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Record Number of PACs Worked Texas' 2012 Elections

1,364 PACS Spent \$126 Million, a Slight Drop from 2010

Austin—A record 1,364 active Texas political action committees (PACs) spent \$126 million in the two-year 2012 election cycle, down five percent from the 2010 gubernatorial election cycle. The number of PACs spending money to influence state elections increased 41 percent over the past decade, while total PAC spending increased almost 50 percent over the same period according to TPJ's new report, [Texas PACs: 2012 Cycle Spending](#). A "Dark Money" section of the report separately discusses almost \$600,000 spent by two political nonprofits that did not disclose contributors

The Business PAC sector spent \$70 million, up three percent over the preceding cycle. Business PACs accounted for 56 percent of all the PAC money spent in Texas. Spending by PACs in the Ideological and Single-Issue sector was down 18 percent to just \$48 million. (A list of Texas' fastest-shrinking PACs includes a disproportionate number of major Democratic committees.) Finally, the Labor PAC sector spent \$8 million. Although this represented 16 percent increase over 2010 cycle, Labor PACs accounted for just 6 percent of PAC expenditures.

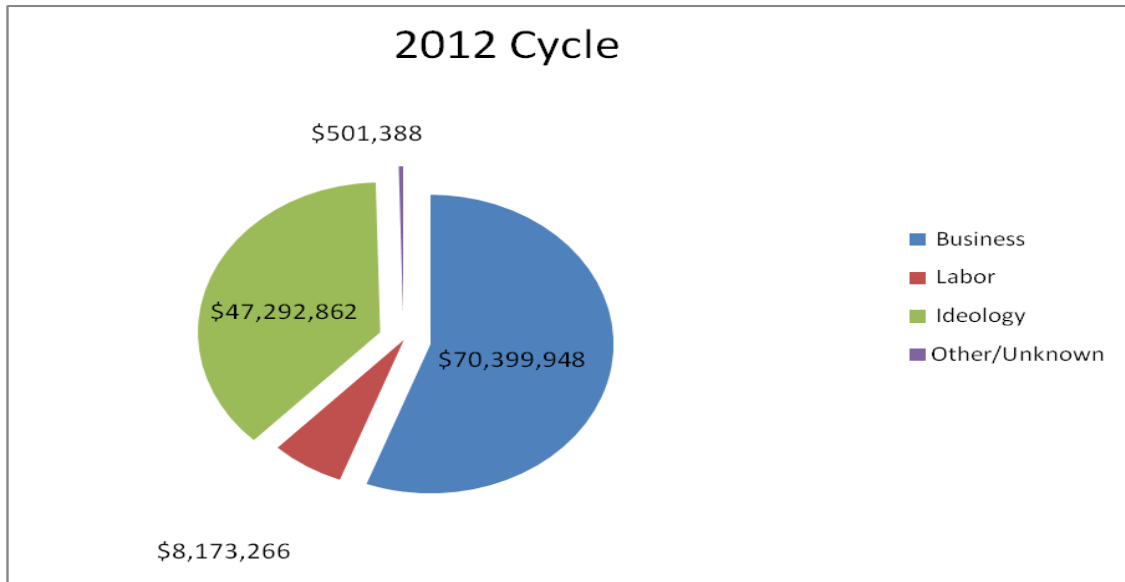
Energy & Natural Resources PACs led the Business sector, boosting expenditures 14 percent to almost \$12 million. During the 2013 session, lawmakers: Sabotaged reforms of the oil and gas industry's lapdog regulatory agency; Killed a bill to restrict the eminent-domain powers of pipeline companies; and Promoted \$2 billion in water projects backed by the thirsty fracking industry. Lawmakers also jacked up the radioactivity of nuclear waste brought into Texas by Waste Control Specialists, which operates this sector's fattest new PAC.

Waste Control owner Harold Simmons provided more than one-eighth of the money spent by Texas' No. 1 PAC: Texans for Lawsuit Reform. TLR spent \$7.8 million. Some of TLR's leadership is migrating into education policy, with no major tort bills looming on the horizon.

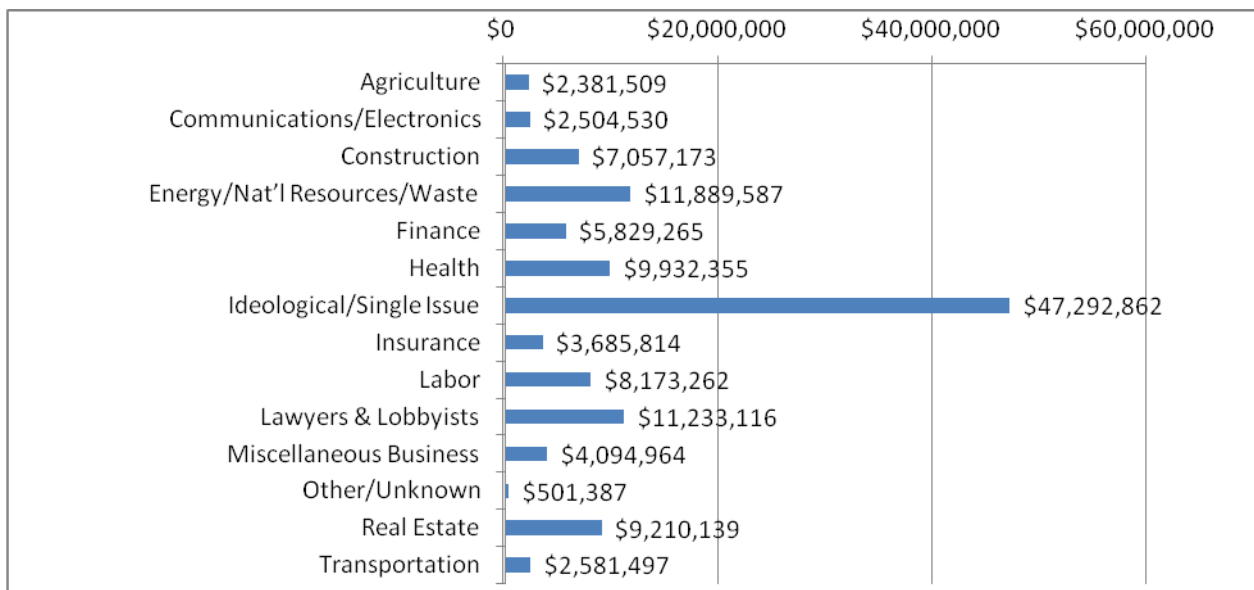
Health PACs doubled their spending to almost \$19 million. McAllen's \$2.2 million Border Health PAC outspent the powerful Texas Medical Association (TMA) almost 2:1, in its aggressive promotion of the physician-owned Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance. These and other Health PACs suffered a huge loss with the defeat of a bill to allow Texas to take federal Obamacare funding to expand Medicaid to 1.5 million more Texans.

Two Texas Association of Realtors PACs accounted for most of the \$9 million spent by the No. 3 Real Estate Sector. Remarkably, one Realtors PAC spent more than \$250,000 to take out of a single lawmaker.

2012 Texas PAC Spending by Major Sectors



2012 Texas PAC Spending By Interest Categories



The *Texas PACs* report ranks Texas' 228 biggest PACs and classifies political committees by their economic and ideological interests. The new report, based on PAC disclosure reports filed with the Texas Ethics Commission, is available at <http://www.tpj.org>.

Texans for Public Justice is a non-partisan, non-profit policy & research organization that tracks money in Texas politics.