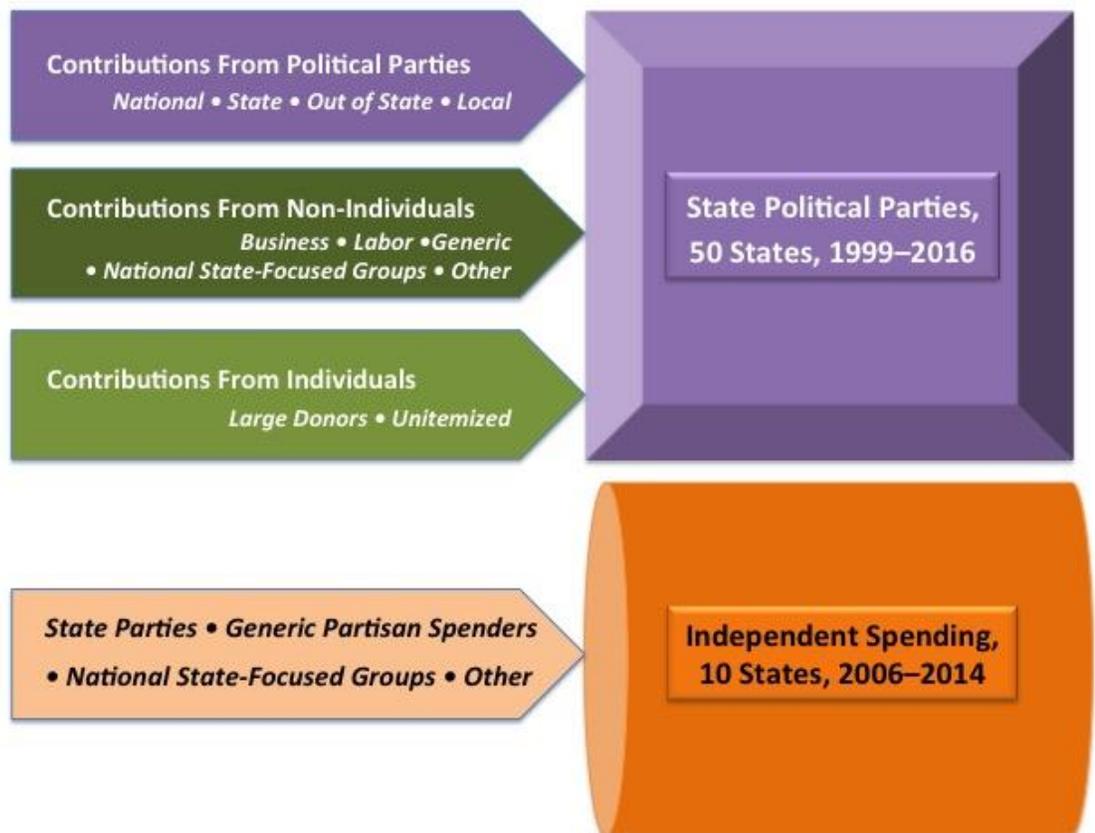




Funding the State Political Party Committees Pre- and Post-BCRA, 1999–2016



Analysis by the **National Institute on Money in State Politics:**

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*Prepared for the Bauer Ginsberg Campaign Finance Research Task Force,
May 15, 2017*

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Executive Summary

In this paper, the National Institute on Money in State Politics explored the campaign finances of 100 state political party committees prior to passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act (BCRA)¹ (1999–2002) and post-BCRA (2003–2016) to understand more fully how donations evolved under the new federal laws. The Institute also examined how state contribution limits affected the funding of state parties. Finally, the Institute looked at the rise of independent spending in selected states and the impact of those independent spenders on the finances of state parties.²

Analyses revealed that state political party committees' campaign finances were less influenced by soft money from national party committees (since that money was earmarked for federal races) than they were by state-based influences, such as campaign-finance regulations, redistricting, political cultures, and closely contested state races. Rather than “making up” for soft money donations post-BCRA, the state political parties consistently relied on individual donors, business donors, labor unions, and even candidates.

Additional analyses of the campaign-finance trends of state-level political parties over the past 18 years find that:

- 1) State party committees received \$498 million in federal “soft money” during the 2000 and 2002 election cycles. That money went away after the passage of BCRA.
- 2) Individuals from outside the political party system have always been a solid source of funds for state party committees. After BCRA, this appeared to be more true than ever.
- 3) The state parties have followed the “law of the vital few”: courting a small number of wealthy donors for a disproportionately larger sum of money. State parties saw an increase in the prominence of large donors (those who gave more than \$200,000) and a corresponding decrease in the participation of unitemized/small donors. Business donors remain the leading source of state party money, and their importance grew considerably in the post-BCRA era of campaign finance.

¹ The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA, McCain–Feingold Act, Pub.L. 107–155, 116 Stat. 81, enacted March 27, 2002, H.R. 2356) is a United States federal law that amended the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, which regulates the financing of political campaigns.

² Data set from 10 states in which spending on both direct advocacy and electioneering communications were required to be disclosed from 2006 to 2014 -- AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, ME, NC, OH, OK, and WA. 2016 data is excluded from the analysis because the data was incomplete at the time the report was written.

4) Similar to individual donors, the makeup of business donors has become more consolidated over time. In 2001–2002 about 11,000 business donors gave to state political parties. A decade after the peak year of 2001–2002, roughly 4,500 business donors were giving to state parties. In the latest election, it was less than 2,500. Meanwhile, the average given by these donors to all state parties per cycle was on the rise: going from around \$12,500 in 2001–2002 to more than \$23,500 10 years later and reaching \$35,000 in 2013-2014.

5) In the past 18 years, labor unions have consistently represented a small proportion of contributions to state parties, providing 3 percent to 13 percent of the total raised per cycle.

6) Contributions from ideology and single issue organizations have been on the rise. These donors averaged nearly \$12 million per cycle from 2004 to 2016, more than double the \$5 million per cycle, 1999–2002.

7) State party independent spending fluctuated over the years, but independent spending by national state-focused organizations and generic partisan spenders skyrocketed, peaking at \$26.7 million in 2012 and \$32.8 million in 2014. The Republican Governors Association alone spent nearly \$21 million, more than triple the total spent by all Republican Party committees combined.

8) Funding the state political parties was greatly influenced by varying state laws that governed who could give and how much. In those states where donors were unconstrained by contribution limits, the state parties relied heavily on business donors.³ Conversely, in the states where corporations were banned or limited, parties relied heavily on other party committees.

Each state's unique demographics, history, economy, political custom and culture, among other issues, also likely influenced the funding streams of the state parties. Future analyses might quantify more specifically how these forces come to bear on political donors. Other external factors, such as redistricting, term limits, statewide or federal campaigns, recall elections, and ballot-measure campaigns also deserve deeper analyses.

³ Defined in this report as non-individual donors, excluding candidate and party committees, government/education organizations, ideological groups, and labor unions.

Introduction

The National Institute on Money in State Politics used its comprehensive, highly credentialed, state-level campaign finance data to explore how specific changes in national and state campaign-finance laws have affected the campaign finance patterns of state party committees from 1999 through 2016.

These examinations of the nation's election system provide an objective basis from which to overlay the historical context of additional policy and legal changes, providing a unique view of just how campaign-finance laws actually affect American election and public policy processes.

The Institute analyzed state party committee donation patterns/trends in all 50 states before and after major campaign-finance events such as BCRA (2002) and *Citizens United* (2010). The analysis looks at shifts in contributing by individuals vs. non-individuals (PACs, labor unions, and business interests, etc.), and by party-related sources vs. those outside the party structure. The analysis also examines the influence of state regulations and gubernatorial or presidential politics on giving, as well as the major players such as the Republican Governors Association (RGA), Democratic Governors Association (DGA), labor unions, and major individual donors.

Methodology

The Institute examined the contributions data of 100 state party committees—the Democratic and Republican committees in all 50 states—from 1999 through 2016. The data came from campaign finance reports that had been collected from the respective state disclosure agencies, obtained as of February 15, 2017.

For this analysis, contributors were divided into two categories – those within the political party system, and those outside the system. Donors within the political party system consisted of all local, state, and national party committees, candidates and their campaign and leadership committees, and nine national state-focused organizations (listed below). All other donors were considered to be outside of the party system.

The nine national state-focused organizations are the following: Republican Governors Association (RGA), Republican National State Elections Committee (RNSEC), Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC), Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA), Republican Lieutenant Governors Association (RLGA), Democratic Governors Association (DGA), Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC), Democratic Attorneys General Association (DAGA), Democratic Lieutenant Governors Association (DLGA). Although they are no longer officially part of the political party structure, their

purpose is to elect candidates of a particular party; therefore, for this report, they were considered part of the political party system.

The national party committees examined in this analysis include the following six committees: Democratic National Committee (DNC), Republican National Committee, Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee (RSCC), House Republican Congressional Committee (HRCC), and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC).

The Institute examined independent spending in 10 states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Washington. These 10 states were selected for analysis because they required full disclosure of both direct advocacy and electioneering communications, and the Institute had data in those states from 2006 through 2014.

For definitions of key terms used throughout the report, please see Appendix B.

Because of the irregular reporting at the state level, this analysis did not include contributions from the national party committees after 2002, when BCRA went into effect. In a perfect world, state party committees report their federal activity to the Federal Election Commission, and their state activity to their respective state disclosure agencies. In reality, however, *some* state party committees *sometimes* report contributions of hard money from the national party committees.

Inflation. All figures in this report are adjusted for inflation, including donations from specific donors – see the inflation adjustment table below. Therefore, totals used in this report will not necessarily reflect the totals on FollowTheMoney.org, which are not adjusted for inflation.

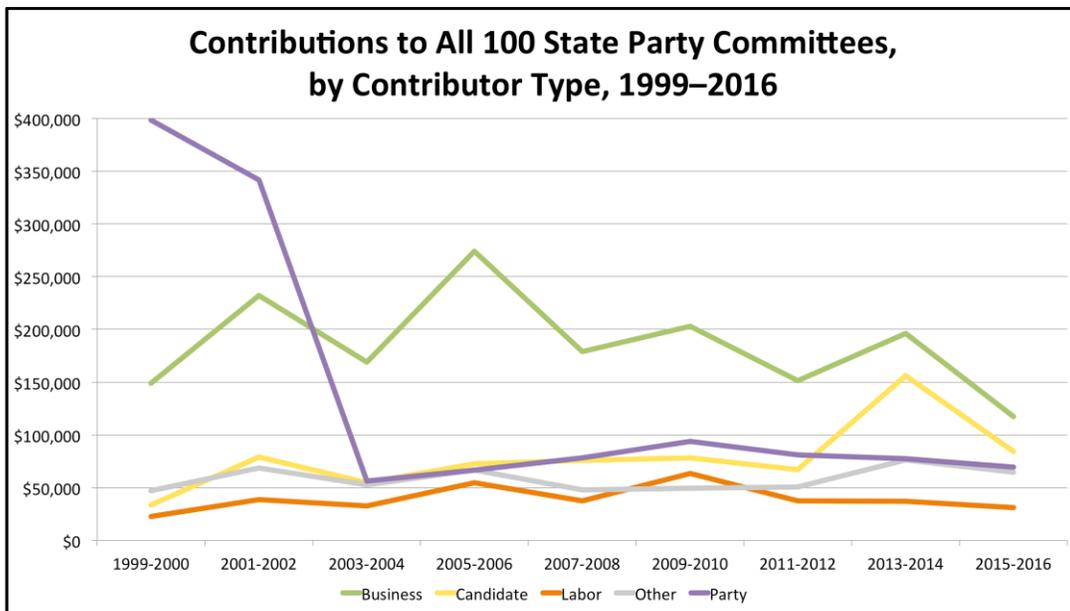
Inflation Table

Inflation	Inflation
1999	1.45
2000	1.4038
2001	1.36
2002	1.34
2003	1.31
2004	1.28
2005	1.24
2006	1.2
2007	1.16
2008	1.12
2009	1.12
2010	1.11
2011	1.07
2012	1.05
2013	1.04
2014	1.02
2015	1.02
2016	1

Funding the State Party Committees

The Institute examined the effects of BCRA on giving trends to state party committees, using its nine election cycles—18 years—of archived data, 1999–2016.

Contributions to All 100 State Party Committees, by Contributor Type, 1999–2016



A review of expenditures by the 100 state party committees from 1999 through 2002—before BCRA's enactment in 2003—reveals that the Democratic and Republican party committees spent their money very similarly. Their largest expenditures focused on candidate support/media, and transfers to other committees or their own accounts.

- The state Democratic parties spent 42 percent of their money on media and candidate support, while the Republican party committees spent 47%. Broadcast media and direct mail costs comprised the majority of those expenses.
- Transfers accounted for 42 percent and 41 percent of the Democratic and Republican parties, respectively. Most of the transfers were to the state parties' own federal accounts.
- Administrative costs comprised 11 percent of the Democratic parties spending, and nine percent of the Republican parties' spending

One item of interest raised in the post-BCRA era is whether state political parties “made up” for the loss of the national party committee dollars in other ways in the

2004 election cycle and beyond. As discussed elsewhere in this report, those dollars largely represented pass-throughs to buy advertising that benefited federal candidates, and thus did little to help sustain state party committees. An examination of donations to state party committees—from other state and local party committees, candidates, party-related 527 committees, and other sources—indicates that the finances of the state party committees were primarily influenced by campaign-finance regulations, effects of redistricting, and state political cultures.

Contributions From Within the Political Party System

The Institute examined contributions from donors within the political party system, defined as all local, state, and national party committees (and their employees), candidates and their committees, and nine specific national state-focused organizations.

National party committees gave the 100 state party committees \$273.1 million in 1999–2000 and \$224.8 million in 2001–2002.⁴ During those same election cycles, state committees received \$49.4 million in 1999–2000 and \$60.3 million in 2001–2002 from other state and local party committees, reflecting the common practice of state committees transferring money to other state committees. Those transfers continued 2004 through 2016, averaging \$55.2 million per cycle, with a low of \$37.7 million in 2003–2004 and a high of \$65.7 million in 2012. It appears that BCRA did little to affect how state and local party committees spread their largesse to other committees.

Contributions from candidates themselves remained robust despite BCRA. They totaled \$700.9 million, averaging \$77.9 million per cycle, with a low of \$33.5 million in 1999–2000 and a high of \$156.3 million in 2013–2014 when Florida gubernatorial candidates pumped more than \$55.5 million into that state’s party committee.⁵ It appears that the state party committees relied on donations from candidates themselves to do business, those donations are significant, and they remained steady post-BCRA.

