,158,288 and faced an opponent who reported no fundraising or expenditures. In the House, the 10 candidates with the highest starting balances were incumbents who ran unopposed.

Since 1992, when OCPF began tracking the top 10 starting balances in both the Senate



and House, only one candidate in that group has lost – Senate incumbent Erving Wall Jr. in 1992.

Several campaign finance records were reached in 2008, including the fewest number of candidates (311) recorded in an OCPF study. The highest number of candidates recorded by OCPF was 507 in 1990.

In the Senate, the 27 unopposed incumbents is the highest ever recorded by OCPF. A total of 58 candidates ran for the Senate in 2008, a decrease of 17 percent from the 70 candidates in 2006 and the lowest total ever recorded in an OCPF study.

In the House, candidates raised and spent more money on average than in any previous election year since 1990, and former House Speaker Salvatore DiMasi spent \$475,984, breaking the expenditure record for a single candidate.

Expenditures and receipts for Senate candidates dropped in 2008 compared to 2006. Candidates reported \$4.3 million in receipts, \$302,506 less than in 2006, and \$4.34 million in expenditures, a drop of \$253,067 from two years earlier. In the House, receipts increased 4.7 percent to \$8.1 million and expenditures grew to \$8.2 million, a 12.7 percent increase.

All but four of the 183 incumbents on the ballot in 2008 were re-elected. Sen. James Marzilli of Arlington and Sen. Dianne Wilkerson of Boston lost their respective primaries. In the House, representatives Patrick Natale of Woburn and Anthony Verga of Gloucester also lost their primary elections.

Of the 200 total seats, 21 new legislators were elected – six in the Senate and 15 in the House.

Generally, the 2008 figures followed the trends established in previous legislative reports – Democrats, who outnumber Republicans in both chambers, reported greater expenditures on average than their counterparts, and incumbents were more likely to have higher expenditure totals.

Figures in the study are subject to change should candidates or committees file subsequent amendments to the campaign finance reports.

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance was established in 1973 and administers Massachusetts General Law Chapter 55, the campaign finance law.

The full report is available on-line at www.mass.gov/ocpf.

Campaign Finance Activity by Legislative Candidates 1998-2008

<i>SENATE</i>	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
<i>Candidates</i>	71	65	61	81	70	58
<i>Total raised</i>	\$3,809,576	\$5,504,933	\$3,819,774	\$7,562,984	\$4,612,580	\$4,310,074
<i>Average raised</i>	\$53,656	\$84,691	\$62,619	\$93,370	\$65,894	\$74,311
<i>Total spent</i>	\$3,806,032	\$4,369,766	\$4,177,425	\$7,620,649	\$4,596,300	\$4,343,233
<i>Average spent</i>	\$53,606	\$67,227	\$68,482	\$94,082	\$65,661	\$74,883

<i>HOUSE</i>	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
<i>Candidates</i>	296	265	311	309	269	253
<i>Total raised</i>	\$6,765,000	\$6,718,138	\$7,746,418	\$9,712,553	\$7,785,801	\$8,152,602
<i>Average raised</i>	\$22,855	\$25,351	\$24,908	\$31,432	\$28,943	\$32,223
<i>Total spent</i>	\$6,875,821	\$6,643,626	\$7,799,288	\$10,019,995	\$7,280,768	\$8,207,102
<i>Average spent</i>	\$23,229	\$25,070	\$25,078	\$32,247	\$27,066	\$32,439