

## RACE TO GOVERNORS MANSION 2000

The Major Parties Are Paying Attention

By Linda Casey  
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National parties are pouring money into five of the 11 gubernatorial races taking place in the 2000 election cycle. The Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee are paying close attention to the gubernatorial contests in **Indiana, Missouri, North Dakota, Vermont** and **Utah** -- often more than doubling the amount of money a candidate receives.

In at least two cases, **Vermont** and **Utah**, party money is nearly funding the incumbent governors entire campaigns, where candidates have received 89 percent and 73 percent of their total contributions, respectively, from their parties. In **Vermont**, Gov. Howard Deans \$270,000 of Democratic Party money makes up for 89.2 percent of his war chest. And in **Utah**, Gov. Michael Leavitt has received 73.1 percent of his campaign money or \$729,775 from the Republican Party.

Party	State	Candidate	Total Contributions	Total Party Money	Party Money % of Total
Repub	Indiana	McIntosh, David	\$ 4,104,161	\$ 1,630,728	39.7%
Demo	Indiana	O'Bannon, Frank	\$ 5,794,278	\$ 49,081	0.8%
Demo	Missouri	Holden, Bob	\$ 7,606,908	\$ 2,327,911	30.6%
Repub	Missouri	Talent, Jim	\$ 5,744,452	\$ 957,627	16.7%
Demo	North Dakota	Heitkamp, Heidi	\$ 1,008,836	\$ 342,682	34.0%
Repub	North Dakota	Hoeven, John	\$ 1,179,610	\$ 357,000	30.3%
Repub	Utah	Leavitt, Michael	\$ 998,692	\$ 729,775	73.1%
Demo	Utah	Orton, Bill	\$ 52,064	\$ 23,413	45.0%
Demo	Vermont	Dean, Howard	\$ 302,702	\$ 270,000	89.2%
Repub	Vermont	Dwyer, Ruth	\$ 149,450	\$ -	0.0%

All this interest has a great deal to do with the upcoming, all-important redistricting process and the role the governors can play. In many states, the governor's role is pivotal to the redistricting process, either by the appointments he or she can make to key committees or by vetoing any plan that doesn't appear fair, or both.

The ability to control the outcome of redistricting is particularly attractive to the parties, which would like nothing better than to see voting districts tailored to benefit their candidates in elections for state and federal offices for the next decade. Because the future makeup of Congress is at stake, national party committees have opened their checkbooks for key candidates.

Targeting races in **Indiana, Missouri** and **North Dakota**, as well as **Utah** and **Vermont** to a lesser degree, the RNC has handed a total of \$2,602,500 to four candidates, compared to the \$498,786 the DNC has contributed to four candidates.

In four states, **Indiana, Missouri, North Dakota** and **Vermont**, extremely large amounts of national party money are flowing into the gubernatorial races. In **Indiana's** primary, the RNC contributed \$1,587,500 in spite of the fact that David McIntosh was not the only Republican in the race. The \$1.5 million makes up nearly 40 percent of McIntosh's total contributions. The RNC is hoping McIntosh can unseat the incumbent governor, Democrat Frank O'Bannon. Also in **Indiana**, state Republicans have contributed \$43,228 to the governors race, with Democrats close behind at \$42,596.

In **Vermont**, incumbent Gov. Howard Dean has gotten nearly 90 percent of his total contributions from the DNC in an effort to ward off a challenge by Republican Ruth Dwyer. Deans total contributions are at \$302,702 and the DNC's share is \$270,000. Republican Dwyer has received no party money.

More than 70 percent of the contributions to **Utah** Gov. Mike Leavitt's re-election bid is Republican Party money, compared to the 45 percent challenger Bill Orton has received from the Democrats.

Of the \$629,775 attributed to state party money in **Utah**, \$627,200 of it is from the Governors Special Project PAC. A majority of the projects money comes from the Governors Spring Gala, an annual \$150-per-plate dinner that attracts high-roller, high-profile players from all parties.

In **Missouri's** race for the open governors seat, the state parties are chipping in large contributions. The Democrats choice has received 30.6 percent of his total contributions from the parties, while the Republicans have contributed 16.7 percent of the total. The Missouri State Democratic Party has invested a whopping \$2,277,411 in its gubernatorial candidate, Bob Holden. The Republican candidate, Congressman Jim Talent, has received \$615,000 from the RNC and another \$342,627 from the Republican State Party.

**North Dakota's** open governors seat is drawing the attention of the national parties as well. Democrat Heidi Heitkamp has received 34 percent of her money or \$175,286 from the national party, with another \$167,396 from the state Democrats. Republican John Hoeven has gotten \$300,000 from the National Republican Party, and another \$57,000 from the state party, making up for 30 percent of his total contributions.

All the money flowing into these gubernatorial races is intended to gain some influence over the redistricting process a process that begins with the 2000 census. After the census figures are in, states will begin the process of redrawing representative district lines, with control of legislative districts as well as congressional districts hanging in the balance.

The parties have a vested interest in protecting incumbents and reshaping districts to give better shots to their candidates in the future, especially in key districts.

While the practice of national dollars finding their way to gubernatorial races is nothing new, it is more significant this election. The upcoming reapportionment can dramatically change the electoral dynamics in each of these states.

The following chart explains the redistricting process in each of the states with gubernatorial races this election. The chart indicates the powers afforded the governor in

State	Redistricting Process	Veto Power
Delaware	Legislature draws boundaries	Yes
Indiana	Legislature draws map; failure by end of April results in five-member commission. Governor appoints one of five seats	Yes
Missouri	28 member bi-partisan commission appointed by governor	No
Montana	Five member commission; four members appointed by Legislature who select chair	No
New Hampshire	Legislature draws boundaries	Yes
North Carolina	Legislature draws boundaries	No
North Dakota	Legislature draws boundaries	Yes
Utah	11-13 member bi-partisan committee appointed by Legislative leadership	Yes
Vermont	Five-member commission; governor appoints two of five seats	Yes
Washington	Five-member commission; four members appointed by Legislature who select chair	No
West Virginia	Legislature draws boundaries	Yes
Information gathered from National Conference of State Legislatures at ncs1.org		

that process either through direct appointment or veto power. In two states, **Indiana** and **Vermont**, the governor can exercise the power of both appointment and veto.

In three states, **Indiana**, **Missouri** and **Vermont**, the governor has appointment power through naming a member or members of the commission or board that is responsible for drawing the new district lines. In **Missouri**, the governor appoints a 28-member bi-partisan commission. In **Vermont**, he or she appoints two spots on the five-member commission. And in **Indiana**, the governor has the power to appoint one member if the legislature fails to establish the commission. While five states redistricting processes are controlled by the legislature and the governor is not initially involved in the selection processes, he or she ultimately has veto power.

When the stakes are this high, money becomes a factor, with redistricting playing a huge role in the bottom-line contribution decisions of national and state party leadership. The parties have not

missed the fact that they have an enormous capacity to influence the direction of this process by contributing thousands of dollars to gubernatorial campaigns.