



# Money in Politics Research Action Project

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

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**Contact:**  
 Janice Thompson or Sarah Wetherson, 503/283-1922

## Less Competition in Legislative Races and Greater Competition in Ballot Measures, Other Races Mean Less Money for Legislative Candidates

General Election fundraising totals for legislative races echo 2002 numbers, reflecting lower rates of competition among the races and possibly the effect of a few highly competitive ballot measure races.

“In 2002 there were 15 Senate races, while this cycle there are two additional contests. But in November 2002, 16 percent of legislative races were competitive—this year, only 10 percent are. Between that and the way that money from traditional political givers, like trial lawyers and timber companies, is being diverted to fuel ballot measure fights, we see legislative candidates just matching the fundraising levels seen in 2002,” said Sarah Wetherson, research and outreach associate for the Money in Politics Research Action Project.

**Chart 1: Comparison of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reporting Period Fundraising, 2002 and 2004 General Elections**

| Senate Races<br>1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> report contributions |               | House Races<br>1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> report contributions |              | All Legislative Races<br>1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> report contributions |               |
|--|---------------|---|--------------|---|---------------|
| 2002   | 2004          | 2002  | 2004         | 2002  | 2004          |
| \$3.6 million  | \$3.6 million | \$5.2million  | \$5.2million | \$8.8 million   | \$8.8 million |

Data for 2004 is compiled by Money in Politics Research Action Project (MiPRAP) based on Elections Division data and could change due to auditing and amendments. Data for 2002 is compiled by MiPRAP based on Elections Division data.

In the Senate, there are three highly competitive races, where the candidates have each raised enough money to have an “equal opportunity” to get their message out to voters. In 2002, there were five races in the Senate with that status. House races are also less competitive. Only five House matchups have “equal opportunity” fundraising rates; seven races in 2002 did.

**Chart 2: Competition Analysis of 2002 General Election Races**

| Competitiveness     | # of Senate races | % of 15 Senate Races |     | # of House Races | % of 60 House Races |     | # of Legislative Races | % of 75 Legislative Races |     |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----|------------------|---------------------|-----|------------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Unopposed           | 1                 | 7%                   | 34% | 6                | 10%                 | 67% | 7                      | 9%                        | 60% |
| Drowned Out         | 4                 | 27%                  |     | 34               | 57%                 |     | 38                     | 51%                       |     |
| Lopsided            | 2                 | 13%                  |     | 8                | 13%                 |     | 10                     | 13%                       |     |
| Struggle to Keep Up | 3                 | 20%                  |     | 5                | 8%                  |     | 8                      | 11%                       |     |
| Equal Opportunity   | 5                 | 33%                  |     | 7                | 12%                 |     | 12                     | 16%                       |     |

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**Chart 3: Competition Analysis of 2004 General Election Races**

| Competitiveness     | # of Senate races | % of 17 Senate Races |     | # of House Races | % of 60 House Races |     | # of Legislative Races | % of 77 Legislative Races |     |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----|------------------|---------------------|-----|------------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Unopposed           | 4                 | 24%                  | 59% | 6                | 10%                 | 72% | 10                     | 13%                       | 69% |
| Drowned Out         | 6                 | 35%                  |     | 37               | 62%                 |     | 43                     | 56%                       |     |
| Lopsided            | 3                 | 18%                  |     | 6                | 10%                 |     | 9                      | 12%                       |     |
| Struggle to Keep Up | 1                 | 6%                   |     | 6                | 10%                 |     | 7                      | 9%                        |     |
| Equal Opportunity   | 3                 | 18%                  |     | 5                | 8%                  |     | 8                      | 10%                       |     |

Based on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> General Election reporting period contributions plus cash balances that reflect money raised but not spent during the primary and available for general election expenditures. Compilation and analysis by MiPRAP using Elections Division data. Data could change due to auditing and amendments.

While only 13 percent of races in the legislature have unopposed candidates, another 56 percent of legislative races are between candidates where the fundraising underdog has raised less than 25 percent the better fundraiser. (In cases where there are three or more candidates, MiPRAP calculated the difference between the two highest fundraisers. See charts at [www.oregonfollowthemoney.org](http://www.oregonfollowthemoney.org) - look under "Who's Running.")

“With 13 percent of legislative races lacking a challenger and another 56 percent of races having a challenger who is in effect 'drowned out' by the better fundraiser, two out of three of the races are effectively over and we could probably predict now who will win,” said Janice Thompson, MiPRAP executive director.

Nine of the remaining races reflect lopsided fundraising, where the underdog has raised between 25 and 50 percent of the opponent’s contribution total. The underdogs in eight of the races struggle to keep up, having raised between 50 and 75 percent of their challengers’ totals.

Even the best fundraisers, however, are only on par with the best fundraisers in 2002, as the chart below illustrates. So, it seems likely that other factors, like competitive ballot measures and other candidate races, are diverting money from legislative campaigns.

**Chart 4: Comparison of 2002 and 2004 Contributions in Top Fundraising Legislative Races**

| Top 5 Senate Contribution Levels                 |           |  |           | Top 5 House Contribution Levels                  |           |  |           |
|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| 2002 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> reports |           | 2004 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> reports |           | 2002 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> reports |           | 2004 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> reports |           |
| Charlie Ringo (SD 17)                            | \$493,072 | Laurie Monnes Anderson (SD 25)                   | \$495,351 | Deborah Kafoury (HD 43)                          | \$244,540 | Chuck Burley (HD 54)                             | \$218,241 |
| Bill Witt (SD 17)                                | \$382,308 | Ron Sunseri (SD 25)                              | \$395,944 | Jim Zupancic (HD 38)                             | \$214,598 | Linda Flores (HD 51)                             | \$199,600 |
| Bob Tiernan (SD 19)                              | \$353,261 | Jim Wright (SD 3)                                | \$380,577 | Keith Parker (HD 28)                             | \$198,044 | Wayne Scott (HD 39)                              | \$183,003 |
| Richard Devlin (SD 19)                           | \$344,762 | Joanne Verger (SD 5)                             | \$352,143 | Greg Macpherson (HD 38)                          | \$192,429 | Suzanne Gallagher (HD 35)                        | \$175,055 |
| Bryan Johnston (SD 10)                           | \$283,909 | Al Pearn (SD 5)                                  | \$323,251 | Karen Minnis (HD 49)                             | \$180,682 | Alan Brown (HD 10)                               | \$170,942 |

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