



NAMES IN THE NEWS: SHELDON ADELSON

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JULY 21, 2008

This publication was made possible by grants from:

Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Strengthening U.S. Democracy*
Ford Foundation, *Program on Governance and Civil Society*
The Pew Charitable Trusts, *State Policy Initiatives*
Rockefeller Brothers Fund, *Program on Democratic Practice*

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Sheldon Adelson, one of the richest people in the world,¹ has so far doled out \$3.3 million to conservative-leaning independent advocacy groups this election season, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.² Adelson's emergence as one of the biggest donors to these groups this year "has raised hopes among Republicans that he could be the right's answer to George Soros, a hedge-fund manager and patron of liberal causes."³

Adelson — a gaming multibillionaire — and his casino/convention centers in Nevada, have also long been making political contributions at the state level, giving \$3.9 million in political contributions in six states — California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada and Texas — from 2000 through 2006.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ADELSON AND HIS COMPANIES, 2000-2006

CONTRIBUTOR	2000	2002	2004	2005	2006	TOTAL
Venetian Casino Resort	\$20,340	\$144,106	\$2,818,418	\$0	\$45,000	\$3,027,865
Adelson, Sheldon G. & Miriam	\$5,000	\$78,500	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$275,000	\$558,500
Las Vegas Sands	\$0	\$5,000	\$12,500	\$0	\$281,000	\$298,500
Interface Group	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,000
Sands Expo & Convention Center	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$30,000
Venetian Macau	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
TOTAL	\$25,340	\$227,606	\$2,930,918	\$100,000	\$671,000	\$3,954,865

WHO ADELSON TARGETED

Most of the money, or 83 percent of the \$3.9 million, went to support or oppose ballot measures in five states. His companies gave on measures addressing their economic interests, while Adelson gave to ideological measures:

- The Venetian Casino Resort bankrolled efforts supporting a casino gambling measure in Nebraska in 2004, providing \$2.7 million of the \$2.8 million raised in support of Amendment 3. The measure, which failed, would have allowed the Legislature to authorize up to two casinos, pending local approval. The company also gave \$10,000 in support of a 2004 education measure in Nevada that requires the Legislature to fund public schools before funding any other part of the state budget.
- Adelson contributed \$450,000 of his own money to three different ballot measure campaigns. He gave \$250,000 in opposition to a measure on Nevada's ballot in 2006 that, if passed, would have legalized marijuana. The measure, Question 7, failed. Adelson also

¹ "The World's Billionaires," *Forbes.com*, March 5, 2008, available from http://www.forbes.com/2008/03/05/richest-people-billionaires-billionaires08-cx_lk_0305billie_land_print.html; accessed July 21, 2008.

² "Top Individual Contributors to 527 committees, 2008 Election Cycle," *Center for Responsive Politics*, available from <http://opensecrets.org/527s/527indivs.php>, accessed July 21, 2008.

³ "Vegas Tycoon Bankrolls Republicans," *Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2008, sec. A, p.16.

gave \$100,000 in support of a California 2005 measure, Proposition 74, that would have increased the waiting period for teachers to receive permanent status, and another \$100,000 in opposition to a Colorado 2004 measure, Amendment 36, that would have allocated Colorado's electoral votes based on the percentage of votes for each presidential candidate. The measures also failed.

- Las Vegas Sands gave \$100,000 in support of a 2006 Nevada measure, Question 4, which would have prohibited smoking in certain public places and only allowed the state Legislature to regulate the smoking of tobacco. There was a competing measure, Question 5, which did pass, that also banned smoking in certain public places, but allows local governments to adopt stricter control measures.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BALLOT MEASURE CAMPAIGNS, 2000-2006

STATE	YEAR	CONTRIBUTOR	MEASURE	POSITION	TOTAL
NE	2004	Venetian Casino Resort	Amendment 3	For	\$2,732,893
NV	2006	Adelson, Sheldon G.	Question 7	Against	\$250,000
CA	2005	Adelson, Sheldon G.	Proposition 74	For	\$100,000
CO	2004	Adelson, Sheldon G.	Amendment 36	Against	\$100,000
NV	2006	Las Vegas Sands	Question 4	For	\$100,000
NV	2004	Venetian Casino Resort	Question 1	For	\$10,000
TOTAL					\$3,292,893

Adelson and his companies also gave to party committees, mostly favoring the state Republican Party in his home state. The Las Vegas Sands gave \$100,000 to the Nevada Republican Party all in 2006, while the Venetian Casino Resort gave \$98,900 and Adelson and his wife together gave \$73,500.