Nine national state-focused organizations,⁶ including the Democratic Governors Association (DGA) and Republican Governors Association (RGA), also were

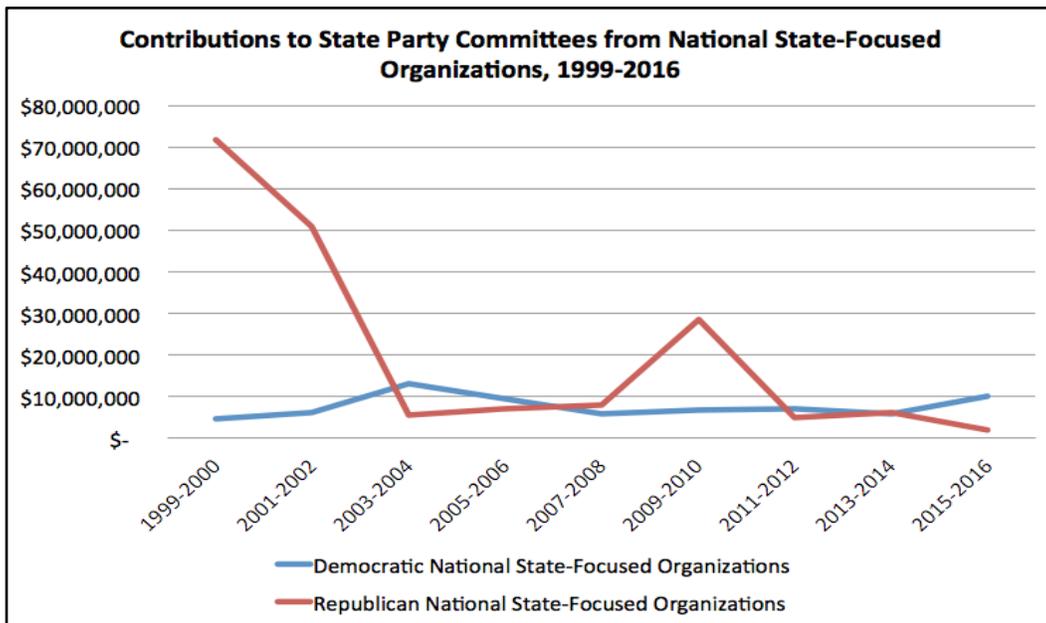
⁴ From the 2004 cycle onward, national party committees still sent dollars to state committees, but they were “hard” dollars. Some state committees reported receiving these dollars, even though they were also reported to the FEC, and Institute data documents more than \$16.9 million of that, with an average of \$4 million a cycle 2010–2016. The Institute has not explored these dollars in great depth because of erratic reporting issues.

⁵ [http://www.followthemoney.org/show-me?s=FL&f-fc=2&pt-exi=1&y=2014#\[{1}|{1}|gro=d-eid](http://www.followthemoney.org/show-me?s=FL&f-fc=2&pt-exi=1&y=2014#[{1}|{1}|gro=d-eid), accessed Feb. 1, 2017.

⁶ Republican Governors Assn (RGA), Democratic Governors Assn (DGA), Republican National State Elections Committee (RNSEC), Republican State Leadership Cmte (RSLC), Democratic

prominent funders to state political parties, both before and after BCRA. Pre-BCRA, these committees functioned as soft-money accounts of the national party committees. From 1999 to 2002, these committees sent hearty sums to the state parties: \$76 million in the 2000 cycle and \$56.8 million in the 2002 cycle, for an average of \$66.4 million per cycle. Most of that money (\$121.5 million) came from just one source—the Republican National State Elections Committee (RNSEC), which ceased contributing to state party committees after 2002.

Contributions to State Party Committees from National State-Focused Organizations, 1999–2016



Post-BCRA, these committees operated autonomously as national state-focused “527 committees.”⁷ Their direct contributions to state party committees dropped significantly, averaging \$17.1 million in cycles from 2004–2016, with a high of \$35.2 million in 2009–2010 elections. While they gave notably less, several of these committees increased their independent spending significantly after *Citizens United*, discussed in further detail below.

Donations from all other sources to state party committees, 2000–2016, totaled \$2.6 billion, with an average of \$289.7 million, fluctuating cycle to cycle with a

Legislative Campaign Cmte (DLCC), Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA), Democratic Attorneys General Association (DAGA), Republican Lieutenant Governors Assn (RLGA), Democratic Lieutenant Governors Assn (DLGA).

⁷ Formed under section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code, 527 groups are tax-exempt organizations that engage in political activities, often through unlimited contributions.

high of \$407.2 million in 2005–2006 and a low of \$229 million in 2000. The sources of these donations are examined further in the following section.

Contributions From Outside the Political Party System

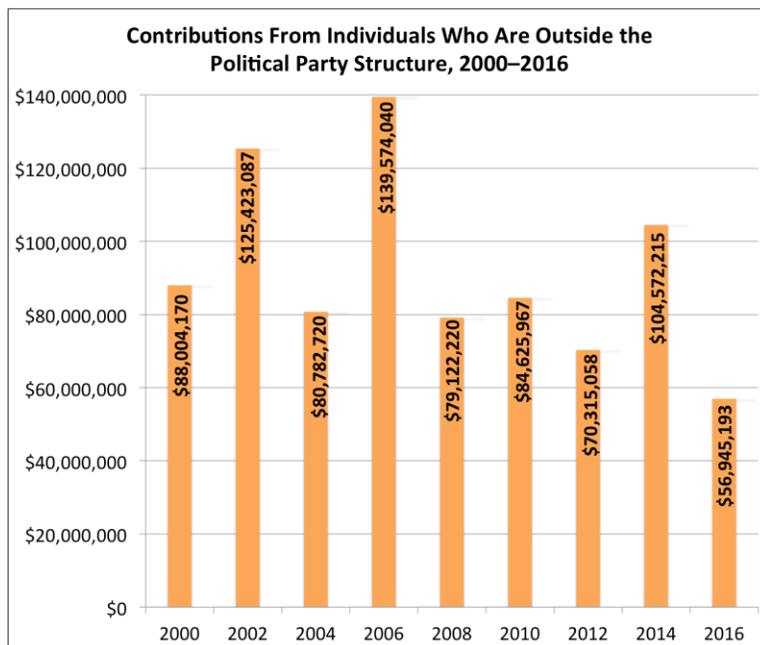
The Institute examined donors from outside the political party system, which include individual donors, business-related donors, labor organizations and their employees, unitemized contributions, and other non-party-affiliated donors from government associations/groups, ideological groups, and public funds.

Individual Donors

Individuals from outside the political party structure have always been a solid source of funds for state party committees, and after BCRA this appeared to be more true than ever. Individuals have given \$829.4 million since 1999. As a group, individuals provided 12 percent and 15 percent of the total raised in 2000 and 2002, respectively, before climbing to a peak of 23 percent in 2006. In the years thereafter, individual giving settled around 15 percent.

A surface reading of the numbers shows the role of individuals in state party finances appearing fairly consistent over the years. A deeper look reveals that the makeup of individual giving has generally undergone two big changes: increased prominence of large donors (those who gave more than \$200,000) and decreased participation by unitemized/small donors. Overall, it appears that in the wake of major campaign finance law changes such as BCRA and the *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon* rulings, parties have followed the “law of the vital few”: courting a small number of wealthy donors for a disproportionately larger sum of money.

Contributions From Individuals Who Are Outside the Political Party Structure, 2000–2016



The 2006 election cycle was the high point for both total dollars given to state party committees from individuals (\$140 million) and the percentage of all party committee fundraising (23 percent) that the total comprised. More large donors participated in the 2006 cycle than in any other until 2014. This corresponded with an increase in the average donation, which also hit high points during both the 2006 and the 2014 cycles.

Anomalies Among Individual Donors

The Walker Effect

In 2012, the nationwide total of individuals who gave to state party committees swelled to more than 125,000, up from an average of 75,000 per cycle. This was primarily due to more than 86,000 individuals turning out to give to Wisconsin party committees during the recall election of Governor Scott Walker. For comparison, the number of individuals who gave to Wisconsin's parties during the regular gubernatorial elections of 2010 and 2014 hovered between 4,000 and 4,500. The total amount coming from individuals ballooned as well, going from less than half a million dollars in 2010 (10 percent of the Wisconsin party committees' total) to \$7.5 million (56 percent) in 2012. The prominence of individual donors within party fundraising has remained high since 2012, but with a significant drop in the number of individuals contributing.

2012 also marked a departure for Wisconsin state party committees: they received more support from out-of-state individual donors than from in-state individual donors. The Republican state committee received \$2.3 million from out-of-state individuals compared to \$1.9 million from in-state individuals. The Democratic state committee also received a considerable amount from out-of-state individuals: \$1.6 million compared to \$1.7 million from in-state individuals. The scale of this departure is notable: the state party committees, combined, had barely ever broken \$100,000 from out-of-state individuals in election cycles before 2012.

Although the number of individuals participating has declined since 2012, their relative role in state party finances has remained very strong. As a group, individuals' contributions have made up about half of all state committee funds in the past three election cycles.

Individuals' Role in Wisconsin Party Finances, 2000–2016

Election Cycle	Individuals	Party Committee Total	Percent from Individuals
2000	\$1,891,673	\$6,982,166	27%
2002	\$2,213,483	\$16,320,731	14%
2004	\$1,328,569	\$5,358,360	25%
2006	\$286,307	\$1,390,492	21%
2008	\$205,171	\$1,728,973	12%
2010	\$425,194	\$2,263,306	19%
2012	\$7,490,910	\$13,303,940	56%
2014	\$6,359,810	\$11,540,322	55%
2016	\$3,223,371	\$6,816,976	47%

Outsourcing Support

Out-of-state contributions have accounted for 19 percent of all dollars given by individuals to state party committees since 1999. From cycle to cycle, this percentage has not varied greatly; its lowest was 16 percent in 2006 and its highest was 30 percent in 2012, but generally it hovers around 20 percent.

As with many of the trends outlined in this report, the numbers become less predictable when looking at individual states. Party committees in 27 states received a larger share of contributions from individuals outside their jurisdiction than inside in at least one election cycle. New Mexico was the most frequent case, with state party committees receiving a larger share of support from out-of-state individuals in seven of nine election cycles, amounting to \$1,898,235 in total, and about \$900,000 more than the in-state total. New Hampshire committees raised \$1.1 million from out-of-state individuals during five elections, which is \$600,000 more than the amount raised from in-state individuals.

The largest sums came in clusters rather than over the course of years. Pennsylvania party committees in 2014 received \$2.8 million more from out-of-state than from in-state individuals; Ohio committees in 2012 received \$1.6 million more from out of state; Virginia committees in 2012 received \$656,055 more from out of state and in 2016 they received \$1.1 million more.

Large Donors

Beginning in 2006, the proportion given by individual large donors (defined here as greater than or equal to \$200,000 in an election cycle) has stayed well above 20 percent. The high point was in the 2014 cycle, when 10 individuals gave more than \$1 million, including active donors such as John Templeton, Frances Scott, Charles Munger Jr, and Sheldon Adelson, who gave two to six times that.

Contributions from all individuals did not keep pace with such deep-pocketed individuals; 2014 also marked the lowest dollar total from unitemized (small) donors in any year prior.

Large (≥\$200,000) Individual Donors to State Party Committees, 2000–2016

Election Cycle	Number of Large Donors*	Total	Average Contribution	Percent of Total From All Individuals
2000	39	\$16,781,070	\$430,284	19%
2002	41	\$22,910,255	\$558,787	18%
2004	24	\$15,738,398	\$655,767	19%
2006	70	\$53,311,689	\$761,596	37%
2008	40	\$19,970,350	\$499,259	24%
2010	48	\$21,664,041	\$451,334	24%
2012	36	\$17,051,650	\$473,657	23%
2014	63	\$45,433,854	\$721,172	40%
2016	42	\$21,915,907	\$521,807	38%

*Large donors were determined after adjusting contribution totals for inflation.

Twenty-four states⁸ place no limits on individuals giving to state party committees. Large donors made up a greater share of the individuals' total in these 24 states compared to other all states for all election cycles except 2006 and 2008.

⁸ Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Wyoming.

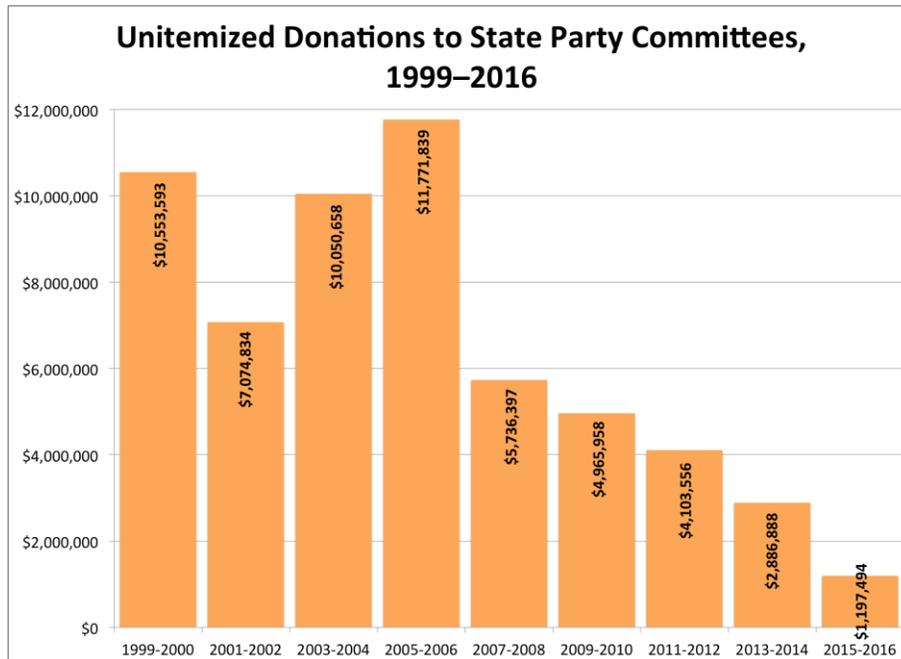
Totals From Individuals in States That Have No Limits, 2000–2016

Election Cycle	Total (adjusted for inflation)	Percent of State Parties' Total	# of Large Donors, No-Limit States	Total From Large Donors, No-Limit States	Large Donor Percent of No-Limit States' Total From Individuals
2000	\$52,524,492	13%	23	\$12,728,246	24%
2002	\$65,675,277	14%	30	\$15,953,811	24%
2004	\$44,820,273	18%	17	\$11,372,226	25%
2006	\$58,584,687	18%	31	\$12,535,532	21%
2008	\$36,025,356	12%	17	\$7,749,319	22%
2010	\$41,171,173	13%	29	\$12,444,512	30%
2012	\$28,815,328	12%	23	\$8,696,282	30%
2014	\$57,020,277	16%	47	\$29,729,898	52%
2016	\$24,913,351	16%	15	\$9,579,991	38%

Unitemized Donations

Since 1999, unitemized donations have never represented more than 2 percent of all party money in a given cycle. Unitemized donations peaked in 2005-06 (\$11.8 million), but have since precipitously declined. By 2009–10, parties raised \$5 million in unitemized contributions, followed by \$4.1 million in 2011–12 and \$2.9 million in 2013–14. The *Citizens United* era of campaign finance has not been kind to state parties' relationship with small donors, who gave only \$1.2 million in the most recent election cycle.

