

News Release

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“Money in PoliTex” Offers the First Comprehensive Guide to A Texas Election

Austin, TX: Texans for Public Justice released today the first comprehensive study of a Texas election. *Money in PoliTex: A Guide to Money in the 2002 Texas Elections* analyzes the sources, sizes, and interests behind the \$195 million that Texas statewide and legislative candidates raised for the most recent state election. The report also contains a *post mortem* of the \$43.5 million that PACs of the two major political parties raised separately to support state candidates.

“*Money in PoliTex*” is the most complete picture to date of how big money dominates Texas politics,” said Texans for Public Justice Director Craig McDonald. “Wealthy individuals, businesses and lobby interests write the big checks that have thrown Lone-Star democracy out of balance.”

The 50-page report analyzes the money raised by all 433 major-party candidates for statewide and legislative offices in 2002, breaking these contributions down by size, economic interest and geographical source. It contains campaign-finance profiles of major officeholders and the two dominant political parties. It also identifies the state’s top individual and institutional donors.

Findings of *Money in PoliTex* include:

- Statewide and legislative candidates raised \$195 million, supplying \$68 million of it from their own pockets and obtaining the other \$127 million from other, “external” donors;
- While Texas candidates raised \$127 million from more than 58,000 individual and institutional donors (PACs and businesses), just 382 donors accounted for almost one-half of this money (\$60 million);
- Individuals contributed \$77 million, while PACs and businesses contributed \$50 million;
- With the exception of two attorneys and two lobbyists, the top 50 individual contributors in the state all were business executives;
- Austin—the home of the lobby—accounted for 59 percent of this money (\$75 million), while Houston generated another \$26 million and Dallas \$17 million;

- House candidates raised just 24 percent of their money within the districts that they represent, while senate candidates obtained 31 percent of their money in district;
- Winners raised \$100 million, surpassing the \$88 million raised by their general-election opponents (candidates eliminated in the primaries raised \$7 million);
- Skewed by the \$57 million in self-contributions from Tony Sanchez, money appears to be evenly divided among incumbents (\$63 million), challengers (\$68 million) and candidates seeking open seats (\$63 million);
- Yet 60 percent of the races for district-level offices went uncontested and just 20 percent of these races were truly competitive (with the winner prevailing with less than 60 percent of the vote); and
- Candidates raised \$52 million before the March primaries, \$113 million between the primary and the general election, and another \$30 million in the five “late-train” weeks after the election.

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[Texans for Public Justice](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan research and advocacy organization that tracks the role of money in Texas politics.