Adelson and his companies gave an additional \$132,921 to the Nevada Republican party in 2007.⁴

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PARTY COMMITTEES, 2000-2006

YEAR	STATE	RECIPIENT	TOTAL
2006	NV	Nevada Republican Party	\$100,000
2004	NV	Nevada Republican Party	\$5,000
2002	NV	Nevada Republican Party	\$164,850
2000	NV	Nevada Republican Party	\$2,550
TOTAL			\$272,400
2006	NV	Republican Assembly Caucus	\$5,000
2004	NV	Republican Assembly Caucus	\$2,000
TOTAL			\$7,000
2000	NV	Republican Legislators Joint Caucus	\$4,000
2006	NV	Senate Republican Leadership Conference	\$2,000
2004	NV	Senate Republican Leadership Conference	\$25,000

⁴ Any contributions made during 2008 are not yet publicly available, since reports of money raised through July 2008 are not due for submittal until early August.

2002	NV	Senate Republican Leadership Conference	\$25,000
			TOTAL
			\$52,000
			NEVADA TOTAL
			\$335,400
2004	NE	Nebraska Democratic Party	\$3,656
2004	NE	Nebraska Republican Party	\$6,370
			NEBRASKA TOTAL
			\$10,026
2000	MA	Massachusetts Republican Party	\$5,000
			TOTAL
			\$350,426

Although Adelson gives almost exclusively to Republicans, the Venetian Casino resort nonetheless gave the Nebraska Democratic Party \$3,656 in 2004, when the company was also funding the gaming measure. The company also gave \$6,370 to the state Republican Party.

Adelson and his companies greatly increased their giving to state-level candidates in 2006, doling out 214,000 to 10 state candidates, all in Nevada. This was twice their combined contributions from 2000 through 2004, which totaled \$97,546.

Much of the increase can be attributed to \$145,000 in contributions to the 2006 governor's race. Republican Gov. Jim Gibbons received \$90,000 from Adelson and his companies, and Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki received another \$40,000. Republican gubernatorial candidate Bob Beers, who lost in the primary, received another \$15,000.

ADELSON VS. SOROS AND BING

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Adelson is third in line to two other wealthy donors who are also pouring significant cash into independent advocacy campaigns this season. George Soros tops the list with \$4.5 million, followed by Stephen Bing, of Shangri-La Entertainment from California, with \$3.3 million.⁵

Like Adelson, Soros and Bing have given millions of dollars at the state level, with many of their donations spent on ballot measure campaigns. Soros contributed \$1.7 million of his own money in the states from 2000 through 2006 — with \$1.4 million spent on six measures in four states. His wife, Susan Soros, gave an additional \$31,100. While Soros has given significantly more of his own money than Adelson — Adelson has given \$543,500 of his own money, while his wife Miriam gave \$15,000 — the additional \$3.4 million given by Adelson's companies heavily tip the scales in his direction.

Stephen Bing has given \$52.9 million of his own money to state committees from 2000 through 2006. Most of that, \$49.6 million, went to support Proposition 87 — a failed measure on California's ballot in 2006 that would have allotted \$4 billion for alternative energy research. The research would have been paid for largely by a profit tax on energy companies. Shangri-La Entertainment gave an additional \$3 million to successfully fight a 2005 California measure, Proposition 77, which would have required a panel of three retired judges to adopt new redistricting plans after each national census.

⁵ "Top Individual Contributors to 527 committees, 2008 Election Cycle," *Center for Responsive Politics*, available from <http://opensecrets.org/527s/527indivs.php>, accessed July 21, 2008.

As state races and ballot measure campaigns gain momentum this election season, the Institute will continue to monitor the money Adelson and his left-leaning competitors, along with other emerging major players, pour into their coffers.