Unitemized Donations to State Party Committees, 50 States, 1999–2016



Almost every state saw a decline in the average unitemized total after *Citizens United*, but a handful of states experienced a disproportionately steep decline. In Minnesota, the average total in 2003–2010 was \$2.5 million, compared to only \$196,929 in 2011–2016. The Supreme Court ruling may have played some role in that, but the repeal of Minnesota’s political contribution refund in 2009 probably played a much bigger role, as the program was credited for uniquely elevating the role of small donors.

Still, unitemized contributions in other states were falling fast after *Citizens United*. In Georgia, the average unitemized total went from \$990,035 per cycle in 2003–2010 to \$457,047 in 2011–2014⁹. In North Dakota, the 2011–2016 average was only \$302,811 per cycle, which is 65 percent less than the 2003–2010 average. And in Texas, the average dropped from \$416,126 in 2003–2010 to \$59,982 in 2011–2016, an 86 percent decline. In each of these states, the decline in unitemized contributions accelerated around the time the Supreme Court handed down the *Citizens United* ruling.

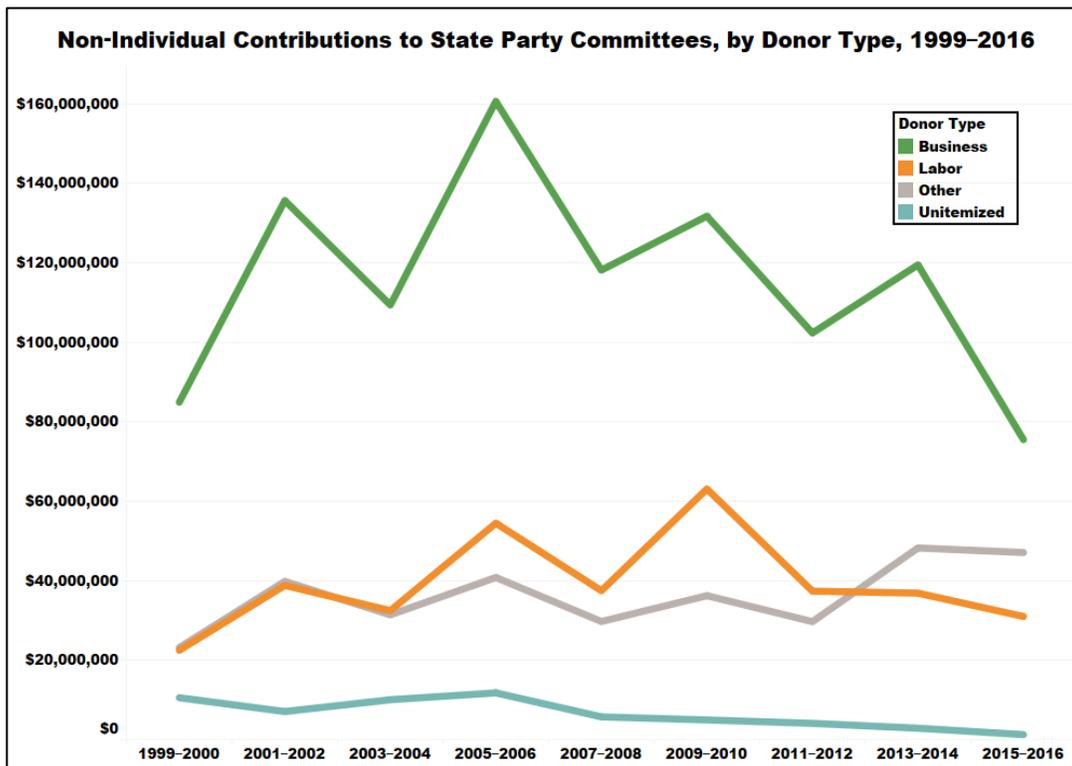
⁹ As a result of [disparate disclosure requirements](#), the Institute’s independent spending data is limited to 31 states, and the time frame varies by state. All told, the Institute has identified 12 states where SEIU spent money independently since 2006.

Non-Individual Donors

State political parties typically depended a lot more on non-individual donors (PACs, associations, and other groups) than they did on individuals. Since the 2003–2004 election, state parties received at least twice as much from non-individual donors as they did from individuals in all election cycles, save for 2005–2006 (excluding contributions from other party sources and candidate contributions). In the latest election, non-individuals gave 158 percent more than did individuals. That disparity was only more pronounced in 2009–10, when non-individuals gave 173 percent more than did individuals.

The composition of non-individual donors changed considerably over the course of these nine election cycles. Business donors proliferated from 2001 through 2006, while organized labor was relatively consistent across time. Meanwhile, the share of funding from other sources (e.g. ideology and single issue groups) was greater in 2013–2014 and 2015–2016 than it was in any cycle going back to 1999–2000.

Contributions From Non-Individuals to State Party Committees, by Donor Type, 1999–2016



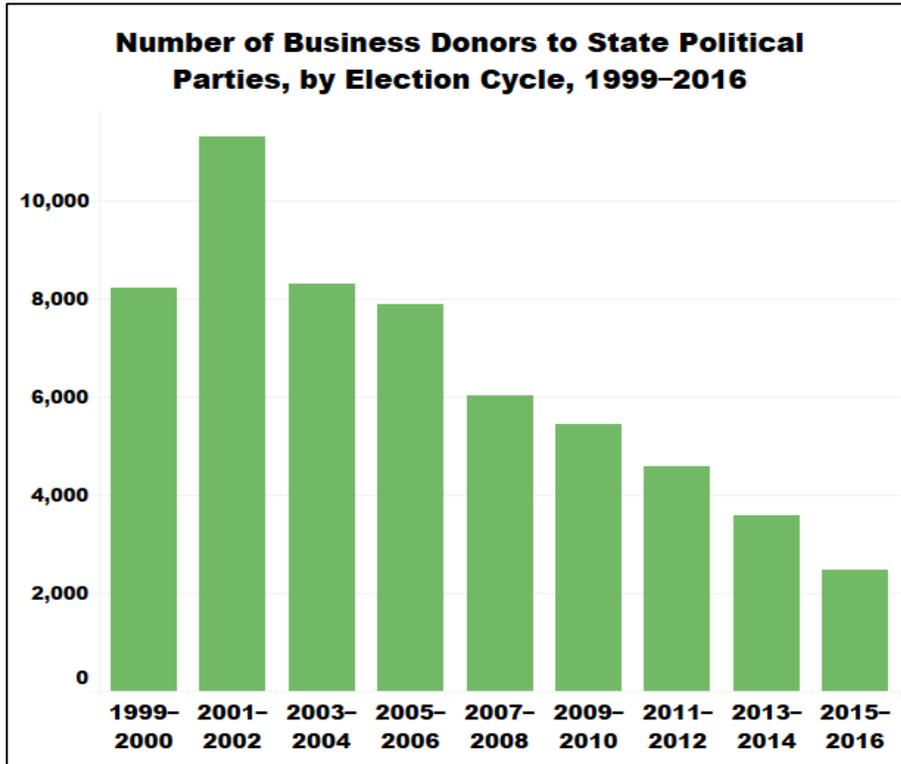
Business Donors

The importance of businesses to state political parties grew considerably in the mid-2000s. Although their role has diminished in recent years, businesses (and their PACs) remain the leading source of state party money from non-individual donors. The decline in business contributions does not reflect the giving trends of the upper echelon of this donor class. In fact, parties recently witnessed a proliferation of contributions from several top-tier donors.

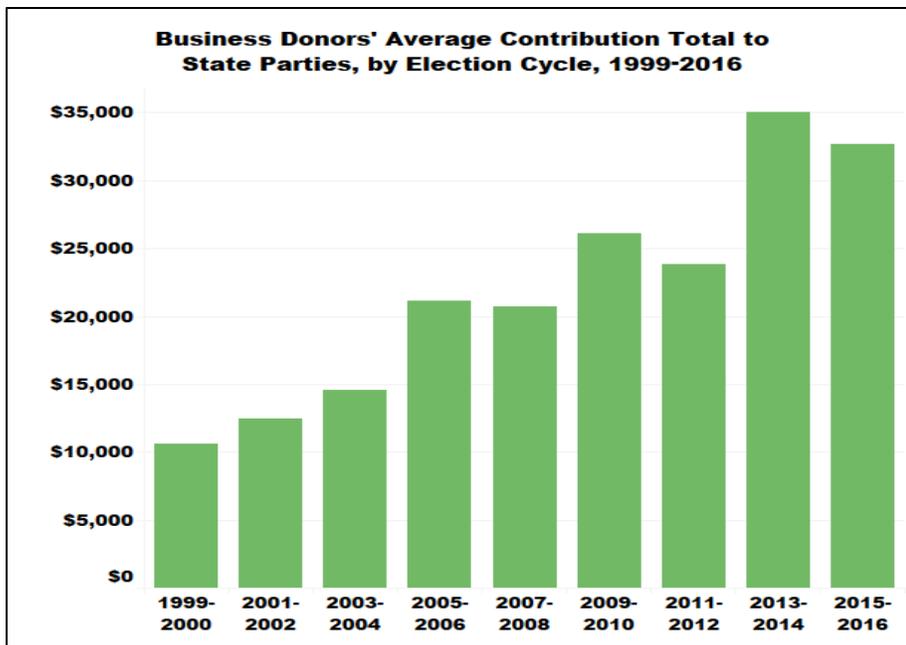
What a difference 10 years makes: business contributions peaked at \$160.6 million in 2005–2006, but fell to only \$75.5 million in 2015–2016, the lowest in the last nine election cycles. The rise of business contributions was rather precipitous: the \$109.3 million raised in 2003–2004 was 29 percent more than parties got in 1999–2000, the previous comparable election. The 2005–2006 haul was 18 percent more than the \$135.6 million raised in 2001–2002. But from 2009–2010 through 2015–2016, parties averaged a 17 percent decline in business contributions from the previous comparable election.

Parties did not see a drop in contributions from all business donors; rather, this group became far more consolidated in recent years. Since 2001–2002, when about 11,000 business donors gave to state political parties, there has been a consistent decline in the number of these contributors. A decade after the peak year of 2001–2002, roughly 4,500 business donors were giving to state parties. In the latest election, it was less than 2,500. Meanwhile, the average given by these donors to all state parties per cycle was on the rise: going from around \$12,500 in 2001–2002 to more than \$23,500 10 years later. The largest average was in 2013–2014, when business donors were giving about \$35,000 to state parties.

Number of Business Donors to State Political Parties, by Election Cycle, 1999–2016



Business Donors' Average Contribution Total to State Parties, 1999–2016

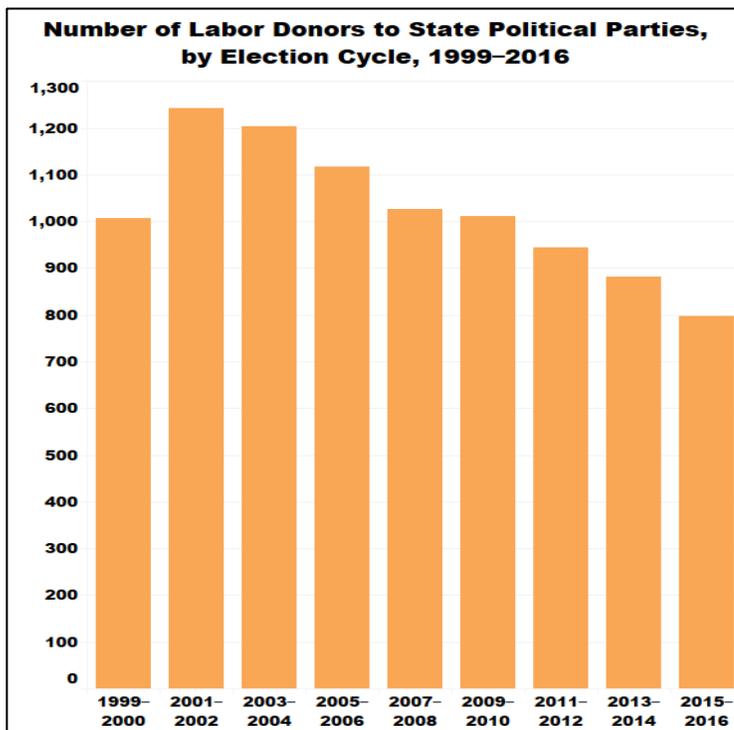


Labor Organizations

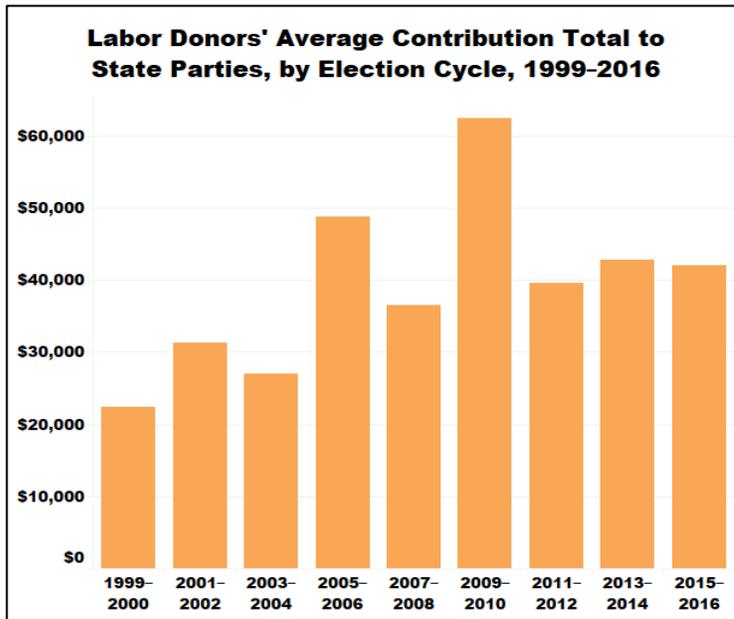
In the past 18 years, labor unions have consistently represented a relatively small portion of state party money, with notable bursts. Labor gave \$54.5 million in 2005–2006, which was 10 percent of all party money. The sector’s biggest showing was in 2009–2010, when labor groups gave \$63.1 million, which accounted for 13 percent of all state party money. In no other cycle since 1999 did labor reach the \$40 million mark or account for more than 10 percent of state parties’ total fundraising.

