



## Money in Politics Research Action Project

917 SW Oak St. #422, Portland, OR 97205 • (503) 283-1922 • Fax (503) 283-1877  
 miprap@oregonfollowthemoney.org • www.oregonfollowthemoney.org

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**Contact:**  
 Sarah Wetherson, 503/756-8537

### A handful of tobacco companies contribute \$193,200 to sitting legislators and caucus PACs in 2006 after spending more than \$370,000 to lobby in 2004-05

As the legislature fights over raising tobacco taxes to fund health care for children, good government watchdogs question whether more than half a million in political cash may influence the outcome.

“You have to wonder how much of the arguing about taxing cigarettes to pay for the Healthy Kids Initiative is driven by the spending of just five tobacco companies,” said Sarah Wetherson, research and outreach associate, Money in Politics Research Action Project. “Unfortunately, our current system of campaign finance ensures that tobacco companies and others may continue to have undue influence over the process,” she continued.

**Table 1: Contributions from Tobacco Companies to Members of the 2007 Oregon State Legislature**

Breakdown of Contributions to Individuals by Legislative Caucus	Contribution Total	Group Percentage of Total Tobacco Company Giving
House Democrats	\$0	0%
Senate Democrats	\$26,350	24.7%
House Republicans	\$52,500	49.2%
Senate Republicans	\$27,850	26.1%
<b>Total Contributions to Sitting Legislators</b>	<b>\$106,700</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Analysis based on reports filed with the Secretary of State’s office. Figures reflect fundraising for 2006 and for 2004 for those state senators whose last election was in 2004. Figures for 2006 are 99 percent complete; for 2004, 100 percent complete. House Republican numbers include contributions to the campaign of Mac Sumner, since he resigned after he was elected and was replaced by a Republican appointee, as state law requires. Senate Republican numbers include contributions to Senator Ben Westlund, since he was a Republican when he received the contributions. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Tobacco contributions were almost evenly split between the chambers, with 49.2 percent going to the House and 50.8 percent to the Senate. Republicans received three-quarters of tobacco company largesse, while Democrats garnered the remainder, 24.7 percent.

**Table 2: 2006 Contributions from Tobacco Companies to House and Senate Caucus Leadership PACs**

Caucus Leadership PAC Name	Contribution Total	Caucus Percentage of Total Tobacco Company Giving
FuturePAC/House Builders (House Democrats)	\$0	0.0%
Senate Democratic Leadership Fund	\$9,500	11.0%
Majority 2006 (House Republicans)	\$49,000	56.6%
The Leadership Fund (Senate Republicans)	\$28,000	32.4%
<b>Total Contributions to Caucus PACs in 2006</b>	<b>\$86,500</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Analysis based on reports filed with the Secretary of State’s office. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The pattern of tobacco company contributions to the caucus leadership PACs, which work to elect a majority of their party members to each chamber, looks similar. The House caucuses received a little over half of the contributions (all of which went to Majority 2006), the Senate a little less than half.

But the Republican caucuses received 89 percent of tobacco company money, while Democratic caucuses received only 11 percent.

Contributing tobacco companies include Brown & Williamson (now RJ Reynolds), RJ Reynolds, Philip Morris USA and US Smokeless Tobacco. These companies were joined by Single Stick, Inc., in spending money to lobby in 2004 and 2005.

**Table 3: Tobacco Company Expenditures to Lobby in Oregon for 2004, 2005**

<b>Lobbying Entity</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp	\$29,167	
Philip Morris USA, Inc by Altria Corporate Services, Inc	\$96,061	\$101,494
Single Stick, Inc.	\$11,300	\$24,190
R.J. Reynolds Tobacco	\$18,654	\$45,500
US Tobacco/UST Public Affairs Inc.	\$0	\$46,000
<b>Total Lobbying Expenditures</b>	<b>\$155,182</b>	<b>\$217,184</b>

Analysis of reports filed with the Government Standards and Practices Commission.

In addition to making contributions to legislative candidates, tobacco companies spent more than \$370,000 in 2004-05 to lobby legislators, the latest year for which data is available. (The Government Standards and Practices Commission is compiling reports for 2006 spending now, and reports on 2007 spending will not be available until February 2008.)

“The good news is that there are several legislative initiatives underway to increase the disclosure of lobbying spending, and some of those bills include provisions to give the ethics commission the resources it needs to make those reports more accessible to the public,” said Wetherson.

The Money in Politics Research Action Project is a non-partisan, not-for-profit group whose goals are to increase accountability and opportunities for participation in politics.

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