



Money in Politics Research Action Project

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Portland Money in Politics and Campaign Finance Reform

Money in politics research reveals marked differences in political giving ability across Portland's neighborhoods, underlining the need for campaign finance reform to increase fairness and opportunity in the political process.

Portland's east side is underrepresented in political fundraising according to Janice Thompson, executive director of the Money in Politics Research Action Project (MiPRAP), who testified at the April 7th city council hearing on a new "clean money" proposal. Clean money campaign finance reform, designed to decrease the role of money in city elections, increases the opportunities of all Portlanders to participate in politics and will improve the city's democratic process.

MiPRAP's recent report, *Portland City Council Contribution History and Major Trends*, documents the domination of downtown and westside zip codes in terms of both overall campaign contributions and average contribution size.

Contributions from just ten Portland zip codes comprised 56.4 percent of total fundraising to City Council Winners since 1992. Only two of these top contributing zip codes lie east of the Willamette River. Of all of the contributions analyzed in the report,

- 56.4 percent comes from ten Portland zip codes:
 - 50.3 percent comes from eight downtown and west side zip codes; and
 - 6.1 percent comes from two northeast Portland zip codes.
- 43.6 percent comes from outside the top ten zip codes:
 - 21.1 percent comes from other Portland zip code areas;
 - 13.2 percent comes from Oregon, outside of Portland;
 - 5.2 percent comes from outside of Oregon; and
 - 4 percent cannot be identified by geographic location.

Contributions from North, Northeast and Southeast Portland also have a smaller average than downtown or west of the river

On the whole, election year campaign fundraising is dominated by contributions larger than the "little guy" donations of \$50 or less. Also, the size of the average itemized contribution from a council member's first race to subsequent races typically increases.

Trends in Size of Average Itemized Contribution

	Francesconi	Hales	Katz	Saltzman	Sten
1 st election year	\$261	\$240	\$399	\$600	\$297
last election year	\$423	\$768	\$815	\$487	\$745
% increase	62%	220%	104%	-19%	151%

The typical increase does not hold true for Commissioner Saltzman because his average itemized contribution figures are affected by personal loans made to his first campaign.

Asked to comment on this increase, the current council member with the most dramatic average contribution increase, Commissioner Erik Sten, said, "Fundraising got much easier after my initial campaigns. I was a long shot early in 1996 and my fundraising included more of those valued but hard-won \$50 contributions. Once in office the money comes easier and in bigger checks." The decline in competition from Sten's first races in 1996 to his re-election runs in 1998 and 2002 also contributed to these shifts in who gave and in what amounts. Those who can give more are more likely to not forget less visible races.

The business sector, particularly the real estate industry, dominates campaign fundraising. The top two contributing sectors for each recent council winner are noted below.

Council Member	Top contributing sector	% of total fundraising from top sector	2nd highest contributing sector	% of total fundraising from 2nd highest sector
Francesconi	Financial/ Insurance/Real Estate	25.2%	General Business	15.9%
Hales	Financial/ Insurance/Real Estate	30.9%	Construction	17.7%
Katz	General Business	23.4%	Financial/ Insurance/Real Estate	18.8%
Leonard	Labor	41.5%	Financial/ Insurance/Real Estate	15.1%
Saltzman	Financial/ Insurance/Real Estate	30.2%	General Business	12.5%
Sten	Financial/ Insurance/Real Estate	27.9%	General Business	17.1%

MiPRAP's report is available online at:
<http://www.oregonfollowthemoney.org/PDXReports/PDXIntro.html>.

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