Like business, the number of labor organizations giving to state parties has declined in recent years, but unlike businesses, their average contributions have declined. In both 2003–2004 and 2005–2006, about 1,200 labor unions gave to state parties, and there has been a consistent drop since. In 2011–2012, fewer than 1,000 labor groups were giving to state donors, and less than 800 gave in the most recent election. Meanwhile, the average contribution total from labor unions waxed and waned, but was largely on the rise until it peaked at about \$62,000 in 2009–2010. In the three elections that followed, however, organized labor’s average total flat-lined around \$41,000.

Number of Labor Donors to State Political Parties, by Election Cycle, 1999–2016



Labor Donors' Average Contribution Total to State Parties, by Election Cycle, 1999–2016



Other Non-Individual Contributors

Single-issue organizations significantly increased their contributions in recent election cycles. From 1999 through 2004, single-issue groups never gave more than \$6.4 million in a cycle, but that suddenly jumped to \$14.9 million in 2005–2006. This sector's largest contribution total (\$17 million) was delivered to parties in 2009–2010, and the next two elections saw eight-figure contribution totals from that sector as well. However, the total from single-issue groups dipped to \$9.3 million in 2015–2016.

The Effect of Citizens United

The recent downturn in both business and labor contributions raises questions about the impact of the *Citizens United v Federal Election Commission* ruling on donors. Ultimately, [a lack of disclosure laws and practices in some states](#) prevents the Institute from conducting a comprehensive analysis of independent spending nationwide. However, the Institute has identified donors that became more partial to independent spending in selected states after the *Citizens United* ruling, particularly among labor donors. Nonetheless, many donors have not let up in their contributions to state political parties.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is notable for contributing \$8.5 million, the seventh-largest among business donors to the state parties since 2000, but that was dispensed exclusively from 2002 through 2010. Since then, the Chamber has not given a dime to state parties, instead focusing on [spending money](#)

[independently on federal elections](#), while many of its [state chapters](#) engaged in independent spending on down-ballot races.

Other major business donors, however, did not move in the same direction as the US Chamber of Commerce following the *Citizens United* decision. In fact, nine of the top 10 business contributors since 2000 averaged more in the three election cycles post-*Citizens United* (2011–2016) than they gave in the five cycles prior (1999–2010). Consider the recent history of the top three:

- AT&T gave \$25.6 million since 2000, more than a third of which came during the three election cycles post-*Citizens United*. In 2011–2012, the first full election cycle after *Citizens United*, AT&T gave \$3.4 million, its second-largest total since 2000.
- Walt Disney gave almost twice as much in 2011–2016 (\$8.4 million) as it did in the preceding six elections (\$4.5 million).
- The California Association of Realtors gave parties \$7.4 million in 2011–2016, a 39 percent increase from 1999–2010.

The ramifications of *Citizens United* could explain the decline in contributions from some labor groups. Labor's share of state party money has dropped considerably in the last three election cycles, falling to only \$31 million in 2015–2016, its lowest total since 1999–2000. Meanwhile, in the [three full cycles](#) after *Citizens United*, labor was behind \$90 million in independent expenditures in states included in the Institute's independent spending dataset, the second-largest total among economic sectors.

Some of the top labor contributors to state parties since 1999 are clearly moving in the direction of independent spending:

- The California Teachers Association (CTA) gave \$17.9 million to state parties, the second-largest contributor total, but those contributions have noticeably declined. But CTA has been the second biggest independent spender in California since 2005, with 56 percent of its total spent in the last three election cycles.
- The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) gave the third-largest total since 1999 (\$17.5 million), but the vast majority was given prior to the *Citizens United* decision. In 2011–2012, SEIU gave \$546,775 to state parties, but the union's [independent spending](#) spiked in that election (\$1.3 million).

Still, some labor organizations upped their party contributions after *Citizens United*. A prime example is the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), which averaged \$57,636 per cycle from 2003 through 2010, but

averaged \$479,576 from 2011 through 2016. Of the top 10 labor donors, only the United Automobile Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) averaged more after *Citizens United*, rising slightly from \$877,872 from 2003 through 2010 to \$925,295 from 2011 through 2016.

Unique State Dynamics

National influences like presidential or congressional elections or robust policy debates have a significant impact in the states. For example, the presidential battleground states of California and Florida saw high donation levels from business interests in 2000–2002 cycles and beyond, averaging \$36.5 million for 2004–2016 in California, up from \$14.9 million in 2000–2002; and \$61.8 million for 2004–2016 in Florida, up from \$50.4 million in 2000–2002.

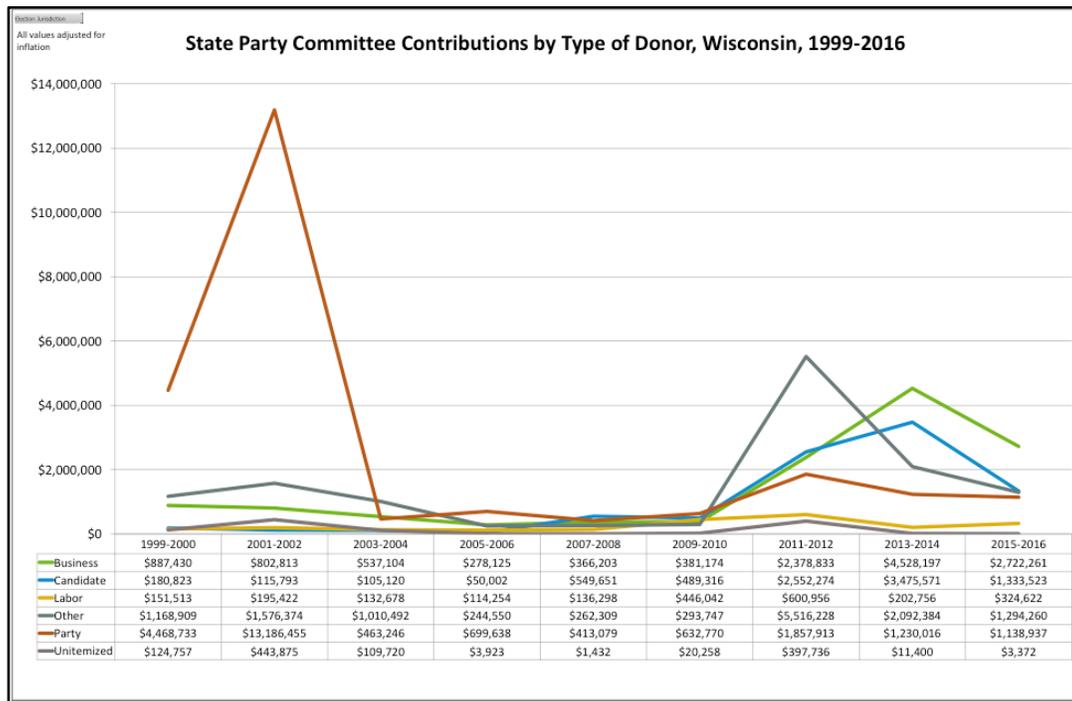
In other battleground states—Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania—donations from business, labor, and party committees were at lower but significant levels. In Ohio, donations from those groups helped the state party committee reach an average of \$19.5 million 2004–2016, a decrease from the 2000–2002 average of \$21.6 million. Michigan saw its average 2004–2016 at \$8.8 million, down significantly from a 2000–2002 average of \$29.0 million; Minnesota’s average 2004–2016 was \$9.2 million, down from the 2000–2002 average of \$21.7 million; and Pennsylvania’s average 2004–2016 was \$12.3 million, down from the 2000–2002 average of \$21.7 million.

It is important to note that each state has widely different parameters, such as campaign-finance regulations, demographics, political cultures, and party structures, and these state-based factors play an extremely important role in the robustness of state party committees. There were interesting conditions in play in three states: Wisconsin, South Dakota, and Florida.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin provides an interesting example of state dynamics. During the 2000 and 2002 election cycles, individuals donated \$1.9 million and \$2.2 million to the state parties, respectively; non-individuals donated \$5.1 million and \$14.1 million, respectively. Of these non-individual dollars, party committees donated \$4.5 million and \$13.2 million, respectively. During the highly contentious gubernatorial race of 2002, the state party committees received more than \$12.4 million from national party groups, which is three times the \$4.3 million given in the 2000 election when a lone congressional seat held by an incumbent had only modest opposition.

State Party Committee Contributions by Type of Donor, Wisconsin, 1999–2016



The four subsequent election cycles—2004, 2006, 2008, 2010—saw the Wisconsin party committees’ fortunes fall dramatically. While donations from individuals were \$1.4 million in 2004, they dropped significantly to \$297,369 in 2006, \$223,696 in 2008, and \$452,870 in 2010. Donations from non-individuals followed a similar pattern: \$987,528 in 2004, \$1.1 million in 2006, \$1.5 million in 2008, and \$1.8 million in 2010.

Thus, from 2004 to 2010, the Wisconsin party committees settled into a level of funding averaging about \$1.9 million a cycle from all sources, with just over half a million on average from party committees.

Wisconsin party committees then experienced a significant increase in income in the 2012 elections, with individual donations skyrocketing to \$7.5 million and non-individuals jumping to \$5.8 million, including \$1.8 million from state and local party committees. A series of events intersected to cause this shift: Gov. Walker signed new redistricting maps in August 2011 and the majority of the new districts were upheld in a court challenge; Gov. Walker then faced a recall election in June 2012, as did four state senators. During the November general election, one U.S. Senate seat and nine House seats were contested; 99 state

House seats were contested, and Barack Obama challenged Mitt Romney for the presidency.¹⁰

The fervor from the 2012 elections and recall effort carried over into 2014, when Gov. Walker and four other executive branch officials had to face the voters. Contributions from individuals totaled \$6.4 million while non-individual donors gave \$5.2 million. State and local party committees continued to give large amounts, at \$1.2 million. During the 2016 elections, with no partisan statewide races on the ballot, party committees experienced a predictable decrease in contributions, dropping 41 percent down to \$6.8 million.

It is worth noting that during the 2012 cycle, the amount donated to the Wisconsin party committees by individual donors increased dramatically over all previous cycles, and was comparable to the amount donated by national sources in the 2002 cycle, \$7.5 million to \$7.7 million, respectively.

As a case study, Wisconsin party committees' fortunes over the past nine election cycles illustrate how little effect BCRA had on the baseline funding the committees collected before and after the law took effect, and how dramatic an effect contentious state and federal politics can have on those same committees.

South Dakota

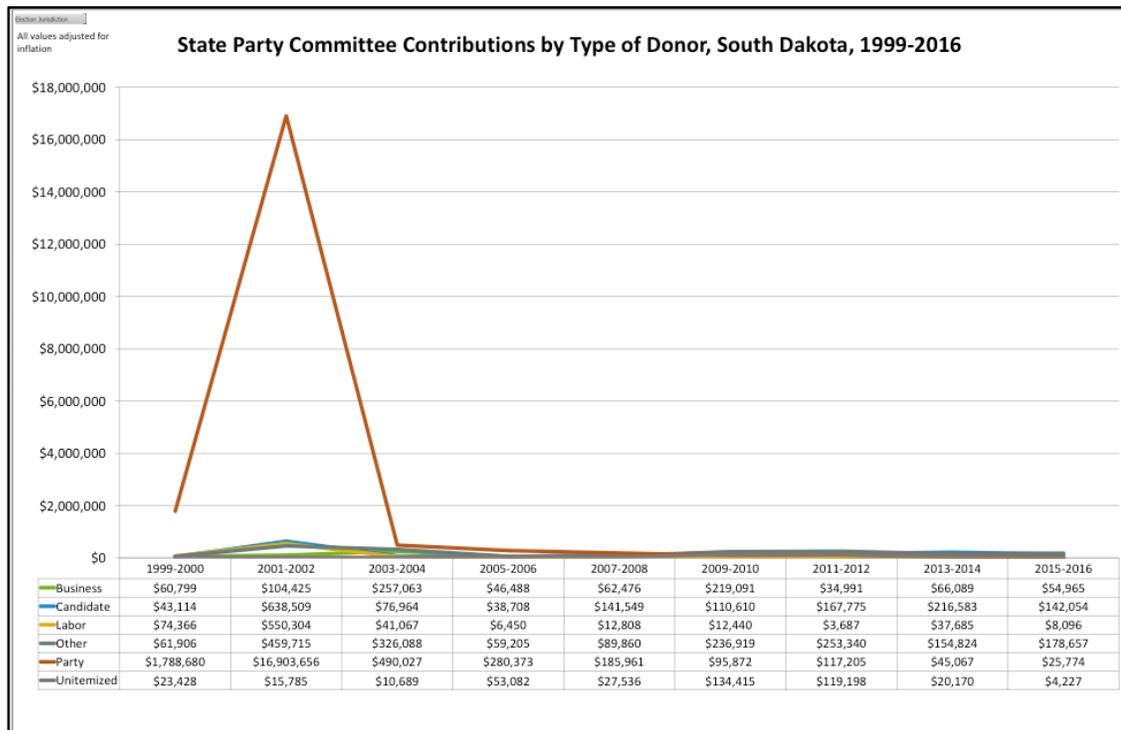
South Dakota is an extreme example of how national party committee dollars flowed into the state in support of federal candidates but with little benefit to the state committees. In the 2002 elections in South Dakota, former state senator Mike Rounds ran successfully for governor against former state representative Jim Abbott. But the headline race was for the U.S. Senate seat occupied by incumbent Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson, who was challenged by U.S. Rep. John Thune. Each candidate raised more than \$5 million for their campaigns.¹¹ National party committees funneled more than \$13.4 million to state party committees, which was largely used to purchase advertising for the federal race. *The Wall Street Journal* noted: "The quintessential 2002 campaign setting is South Dakota, the fourth smallest state, whose House and Senate contests represent nearly 10 percent of all the toss-up races in the country."¹² Some of that money also was funneled to other states' party committees:

¹⁰ https://ballotpedia.org/Wisconsin_elections,_2012, accessed Jan. 18, 2017.

¹¹ <http://www.opensecrets.org/races/summary.php?id=SDS2&cycle=2002>, accessed Jan. 18, 2017.

¹² "Control of Congress Lies in a Few Races in Smaller Locales," *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 14, 2002, p. 1, accessed Jan. 18, 2017.

State Party Committee Contributions by Type of Donor, South Dakota, 1999–2016



From the Institute’s 2007 report “Life Before BCRA”¹³:

“During the 2002 cycle, the South Dakota Democratic Party transferred the largest amount of any state committee — a total of \$1.23 million of soft money to Democratic state parties in nine states: California (\$345,000), Florida (\$427,050), Minnesota (\$212,000), New York (\$130,000), Michigan (\$57,500), Kentucky (\$54,600) Kansas (\$30,000), Montana (\$16,667), and Indiana (\$10,700).

