

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Campaign and Political Finance

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**PAC contributions to candidates reached
a record \$2.4 million in the 2003-04 election cycle**

Political action committees in Massachusetts contributed just over \$2.4 million to state and county candidates in the 2003-04 election cycle, according to a study released today by the Office of Campaign and Political Finance. The total is the highest amount of PAC activity ever recorded in an OCPF study.

The breakdown of contributions was \$1,022,045 in 2003 and \$1,397,259 in 2004, for a two-year total of \$2,419,304. (Contributions to candidates for mayor and councilor-at-large in the state's five largest cities – Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Springfield and Worcester -- amounted to an additional \$103,035 in 2003 and \$64,025 in 2004, for a two-year total of \$167,060.)

The total contribution figure of just over \$2.4 million surpassed the previous record, from 1989-90, by about \$130,000. The new record was set last year despite the absence of elections for statewide offices, which usually boost contribution totals in a cycle.

Each of the two years in the most recent cycle placed in the top 10 for total annual contributions. The \$1.4 million contributed in 2004 put that year at second all-time, the only year in the top five that did not feature a statewide election. The \$1.022 million contributed in 2003 placed it ninth in the all-time list but was also the highest figure ever recorded for a year featuring no state elections at all, statewide or otherwise (not including any special elections due to legislative vacancies). All of the eight years preceding it on the list are state election (even-numbered) years.

The most recent PAC numbers cap a decade of resurgence in PAC activity since the mid-1990s, when changes in the law led to a decline in the total number of PACs and a resultant drop in activity by those committees.

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The average amount of a PAC contribution to an individual candidate in 2004 was \$265, the same amount that was recorded in the last election year, 2002. That figure is the highest in a decade, surpassed only by the amount of \$270 posted in 1994.

The number of PACs registered with OCPF remained at around 300 in the 2003-04 election cycle. A total of 211 made at least one contribution to a candidate in one or both of those two years, a proportion that is consistent with previous cycles.

Labor, business and professional groups continued to account for the top contributing PACs in the 2003-04 cycle. Of the top 20 PACs in terms of contributions, 15 represented unions or labor organizations, including firefighters, police officers, teachers, plumbers and iron workers. That is one fewer such PAC than the total number that appeared in the top 20 for 2001-02. Another four PACs in 2003-04 represented professional or other business interests, including beer distributors, realtors, new car dealers, and optometrists. Rounding out the top 20 list was the House Democratic PAC.

The top contributing PAC for the cycle, as well as for both individual years, was the Retired Public Employees PAC, which reported giving a total of \$100,800 over two years. The PAC was also the top giver in the 2001-02 cycle. Sixteen of the PACs on the most recent top 20 also appeared on the 2001-02 list.

The study may be found in the "OCPF Studies" section of the office's website, at www.mass.gov/ocpf. The direct link is www.mass.gov/ocpf/pacrpt04.pdf.

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