

News Release

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Record \$159 Million in Texas PAC Spending Analyzed in New TPJ Report

(Austin, TX) An unrivalled 1,421 general purpose political committees spent a record \$159 million in the 2014 election cycle, according to a [new edition of TPJ's biennial "Texas PACs" report](#).

Business PACs accounted for just over half of all Texas PAC spending, led by Texas' No. 2 PAC: the \$6.9 million Texas Association of Realtors PAC. Spending patterns by this palatial Realtor PAC suggest a preference for moderates over Tea-Party extremists.

Ideological and Single-Issue PACs accounted for 41 percent of all PAC spending, led by a \$7 million outlay by Texas' largest PAC: Texans for Lawsuit Reform. Labor PACs commanded just 6 percent of the PAC pie, led by the Texas Organizing Project's TOP PAC.

Empower Texans PAC and TOP PAC were the state's fastest-growing PACs. Empower PAC spent almost \$5.5 million in the 2014 cycle, up more than 5,000 percent from what it spent in 2012. TOP PAC increased spending almost 500 percent to more than \$2.5 million.

Meanwhile, the Empower Texans non-profit spent almost \$550,000 in political funds from undisclosed sources, accounting for about a third of Texas' dark-money dollars. Empower spent most of its dark dollars promoting hard-line conservatives over relative moderates in the GOP Primary. The Texas Organizing Project non-profit ranked No. 2 in dark money. It spent most of its \$320,000 on canvassing operations in Houston and San Antonio.

Texas' fattest new PACs were the \$2.6 million Planned Parenthood Texas Votes PAC and the \$1 million Accountability First PAC. The new Planned Parenthood PAC spent 58 cents of every dollar helping Democratic headliners Wendy Davis and Leticia Van de Putte win 39 percent of the vote. Accountability First's three favorite candidates cast three of the 19 votes to oust House Speaker Joe Straus in early 2015. The PAC's next three favorite candidates probably would have joined this dissent—if they had won their House races.

The 31-page "Texas PACs" report delves deeply into PAC spending by the four largest business sectors: Real Estate, Energy & Natural Resources, Health and Lawyers & Lobbyists. The report includes scintillating sections on dark money, new PACs, fast-growth PACs, shrinking PACs, extinct PACs and the specific-purpose PACs that promoted ballot initiatives for water and road projects. The appendix ranks the 262 top PACs that spent more than \$100,000 apiece.

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