“In at least two instances, it appears that the South Dakota Democratic Party used money it received from the national Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) to send on to the Kansas Democratic Party. On May 10, 2001, for example, the DSCC sent \$40,000 to the South Dakota committee, which in turn sent \$15,000 to the Kansas Democratic Party. Then again on Jan. 14, 2002, the DSCC sent the South Dakota committee \$11,700. Six days later, the South Dakota Democratic Party sent \$15,000 to the Kansas Democratic Party. In other instances, the transfers were between the committees themselves. For example, during the 2002 cycle, the South Dakota Democratic Party gave

¹³ <http://www.followthemoney.org/assets/Research-Reports-in-PDF-2007-and-earlier/Life-Before-BCRA.pdf>.

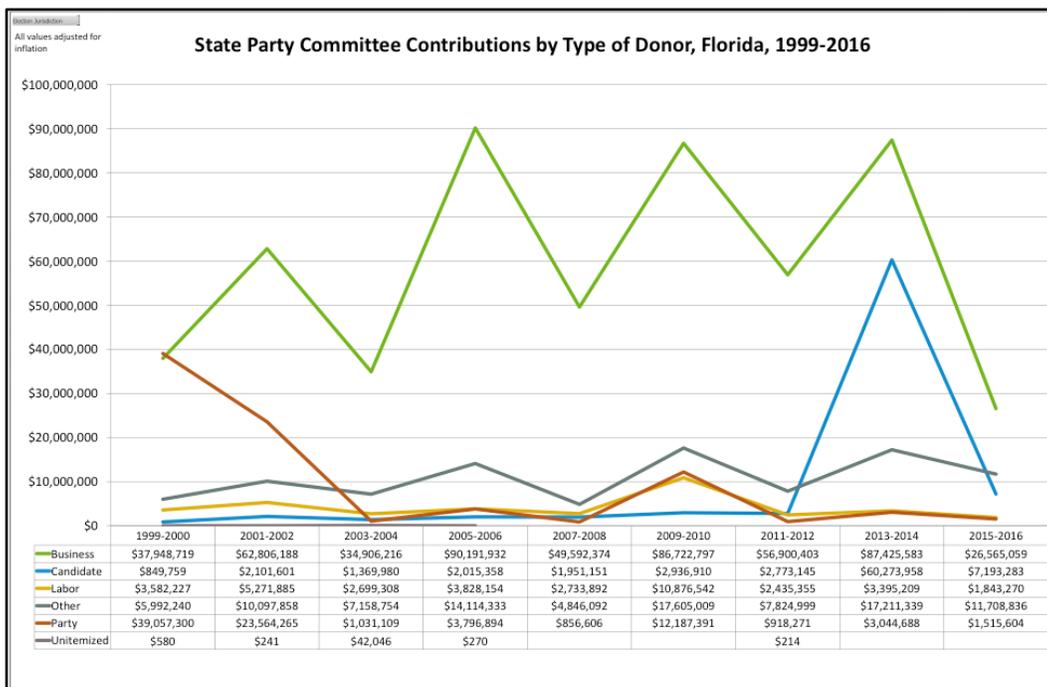
\$212,000 to the Minnesota DFL Party, which in turn sent South Dakota \$103,000.”

From the 2000 election cycle to 2016, the South Dakota state party committees raised an average \$100,710 from business sources, an average \$175,096 from candidates themselves, an average \$82,989 from labor organizations, and an average \$202,279 from other donors, including retirees and ideological organizations. Donations from party sources post-BCRA, 2004–2016, averaged \$177,183. The average from all sources from 2004 through 2016 was \$668,600. In South Dakota elections, \$1 million is clearly a lot of money, and \$13.4 million from the national parties was a notable infusion.

Florida

Florida presents yet another view of the campaign finances of state political parties. Florida parties are robustly funded by business interests, which are unconstrained by contribution limits.

State Party Committee Contributions by Type of Donor, Florida, 1999–2016



Pre-BCRA, party committee dollars in 2000 and 2002 elections amounted to \$39.1 million and \$23.6 million, respectively. In both cases, federal party donors were the driving force. Contributions from business interests during the same period were \$37.9 million and \$62.8 million, respectively. Post-BCRA, 2004–2016, contributions to Florida party committees from party sources plummeted to

an average \$3.3 million with a spike of \$12.2 million in 2010 races due to \$9.2 million in donations from national state-focused organizations. Post-BCRA, business donations to party committees averaged \$61.8 million a cycle, with spikes of \$90.2 million in 2006, \$86.7 million in 2010, and \$87.4 million in 2014. Contributions to the state party committees from candidates, labor, and other interests paled in comparison to business dollars, except for the \$60.3 million donated by candidates and their committees during the high-profile 2014 gubernatorial race between Charlie Crist and incumbent Rick Scott.

As these three examples illustrate, state political party committees' campaign finances were less influenced by soft money from national party committees (since that money was earmarked for federal races anyway) than they were by state-based influences, such as campaign-finance regulations, effects of redistricting, political cultures, and closely contested state races.

Independent Spending: Party Committees & Non-Party Ideological Spenders

Independent spending by state party committees ebbs and flows, depending on the number of prominent state-level races. In this way, state party outside spending mimics contribution trends discussed previously. However, constricting the conversation to just state party committees masks an explosion of spending by groups that have the sole purpose of electing partisan candidates but operate outside the official party apparatus. Some of these organizations have long-term ties to the two major parties, like the nine national state-focused organizations discussed previously. Others form shortly before an election only to disappear again as soon as voting is complete.

In the ten states examined below, the dramatic increase in independent spending activity occurring by non-party spenders coincided with an apparent drop in contributions to state party committees from donors that also give to independent spenders. While these facts combined are not enough to say that official party influence is being overtaken by a new political apparatus, it is clear that this new class of spender has carved out a major niche in today's political ecosystem.

Utilizing data in ten states where a full picture of independent spending was readily available¹⁴ between 2006 and 2014¹⁵, the Institute examined state-level

¹⁴ Full disclosure is defined as when both direct advocacy and electioneering communications are required to be reported. The 10 states with full disclosure and accessible data since 2006 include: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Washington.

¹⁵ 2014 is the last major election year for which the Institute has complete data on independent spending.

outside spending by state party committees, national state-focused organizations, and generic partisan groups.

Major findings include:

- State party independent spending fluctuated between \$2 million and \$15 million from 2006 to 2014. Meanwhile, spending by national state-focused organizations and generic partisan spenders rose, peaking at \$26.7 million in 2012 and \$32.8 million in 2014, respectively.
- In 2014, national state-focused organizations spent 211 percent more than did state parties. Generic partisan groups spent 299 percent more.
- In 2014, the Republican Governors Association spent nearly \$21 million, more than triple the total spent by all Republican Party committees combined.
- The Democratic Governor's Association contributed more than \$20 million to generic liberal spenders between 2006 and 2014, while directly spending just a quarter million dollars.
- The number of independent spenders increased every election year between 2006 and 2012, with the count of spenders totaling 647 in 2012. The largest increase in spenders occurred in the first full election cycle after the 2010 *Citizens United v FEC* decision. The number of generic partisan groups increased from 10 to 65 between 2006 and 2014.
- Among donors that have given to both state party committees and independent spending groups, contributions to party committees fell 24 percent between 2006 and 2014.

State Parties Fail to Keep Up

The most comprehensive look at changes to political party independent spending over time can be found in ten states that require full disclosure of the spending and have data available back to 2006. An analysis of the data in these states shows that while party independent spending fluctuates over time, their spending relative to other spenders has fallen.

Independent Spending by State Party Cmtes in 10 States, 2006-2014

	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
State Party Independent Spending	\$9,485,268	\$2,020,025	\$14,982,073	\$3,880,992	\$8,218,001
Percentage of Total Independent Spending	9%	2%	10%	3%	4%

State political parties fell from a high of 10 percent share of total spending in 2010 to a 4 percent share in 2014, the first major election year in the states since the *Citizens United* decision.¹⁶ Although it is too early to tell whether 2014 was an anomaly or the beginning of a consistently reduced role for state parties in the independent spending arena, it seems unlikely parties will expand significantly beyond their historical spending.

The previous two high-water marks for party outside spending were largely driven by a single committee: the California Democratic Party. In 2006, California Democratic Party spending constituted 51 percent of all party spending in the ten states examined. In 2010, they expended nearly \$8.5 million or 57 percent of that year's party outside spending total. Despite 2014 being another gubernatorial election year in the Golden State, California Democratic Party spending failed to break half a million dollars. Without that cash infusion, party spending fell 45 percent, while spending by all other committees increased by 47 percent.

(Republican) National State-Focused Organizations Rise

Unlike state party independent spending, independent spending from national state-focused groups surged between 2006 and 2014, from less than \$1 million in 2006 to nearly \$25.5 million in 2014.

Just three organizations from this group engaged in independent spending in 2006. The Democratic Legislative Campaign Committees led the way with \$548,866 in expenditures, followed by the Republican Governors Association at \$293,433, and the Republican State Leadership Committee at \$12,000. It would be the only time that Democratic national state-focused organizations outspent

¹⁶ Even-numbered years without a presidential elections have the most elections for major state offices.

their Republican counterparts. The next even-year election, the RGA poured \$10.5 million into North Carolina and Washington, beginning an uninterrupted run of spending dominance by the group that drove national state-focused group spending to new heights.

Spending by national state-focused organizations peaked at \$26.7 million in 2012 before dipping slightly to \$25.6 million in 2014. Democratic national state-focused groups did not spend a single dollar in direct independent spending in either year, choosing instead to fund other spenders, as discussed below.

***Independent Spending by National State-Focused Organizations,
2006–2014***

Organization	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	Total
Republican Governors Association	\$293,433	\$10,536,221	\$15,473,616	\$23,605,707	\$20,834,343	\$70,743,320
Republican State Leadership Cmte	\$12,000	\$1,475,366	\$2,429,346	\$3,113,134	\$222,383	\$7,252,230
Republican Attorneys General Association	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,495,981	\$4,495,981
Democratic Legislative Campaign Cmte	\$548,866	\$1,271,433	\$229,188	\$0	\$0	\$2,049,488
Democratic Governors Association	\$0	\$0	\$253,629	\$0	\$0	\$253,629
TOTAL	\$854,299	\$13,283,020	\$18,385,780	\$26,718,841	\$25,552,707	\$84,794,647

No independent spending was reported by the Republican National State Elections Cmte, Republican Lieutenant Governors Assn, Democratic Attorneys General Association, or Democratic Lieutenant Governors Assn.

In most cases, spending by national state-focused organizations occurred alongside spending by at least one state party committee. However, there were some notable exceptions. In Washington, the only party spending between 2006 and 2014 was \$31,176 by the Washington Republican Party in 2006. The following two gubernatorial election years in 2008 and 2012 brought \$6.3 million and \$21.4 million in combined spending by the RGA and RSLC. Neither the Washington Democratic Party nor Democratic national state-focused groups countered the influx of spending. Oklahoma was the only state with no state party independent spending of any kind. National state-focused organizations on either side of the political aisle spent similar amounts of slightly more than \$1 million over the course of 2006–2010, but ceased making expenditures after that.

Generic Partisan Spenders

It is worth discussing the broader array of generic partisan spenders for two reasons. First, the spenders' sole purpose is electing one or more candidates of a specific party. As such, they can be viewed as either complements to traditional party structures or as rivals for donors much like the national state-focused organizations. Second, many of the top generic partisan spenders are funded primarily by national state-focused organizations. In some cases, these groups are essentially state-specific fronts for organizations like the RGA and DGA.

The Democratic Governor Association's participation in Colorado's 2014 gubernatorial race is a prime example of the national state-focused organizations in the 10 study states. That year, the fourth biggest spender was Making Colorado Great, which spent \$8.1 million, \$6.2 million of which was provided by the DGA.

Expanding the examination of the governors associations to all states in which 2014 data is available reveals cases of even greater participation. For instance, Commonwealth Future spent the second-most after the RGA. The RGA provided about \$11 million of the \$13 million the group expended targeting candidates in the Massachusetts gubernatorial race.

From 2006 to 2014, the number of generic partisan spenders increased dramatically. Just 10 groups engaged in outside spending in 2006. By 2014, that number ballooned to 65. To some extent, both conservative and liberal groups drove the growth. However, groups on the left cropped up at a much faster rate. In fact, their numerical advantage over conservative groups grew in an almost perfect geometric sequence, going from two, to four, to eight, and finally reaching 17 in 2014. In most cases, these groups formed and quickly disbanded. Eighty-

eight (82 percent) of the 109 generic partisan groups tracked in the 10 study states between 2006 and 2014 spent money in just one election year.

Growth in Number of Generic Partisan Spenders by Spender Type, in 10 States, 2006–2014

Spender	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Liberal Partisan Spender	5	6	15	20	41
Conservative Partisan Spender	5	4	11	12	24
Total	10	10	26	32	65

The numerical advantage of liberal groups was matched by a spending advantage, though that lead did not increase at the same clip. Nor did the spending edge by generic liberal spenders fully make up the difference between Republican and Democratic national state-focused organizations.

Independent Spending by Generic Partisan Spenders, 2006–2016

Spender	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	Total
Liberal Partisan Spender	\$12,457,199	\$7,745,667	\$14,206,917	\$21,064,419	\$26,104,584	\$81,578,787
Conservative Partisan Spender	\$352,515	\$673,605	\$5,169,802	\$2,552,352	\$6,670,889	\$15,419,163
TOTAL	\$12,809,714	\$8,419,272	\$19,376,719	\$23,616,771	\$32,775,473	\$96,997,950

A deeper look at the funders of the generic partisan groups reveals that the line between the nine major national state-focused organizations and these pop-up state-based groups is somewhat blurry and highlights the differing strategies of Republicans and Democrats. Of the \$97 million spent by generic partisan groups, at least \$32.5 million was provided by national state-based organizations.¹⁷ The DGA, DAGA, and DLCC combined contributed \$27.6 million of that sum, compared to just \$4.9 million from the RSLC and RGA.

¹⁷ Contribution data to independent spenders in 2006-2014 is not comprehensive. As such, the \$32.5 million contributed by these organizations is a conservative estimate.

Contributions from National State-Focused Organizations to Generic Partisan Spenders, 2006-2014

Organization	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	Total
Democratic Governors Assn	\$0	\$0	\$3,330,000	\$7,822,500	\$9,477,390	\$20,629,890
Democratic Attorneys General Assn	\$0	\$0	\$3,646,350	\$0	\$1,279,784	\$4,926,134
Republican State Leadership Cmte	\$0	\$0	\$388,500	\$383,250	\$2,464,320	\$3,236,070
Democratic Legislative Campaign Cmte	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$215,250	\$1,790,100	\$2,005,350
Republican Governors Assn	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$354,900	\$1,319,413	\$1,674,313
TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$7,364,850	\$8,775,900	\$16,331,006	\$32,471,756

Smaller Amounts for Parties

Overall, contributions to state parties in the 10 study states declined from donors that also gave to independent spending groups in those states.¹⁸ The decline was brought about by significantly smaller contributions by both business and labor interests. Although political funders, such as candidates, leadership PACs, and ideological groups, made up some of the difference by increasing their contributions, the net result was a nearly 24 percent decrease in party donations from independent spending donors in 2014 compared to 2006.

¹⁸ Because contributions to independent spending groups have not been as thoroughly tracked as independent spending itself, it is impossible to get a clear sense for trends among contributors to independent spenders across multiple states and years. That said, it is possible to look at contributors that the Institute has identified as giving to independent spenders and examine whether their giving to political parties has changed.

Contributions to State Party Committees from Donors That Gave to Independent Spenders, 2006–2014

Contributor Type	Party	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Business	Dem.	\$7,392,868	\$8,092,433	\$8,534,169	\$10,060,962	\$6,922,066
Business	Rep.	\$24,308,663	\$10,145,703	\$13,589,502	\$4,061,975	\$9,363,846
Labor	Dem.	\$17,426,543	\$10,835,825	\$22,006,999	\$10,419,900	\$8,908,128
Labor	Rep.	\$84,360	\$824,132	\$115,252	\$23,520	\$74,592
Political	Dem.	\$5,953,930	\$6,436,717	\$8,287,767	\$6,585,482	\$7,696,714
Political	Rep.	\$1,829,371	\$1,427,173	\$4,842,142	\$2,807,924	\$5,462,864
Miscellaneous	Dem.	\$1,617,220	\$3,152,420	\$1,370,414	\$2,796,907	\$1,856,402
Miscellaneous	Rep.	\$925,030	\$831,126	\$816,918	\$468,603	\$5,151,138

The decrease in labor contributions almost exclusively affected Democratic Party committees, with union contributions to Republicans peaking at just \$115,252 in 2010 before falling to \$74,592 in 2014. Democrats, meanwhile, received \$22 million from unions in 2010 but only \$8.9 million in 2014.

On the other side of the aisle, business interests played a similar role in Republican Party committees' financial losses. Ten different business sectors combined to give GOP state committees \$24.3 million in 2006.¹⁹ By 2014, that number had fallen by 61 percent, to \$9.4 million. Democrats, on the other hand, maintained relatively stable business contributions, hovering between \$10.1 million and \$6.9 million in 2006–2014.

¹⁹ These sectors include: Agriculture; Communications & Electronics; Construction; Defense; Energy & Natural Resources; Finance, Insurance & Real Estate; General Business; Health; Lawyers & Lobbyists; Transportation.

Homing In on Individual State Dynamics

Examining independent spending trends at the macro level can hide the erratic nature of spending in individual states. As outlined in the Institute's *2013–2014 Independent Spending Overview*²⁰, outside spending is generally deployed in only a select number of key races. This targeted approach can mean independent spending is minimal during one cycle, only to skyrocket in the next.

Colorado

Colorado provides a counterexample to the common boom or bust cycle of independent spending that revolves around high-profile gubernatorial races. In Colorado, independent spenders remained active between gubernatorial elections, spending \$5.2 and \$5.9 million in 2008 and 2012, respectively.

Independent Spending in Colorado, by Spender Type, 2006–2014

Spender	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Republican National State-Focused Org	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,412,154
Generic Conservative Spender	\$170,714	\$477,427	\$2,479,518	\$19,123	\$3,555,242
Republican Party Cmte	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$90,140	\$53,244
Democratic National State-Focused Org	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Generic Liberal Spender	\$0	\$2,382,898	\$6,986,827	\$4,750,820	\$16,573,162
Democratic Party Cmte	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$37,730	\$46,494
Other*	\$249,507	\$2,340,632	\$2,533,475	\$977,251	\$4,802,751

*Other means NonParty affiliated donors from government associations/groups, ideological groups, as well as public funds and uncoded donors. Includes individuals and non-individual donors.

The off-year spending was led by generic liberal spenders focused on electing Democratic legislators. In fact, Colorado was the only one of the 10 states in which generic liberal and national state-based Democratic spenders outspent their conservative counterparts in every election year between 2008 and 2014.

²⁰ <https://www.followthemoney.org/research/institute-reports/independent-spending-overview-2013-and-2014/>

Colorado state political parties rarely engaged in independent spending. Each refrained from making expenditures until 2012 and 2014. In those two election years they averaged a combined \$56,902 in spending.

Maine

In one respect, independent spending in Maine was similar to states across the country. Increasingly large spikes of expenditures occurred during gubernatorial election years, driven in part by big spending from national state-focused organizations and generic partisan spenders. The 2014 contest between incumbent Republican Governor Paul LePage, Democrat Mike Michaud, and Independent Eliot Cutler propelled overall outside spending to \$15.2 million, smashing the previous record of \$5.9 million.

In another respect, Maine was unique. It was the only state among the 10 studied in which both major state party committees engaged in independent spending every year. Although their overall average expenditures were lower than spending by groups outside the official party apparatus, they committed more resources to state legislative races where smaller amounts of money can make a bigger difference.

Independent Spending in Maine, by Spender Type, 2006–2014

Spender	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Republican National State-Focused Org	\$0	\$0	\$1,687,335	\$0	\$3,644,413
Generic Conservative Spender	\$0	\$0	\$868	\$0	\$7,990
Republican Party Cmte	\$390,112	\$136,259	\$482,546	\$966,071	\$770,167
Democratic National State-Focused Org	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Generic Liberal Spender	\$8,284	\$6,070	\$45,778	\$957,932	\$4,241,252
Democratic Party Cmte	\$680,867	\$299,448	\$834,204	\$1,061,930	\$1,112,550
Other*	\$434,985	\$268,416	\$2,800,405	\$1,056,664	\$5,422,184

*Other means NonParty affiliated donors from government associations/groups, ideological groups, as well as public funds and uncoded donors. Includes individuals and non-individual donors.

The focus on independent spending may be the result of the state's robust public campaign finance system. The program provides participating candidates with public money to run their campaigns. In return, candidates cannot raise any private funds outside of small, qualifying contributions at the beginning of their campaign that show the viability of their candidacy. Prior to the public financing system's implementation in the 2000 election cycle, the parties had contributed tens of thousands of dollars to legislative candidates. In the 2000 election, that spigot was abruptly shut as no candidate for state house or senate received money from a Maine state party committee. Between 2006 and 2014, the parties made a total of six contributions that averaged slightly more than \$200. By comparison, during that same period the parties spent more than \$4.6 million independently supporting or opposing legislative candidates.

Arizona complicates the picture. It's the only other state among the 10 studied that has a full public financing program. Arizona mirrors the Maine parties' contribution profile, giving less than \$500 to legislative candidates between 2006 and 2014 in increments of no more than \$75. However, the data does not show that significant resources have been redirected toward outside spending targeting legislative candidates beyond the \$20,200 spent by the Arizona GOP in 2010. Since 2010, the Arizona Republican Party has not reported independent spending of any sort. Arizona Democratic Party has no record of independent spending whatsoever.

The fact that every state without public financing of legislative elections showed robust contributions from state parties to house and senate candidates indicates that such programs likely affect how state parties utilize their financial resources. That said, it is not a given that parties will automatically redistribute that money to messaging through independent spending, as demonstrated by both major parties in Arizona.

Impact of State Laws on State Political Parties

To determine the impact of state laws regulating who can give and how much, the Institute analyzed and compared the donor patterns among the states that have varying contribution regulations. This analysis also examined the shift in party donors in the four states where limits changed during the study period, 1999–2016.

The analysis found that in states where political parties were unconstrained by contribution limits, the state parties relied heavily on business donors.²¹

²¹ Defined in this report as non-individual donors, excluding candidate and party committees, government/education organizations, ideological groups, and labor unions.

Conversely, in states where only corporations and unions were banned or limited, state parties instead relied more heavily on other party committees, while business donors provided less than one-fourth of the state party committee funds.

From 2000 through 2016, the laws governing limits changed in four states. State party committees in Illinois and New Mexico had to adapt to contribution limits enacted for the first time, in 2010 and 2012, respectively. In Illinois, individuals, businesses, and PACs—once free to give unlimited amounts—gave on average \$5.5 million per cycle, down from the \$6.8 million raised per cycle pre-limits. Similarly, contributions raised by New Mexico state party committees declined by 74 percent after the state imposed limits on all donors in 2012.

Conversely, South Dakota and Tennessee expanded the ability of donors to give to party committees. While this led to a predictable increase in giving in Tennessee, the same was not observed in South Dakota. Although South Dakota increased its limits from \$3,000 to \$10,000 for individuals giving to political parties after 2006, the average given by individuals each cycle actually decreased after the limits were raised.

Donor Profiles, by Type of State Regulations

An examination of donor profiles among states with varying contribution regulations revealed that state parties rely heavily on business donors, where they can, but when those donors are limited or restricted, the parties turn to other party committees for the bulk of their funding.

In 12 states where no limits were placed on any donor type, business donors provided 37 percent of the funds raised by the state parties.²² Conversely, in the 11 states where corporations were banned or limited, other party committees were the largest source of funds, providing 36 percent of the total raised.²³ When most donor types were restricted, as they were in 23 states,²⁴ the parties' reliance was comparable between business donors and party committees, at 21 percent and 24 percent respectively.

Types of Contributors by Types of Limits

Types of Contributors by Types of Limits									
Contributor Type	States That Have No Limits (12)			States That Restrict Only Corporations/Unions (11)			States That Limit Most/All Contributors (23)		
	Total	Avg/State	% of Total	Total	Avg/State	% of Total	Total	Avg/State	% of Total
Business Contributors	\$560,594,490	\$46,716,207	37%	\$71,136,899	\$6,466,991	7%	\$364,965,025	\$15,868,045	21%
Candidate Cmtes	\$164,187,281	\$13,682,273	11%	\$220,970,193	\$20,088,199	21%	\$206,764,183	\$8,989,747	12%
Labor Organizations	\$75,510,138	\$6,292,512	5%	\$70,784,081	\$6,434,916	7%	\$189,568,844	\$8,242,124	11%
Other Contributors	\$119,824,245	\$9,985,354	8%	\$54,785,320	\$4,980,484	5%	\$141,416,873	\$6,148,560	8%
Party Committees*	\$378,177,310	\$31,514,776	25%	\$373,814,692	\$33,983,154	36%	\$425,107,394	\$18,482,930	24%
Unitemized	\$16,572,701	\$1,381,058	1%	\$24,832,851	\$2,257,532	2%	\$15,684,742	\$681,945	1%
Individuals	\$219,967,448	\$18,330,621	14%	\$218,814,057	\$19,892,187	21%	\$404,073,026	\$17,568,392	23%
TOTAL	\$1,534,833,612	\$127,902,801		\$1,035,138,091	\$94,103,463		\$1,747,580,086	\$75,981,743	

* excludes federal party committees

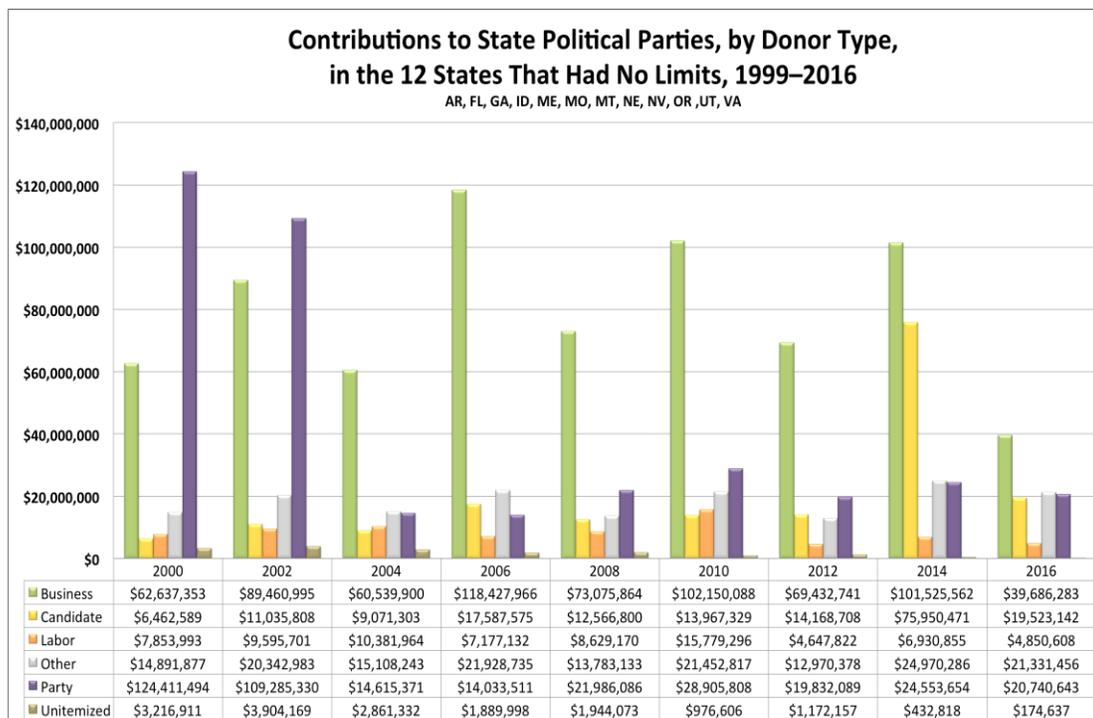
Donors in States That Had No Contribution Limits

State party committees were able to raise unlimited amounts from all donor types—individuals, corporations, labor, PACs—in 12 states, from 2000 through 2016.

Collectively, state party committees in these 12 states relied consistently and heavily on business donors, which accounted for 37 percent of the total raised in 1999–2016.

Party committees and candidate committees were also significant donors in these states, providing 25 percent and 11 percent, respectively, over the years. Individual donors accounted for 14 percent of the money raised. Although labor unions are traditionally significant donors to candidates, they accounted for just 5 percent of the money raised by state parties during the study period.

Contributions to State Political Parties, by Donor Type, in the 12 States That Had No Limits, 1999–2016



Although candidate committees were not a major source of funds to state parties in general, they nearly quadrupled their percentage of the total raised by the state parties post-BCRA (2003–2016), from 4 percent to 15 percent.

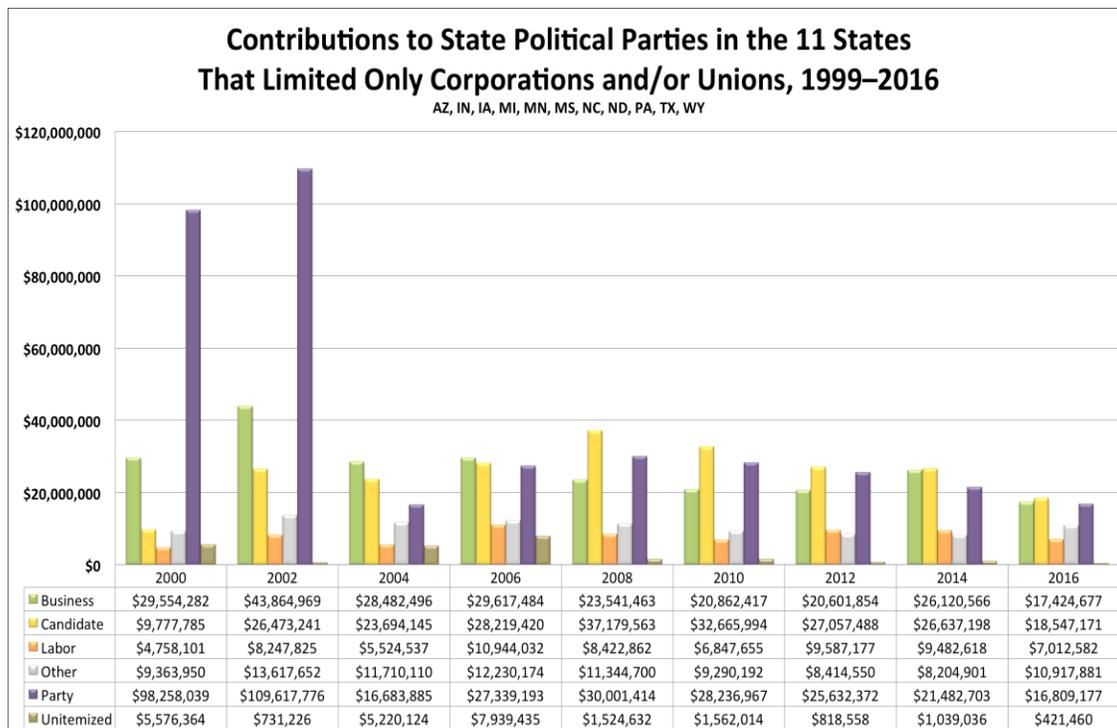
Donors in States That Had Contribution Limits

States That Limit Only Corporations and/or Unions

In the 11 states that only restricted contributions from corporations and unions, one would expect that business donations would be less significant than they were in states where they were unlimited, and party sources (party committees and candidates) would be more prevalent. As the chart below indicates, that is exactly what occurred.

Business donors, while prevalent, did not dominate in these states as they did in the states where corporations had no limits. Business donors provided an average of 23 percent of the funds to state parties, compared to 47 percent of funds in states without corporate limits, followed closely by candidate committees with 22 percent of the funds. Notably, they took a back seat to party committees, which provided 36 percent of the funds raised by state parties.

Contributions to State Political Parties in the 11 States That Limited Only Corporations and/or Unions, 1999–2016



States That Limit Most Donors

Twenty-three states limited donations to political parties from most donor sources. In these states, party committees raised an average of \$76 million per state, which is 59 percent of the average \$127.9 million raised in the states that

had no limits, and 81 percent of the average \$94.1 million raised in the states that had only corporate/union limits.

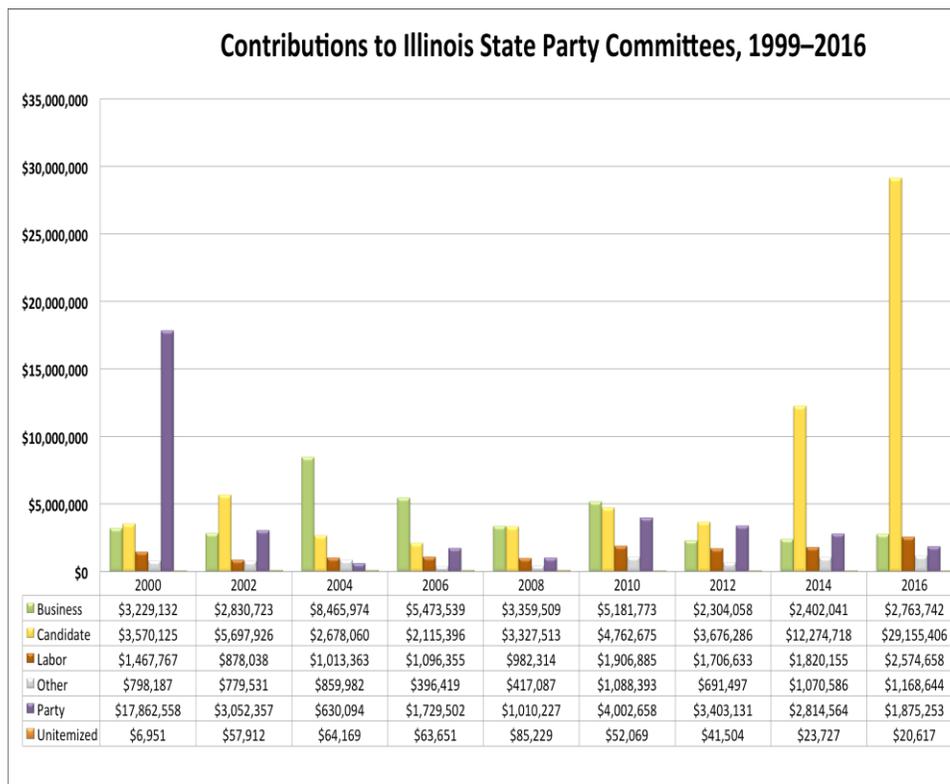
Business donors were the largest source of funds to state parties in these states, providing more than one-third (37 percent) of the money raised. Party committees followed with nearly one-fourth of the money raised. Labor unions averaged 11 percent of the state parties' total.

Donors in States Where Limits Changed

Illinois

Illinois placed no restrictions on any donor types to political party committees until 2011, when the state's first-ever campaign finance law went into effect.²⁵ Most donors were limited in their giving to a political party: \$11,100 from an individual; \$22,200 from a corporation, labor organization, or association; and \$55,400 from a political action committee (all per election cycle). Candidate committees and political party committees, however, could continue to give unlimited amounts.

Contributions to Illinois State Party Committees, 1999–2016



²⁵ <http://www.elections.il.gov/downloads/campaigndisclosure/pdf/contribution%20limits.pdf>

Prior to the enactment of limits in 2011, Illinois state parties raised an average of \$6.7 million per cycle from donor types that were later impacted by the limits. That dropped to \$5.4 million after the limits were enacted, a 19 percent reduction.

Although unencumbered by limits, party committees still shared the stage with—and often were upstaged by—business donors, before and after state limits on business donors were enacted. The only exception to that rule was in 2000, when \$11.7 million was given by the national party committees to help the state parties fund their candidates in the closely contested presidential race, as well as for 20 congressional seats.²⁶

Candidate committees, also not limited, upped their contributions significantly following enactment of the state limits, and provided, on average, half of the funds raised by the party committees in 2011–2016. These committees took center stage during the 2014 and 2016 elections, when Gov. Bruce Rauner funneled more than \$29 million from his campaign committee to the Illinois Republican Party: \$8.6 million in 2014 and nearly \$21 million in 2016. Largely due to the influx of Rauner’s campaign funds, candidate committees provided 60 percent and 78 percent of total funds to state party committees in 2014 and 2016, respectively. Prior to Rauner, Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan was the lead candidate donor, giving party committees \$12.6 million from 1999 through 2016, a significant sum but dwarfed by the \$29 million later given by Rauner.

Before the new limits were put in place, business donors gave an average of \$4.8 million per election cycle, 2000–2010. After limits were enacted, business contributions dropped by half, averaging \$2.4 million per election cycle (2011–2016).

While individual donors have consistently represented a small percentage of the money raised by the state parties, they became even less significant after limits were enacted, shrinking from 7 percent of the total raised pre-limits (1999–2010) to a negligible 1 percent after limits were enacted. Prior to the limits, individual donors collectively gave an average of \$1.1 million per cycle, 2000–2010. This dropped by two-thirds after limits were enacted, to \$330,737 per cycle.

The 2004 and 2010 cycles saw unusually high amounts of individual giving to the Democratic Party in Illinois. In 2004, 37 individuals gave the party \$940,149; in 2010, just 29 individuals gave the party \$1,011,852. Overall in Illinois, the Democratic Party’s cycle average from individuals was \$295,695.

²⁶ <https://elections.il.gov/ElectionResults.aspx?ID=WYqMvNx3BSk%3d>

Individual Contributions to Illinois Party Committees, 2000–2016

Election Cycle	Total	Number of Individuals who gave >\$10,000
2000	\$701,587	17
2002	\$388,424	8
2004	\$1,689,890	44
2006	\$896,562	32
2008	\$816,423	27
2010	\$1,902,773	42
2012*	\$351,706	20
2014*	\$266,078	23
2016*	\$330,292	28

*\$10,000/cycle Individual limit in place (previously unlimited)

New Mexico

Similar to Illinois, New Mexico had no restrictions on contributions to political party committees until the 2012 election cycle, when contribution limits went into effect. However, unlike Illinois, all donors were restricted in their giving, including party committees and candidates, and all faced the same limit of \$5,000 per election (primary and general), subject to an annual inflation increase thereafter.

Consequently, the New Mexico state party committee income declined considerably after limits were enacted. The average raised by the two state party committees per cycle dropped 82 percent, from \$4.2 million pre-limits (1999–2010) to \$758,897 post-limits (2012–2016).

Two national donors seemed particularly affected by the limits. After BCRA, both the Republican Governors Association (RGA) and the Democratic Governors Association (DGA) were picking up steam in New Mexico. The RGA gave \$84,000 in 2008 and \$456,210 in 2010. The DGA gave \$286,840 over the years, more than half of which (\$153,760) was given in 2005. But after state contribution limits were enacted, neither the DGA or RGA contributed to New Mexico state party committees.

Although totals from all donor sources diminished significantly after limits were enacted, those outside the party apparatus remained the dominant source of funds to party committees. This was most notable with business-related donors, which provided one-half to two-thirds of the money raised after limits were enacted.

After New Mexico restricted individuals to \$5,000 per election, the average that party committees received from individuals per cycle dropped from \$486,898 to \$61,353. Prior to the limit, individuals were a nominal source for the state parties, accounting for 13 percent of the total raised per cycle. After limits were introduced, individual contributions decreased to 8 percent of the total raised.

Individual Contributions to New Mexico Party Committees, 1999–2016

Election Cycle	Total	Number of Individuals who gave >\$5,000
2000	\$809,246	26
2002	\$656,924	21
2004	\$469,028	14
2006	\$214,230	26
2008	\$484,945	19
2010	\$162,730	8
2012*	\$74,523	11
2014*	\$40,493	4
2016*	\$55,360	3

**\$5,000/election individual limit in place (previously unlimited)*

Tennessee

Corporations were banned from giving to state political parties in Tennessee until June 2011, when then-governor Bill Haslam signed into law a campaign finance bill (SB 1915) that enabled corporations to contribute directly to campaigns.

After that corporate ban was lifted, the Tennessee state parties collectively raised \$1.1 million from 56 corporate donors, comprising 13 percent of the money raised by the parties 2011–2016:

- The state Democratic Party raised \$598,074 from corporate donors during that time, which accounted for 21 percent of its total. The 2014 election cycle stood out when the \$235,600 in corporate money comprised one-third of the \$720,641 raised by the Democratic Party.
- The state GOP raised slightly less (\$501,875) in corporate donations, and these funds counted for 17 percent of the state party's total. The 2016 election cycle saw the Republican Party raising 32 percent of its total from corporate donors.

The largest corporate donor, Olan Mills Inc., a national photography chain headquartered in Chattanooga, provided 40 percent of the \$1.1 million corporate contributions, with \$100,000 given to the Tennessee Democratic Party during the 2016 election cycle.

South Dakota

South Dakota increased its annual limits on individuals giving to political parties from \$3,000 to \$10,000 after 2006. One might expect that giving by individuals would have increased, but that did not occur. Individuals gave an average of \$201,522 each cycle from 1999 through 2006. Rather than increasing when the limits were raised, the average actually dropped 24 percent, to \$132,909 per cycle.

The state parties also saw fewer individuals reach the new contribution limit in South Dakota. From 1999 to 2006, 34 individuals gave the maximum amount to state political parties. From 2007 to 2016, this number dropped to just eight. What's more, the number of individuals who gave above the old limit of \$3,000 decreased to 20 during this time period.

Individual Contributions to South Dakota Party Committees, 1999–2016

Election Cycle	Total Given by Individuals	Number of Individuals Who Reached the Contribution Limit
2000	\$53,043	0
2002	\$132,866	23
2004	\$508,426	11
2006	\$80,691	0
Cycle Average When Individual Limits Were \$3,000	\$193,757	34
2008*	\$102,258	3
2010*	\$366,479	2
2012*	\$42,559	0
2014*	\$100,113	1
2016*	\$53,141	2
Cycle Average When Individual Limits Were \$10,000	\$132,910	8
TOTAL	\$1,439,576	

*\$10,000/year individual limit 2008–2016 / \$3,000/year individual limit 2000–2006.

Appendix A: Background

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002 instituted a radical shift in rules governing how political parties participated in elections. While aimed at disrupting the use of so-called “soft money”—unlimited contributions to national party committees—it also had a profound effect on state party finances. Prior to BCRA, state parties received funds from national party committees to complement activities aimed at electing federal candidates, primarily through purchasing TV advertising. BCRA severely curtailed the flow of national party funds to state parties.²⁷

Shortly after BCRA’s passage in 2002 and a subsequent unsuccessful Supreme Court challenge in *McConnell v. FEC*, the Institute used its comprehensive state-level party committee donor data to begin examining the effects of the national law on state parties. Those reports include:

Passing the Bucks: Money Games that Political Parties Play, (Sept. 2003)

A Changing Landscape: Life After McCain-Feingold for Florida’s Political Parties, (Sept. 2004)

Shifting Gears: State Party Strategies Post-BCRA (Sept. 2005)

Declining Fortunes: State Party Finances, 2004, (Sept. 2005)

Closing the Gap: State Party Finances Four Years After BCRA (Oct. 2007)

In assessing the impact of BCRA on state party committees, the Institute noted that the federal committee soft-money transfers to state committees took advantage of a spending formula that greatly benefited the federal parties (essentially state parties could buy ads using more soft money than could the federal parties). Thus, the soft-money transfers were pass-through funds that were not principally for the support of state parties’ basic operations.

“For example, in its earlier study, the Institute found that Michigan’s two state political parties bought \$29 million worth of issue ads in 2000, using a combination of soft and hard money sent to them from the national party committees. However, without that soft money from the national parties in 2004, the state parties’ media programs were basically non-existent.

“The amount the North Carolina parties spent on advertising also decreased. Combined advertising expenditures for both parties totaled \$2.1 million in the 2000 cycle, but dropped to about \$328,000 in the 2004 cycle. And media spending by the Texas parties was also down in 2004. They spent about \$41,000

²⁷ (Ray J. La Raja, Chapter 4: State and Local Political Parties, in *The Election after Reform: Money, Politics and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act*, Michael J. Malbin, ed., 2006)

on broadcast media in the recent election cycle, down from \$1.5 million in 2000.”

28

This conclusion is supported by other research:

“Second, the state parties no longer sponsor television advertising in federal campaigns. The ban on national party soft money and soft money transfers has effectively eliminated this state party activity.” And, “Figure 4.2 shows that both sets of state parties spent less money in the 2004 federal elections than in 2000. Again, these sums represent only the money reported to the FEC. The difference between 2004 and 2000 in these reported sums can largely be accounted for by the decline in transfers from national committees to state parties for spending on broadcast advertising for federal candidates. In 2004, for example, ...” And, “As for media activity, the data in figures 4.3a and 4.3b show dramatically that BCRA eliminated advertising by state political parties mentioning federal candidates. ... The elimination of soft money ‘issue ads’ that supported or opposed federal candidates was a clear goal of BCRA, and it appears that it succeeded.” and, finally “By eliminating national party soft money, BCRA effectively ended the decade-long practice of state parties using national party transfers to air election-related advertising.²⁹

The Institute’s initial post-BCRA research assessed whether state party committees were adapting to the new funding environment. Comparing 2004 party totals with those from 2000, the Institute found that some state committees benefited from federal hard-money transfers as well as donations from individuals:

“The two state parties in Florida enjoyed a \$10 million increase of hard money from the two national party committees over the amount they received in the 2000 elections. The RNC gave \$11.3 million of hard money to the Florida GOP in 2004, \$7.5 million more than it gave in 2000. The Florida Democratic Party received \$6.4 million of hard money from the DNC in 2004, well up from the \$3.6 million it received in 2000. In addition, each of the two state parties raised about \$1 million more in hard money from individual donors.

“The Michigan Democratic Party intentionally bolstered its efforts to raise more hard money, according to Chairman Mark Brewer. The party raised an additional \$5 million in hard money. However, the increase came not from the national party committees, which actually gave less federal money, but rather from individual

²⁸ Shifting Gears: State Party Strategies Post-BCRA, The National Institute on Money in State Politics, September 2005.

²⁹ Ray J. La Raja, Chapter 4: State and Local Political Parties, in *The Election after Reform: Money, Politics and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act*, Michael J. Malbin, ed., 2006.

donors, who gave almost \$7 million in 2004. That's almost triple the \$2.5 million they gave during the comparable 2000 election cycle."³⁰

"The Washington State Democratic Party raised \$4.2 million more in hard money, due to an additional \$1.6 million from individuals, another \$756,000 from the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and \$650,000 from the Kerry for President campaign."³¹

But more than a dozen of the 26 state party committees in the 13 states analyzed in this report relied instead on other donors.

"This early analysis also found that other national committees weighed in with major support, such as the Republican and Democratic Governors Associations, which provided support for gubernatorial campaigns; that other party committees in the state supported each other; that candidates in some states provided support; that parties that focused on individual-donor fundraising had success; and that labor and corporate money began to rise.

"Subsequent analyses through the 2006 elections found similar ups and downs, depending on the state."³²

³⁰ Telephone interview, July 13, 2005, The National Institute on Money in State Politics

³¹ The National Institute on Money in State Politics, *Shifting Gears: State Party Strategies Post-BCRA*, September 2005

³² Denise Roth Barber, *Closing the Gap: State Party Finances Four Years After BCRA*, National Institute on Money in State Politics, Oct. 2007.

Appendix B: Definitions

BCRA The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA, McCain–Feingold Act, Pub.L. 107–155, 116 Stat. 81, enacted March 27, 2002, H.R. 2356) is a United States federal law that amended the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, which regulates the financing of political campaigns.

Citizens United Refers to the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2010 *Citizens United v. FEC* decision, allowing corporations to independently spend unlimited amounts on federal elections.

Cycle Each election cycle consists of two calendar years (1999–2000, 2001–2002, etc.),

Generic Party Spender Spenders with the sole purpose of electing one or more candidates of a specific party. Many of the top generic partisan spenders are funded primarily by national state-focused organizations. In some cases, these groups are essentially state-specific fronts for organizations including the RGA and DGA.

Individuals Actual people. Those who work for a political party are considered donors from inside the political party system. Those who do not work for a political party are considered donors from outside the political party system.

Independent Spending Spending on communications to the electorate that occur during elections and are made independently of the candidate (or other target, where applicable).

Non-Individual Any contributor that is not a person, including labor unions, political party and candidate committees, corporations and/or their political action committees, associations, and ideological groups.

State Party Committees The 100 Democratic and Republican main state political party committees. Thus, this analysis excludes contributions to legislative caucus committees and any other party committees.

Political Party System For purposes of this report, donors include all local, state, and national party committees, candidates and their committees, and nine specific national state-focused organizations (defined further below). Donors outside the political party system include business, labor, unitemized, and other, defined below.

Business All non-individual donors, excluding candidates, political parties, government associations, ideological groups, labor unions, and unitemized donations.

Labor Donors affiliated with organized labor groups. Includes individuals and non-individual donors.

Unitemized Contributions that fall under a state's identifying donor disclosure threshold.

Other NonParty affiliated donors from government associations/groups, ideological groups, as well as public funds and uncoded donors. Includes individuals and non-individual donors.

National Party Committees The following six committees: the Democratic National Committee (DNC), the Republican National Committee, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), The Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee (RSCC), the House Republican Congressional Committee (HRCC), and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC)

Candidates This includes any candidates for elected office as well as contributions from candidate committees (including joint candidate committees) and candidate leadership committees.

Major national state-focused organizations Refers specifically to the following nine committees: Republican Governors Assn (RGA), Republican National State Elections Cmte (RNSEC), Republican State Leadership Cmte (RSLC), Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA), Republican Lieutenant Governors Assn (RLGA), Democratic Governors Assn (DGA), Democratic Legislative Campaign Cmte (DLCC), Democratic Attorneys General Association (DAGA), Democratic Lieutenant Governors Assn (DLGA).

Appendix C: Tables for “Funding of State Party Committees”

Contributions to All 100 State Party Committees, by Donor Type, 1999–2016 (in thousands)

Donor Category	Donor Sub-Category	1999–2000	2001–2002	2003–2004	2005–2006	2007–2008	2009–2010	2011–2012	2013–2014	2015–2016	Total
Business		\$148,933	\$232,204	\$168,917	\$274,058	\$178,915	\$203,056	\$151,282	\$196,043	\$117,307	\$1,670,715
Candidate		\$33,532	\$78,931	\$54,573	\$72,817	\$75,634	\$78,051	\$67,038	\$156,319	\$84,035	\$700,929
Labor		\$22,546	\$38,834	\$32,573	\$54,632	\$37,567	\$63,236	\$37,413	\$36,894	\$31,059	\$354,753
Other		\$47,077	\$68,606	\$52,505	\$66,711	\$47,959	\$49,312	\$50,709	\$76,157	\$64,583	\$523,620
Party		\$398,582	\$341,900	\$56,217	\$66,653	\$78,284	\$93,977	\$81,015	\$77,625	\$69,406	\$1,263,660
	Federal Party	\$273,178	\$224,761	\$17	\$178	\$703	\$3,607	\$3,180	\$4,733	\$4,502	\$514,859
	Party-527	\$76,039	\$56,833	\$18,523	\$16,521	\$13,666	\$35,206	\$12,132	\$11,829	\$11,727	\$252,476
	State/Local Committee	\$49,365	\$60,306	\$37,677	\$49,954	\$63,916	\$55,164	\$65,702	\$61,063	\$53,178	\$496,325
Unitemized		\$10,554	\$7,075	\$10,051	\$11,772	\$5,736	\$4,966	\$4,103	\$2,887	\$1,272	\$58,415
TOTAL		\$661,223	\$767,550	\$374,836	\$546,643	\$424,096	\$492,598	\$391,560	\$545,925	\$367,662	\$4,572,092

Contributions to Wisconsin State Party Committees, by Donor Type, 1999–2016 (in thousands)

Donor Category	Donor Sub-Category	1999–2000	2001–2002	2003–2004	2005–2006	2007–2008	2009–2010	2011–2012	2013–2014	2015–2016	Total
Business		\$887	\$803	\$537	\$278	\$366	\$381	\$2,379	\$4,528	\$2,722	\$12,882
Candidate		\$181	\$116	\$105	\$50	\$550	\$489	\$2,552	\$3,476	\$1,334	\$8,852
Labor		\$152	\$195	\$133	\$114	\$136	\$446	\$601	\$203	\$325	\$2,305
Other		\$1,169	\$1,576	\$1,010	\$245	\$262	\$294	\$5,516	\$2,092	\$1,294	\$13,459
Party		\$4,469	\$13,186	\$463	\$700	\$413	\$633	\$1,858	\$1,230	\$1,139	\$24,091
	Federal Party	\$572	\$7,694					\$0			\$8,266
	Party-527	\$3,803	\$4,732				\$7	\$76	\$12		\$8,631
	State/Local Committee	\$94	\$760	\$463	\$700	\$413	\$626	\$1,782	\$1,218	\$1,139	\$7,194
Unitemized		\$125	\$444	\$110	\$4	\$1	\$20	\$398	\$11	\$3	\$1,116
TOTAL		\$6,982	\$16,321	\$2,358	\$1,390	\$1,729	\$2,263	\$13,304	\$11,540	\$6,817	\$62,705

Contributions to South Dakota State Party Committees, by Donor Type, 1999–2016 (in thousands)

Donor Category	Donor Sub-Category	1999–2000	2001–2002	2003–2004	2005–2006	2007–2008	2009–2010	2011–2012	2013–2014	2015–2016	Total
Business		\$61	\$104	\$257	\$46	\$62	\$219	\$35	\$66	\$55	\$906
Candidate		\$43	\$639	\$77	\$39	\$142	\$111	\$168	\$217	\$142	\$1,576
Labor		\$74	\$550	\$41	\$6	\$13	\$12	\$4	\$38	\$8	\$747
Other		\$62	\$460	\$326	\$59	\$90	\$237	\$253	\$155	\$179	\$1,821
Party		\$1,789	\$16,904	\$490	\$280	\$186	\$96	\$117	\$45	\$26	\$19,933
	Federal Party	\$870	\$13,367								\$14,236
	Party-527	\$226	\$2,877	\$144							\$3,247
	State/Local Committee	\$693	\$660	\$346	\$280	\$186	\$96	\$117	\$45	\$26	\$2,449
Unitemized		\$23	\$16	\$11	\$53	\$28	\$134	\$119	\$20	\$4	\$409
TOTAL		\$2,052	\$18,672	\$1,202	\$484	\$520	\$809	\$696	\$540	\$414	\$25,391

Contributions to Florida State Party Committees, by Donor Type, 1999–2016 (in thousands)

Donor Category	Donor Sub-Category	1999–2000	2001–2002	2003–2004	2005–2006	2007–2008	2009–2010	2011–2012	2013–2014	2015–2016	Total
Business		\$37,949	\$62,806	\$34,906	\$90,192	\$49,592	\$86,723	\$56,900	\$87,426	\$26,565	\$533,059
Candidate		\$850	\$2,102	\$1,370	\$2,015	\$1,951	\$2,937	\$2,773	\$60,274	\$7,193	\$81,465
Labor		\$3,582	\$5,272	\$2,699	\$3,828	\$2,734	\$10,877	\$2,435	\$3,395	\$1,843	\$36,666
Other		\$5,992	\$10,098	\$7,159	\$14,114	\$4,846	\$17,605	\$7,825	\$17,211	\$11,709	\$96,559
Party		\$39,057	\$23,564	\$1,031	\$3,797	\$857	\$12,187	\$918	\$3,045	\$1,516	\$85,972
	Federal Party	\$34,819	\$17,749		\$145		\$2,437	\$20		\$4	\$55,175
	Party-527	\$3,542	\$4,898		\$2,082	\$112	\$9,213	\$604	\$2,437	\$553	\$23,442
	State/Local Committee	\$696	\$917	\$1,031	\$1,570	\$745	\$537	\$294	\$607	\$959	\$7,355
Unitemized		\$1	\$0	\$42	\$0			\$0			\$43
TOTAL		\$87,431	\$103,842	\$47,207	\$113,947	\$59,980	\$130,329	\$70,852	\$171,351	\$48,826	\$833,765

Contributions to State Party Committees from National State-Focused Organizations, 1999–2016 (in thousands)

Organization	1999– 2000	2001– 2002	2003– 2004	2005– 2006	2007– 2008	2009– 2010	2011– 2012	2013– 2014	2015– 2016	Total
Republican National State Elections Committee/RNSEC	\$71,390	\$50,136								\$121,526
Republican Governors Assn/RGA	\$198	\$531	\$4,254	\$4,053	\$3,907	\$25,944	\$2,312	\$4,780	\$1,124	\$47,102
Republican State Leadership Cmte/RSLC			\$1,109	\$3,069	\$3,858	\$2,578	\$2,692	\$1,357	\$763	\$15,426
Republican Attorneys General Association/RAGA		\$47						\$26	\$10	\$83
Republican Total	\$71,588	\$50,713	\$5,363	\$7,122	\$7,765	\$28,521	\$5,004	\$6,163	\$1,897	\$184,137
Democratic Governors Assn/DGA	\$2,352	\$4,825	\$11,123	\$5,746	\$5,009	\$4,813	\$4,755	\$3,441	\$7,892	\$49,958
Democratic Legislative Campaign Cmte/DLCC	\$2,099	\$1,261	\$1,685	\$2,632	\$861	\$1,324	\$2,156	\$2,046	\$1,932	\$15,996
Democratic Attorneys General Association/DAGA		\$34	\$352	\$1,021		\$543	\$212	\$179	\$125	\$2,465
Democratic Lieutenant Governors Assn/DLGA					\$31	\$4	\$5			\$40
Democratic Total	\$4,451		\$13,160	\$9,398	\$5,901	\$6,685	\$7,128	\$5,666	\$9,949	\$68,459
TOTAL	\$76,039	\$56,833	\$18,523	\$16,521	\$13,666	\$35,206	\$12,132	\$11,829	\$11,847	\$252,596