

# **WHERE DID THE POLITICAL PARTY MONEY GO?: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE 2006 AND 2008 OKLAHOMA ELECTIONS**

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With the decline of the economy and the implementation of term limits in Oklahoma, campaign money has become increasingly more important to state legislative candidates in Oklahoma. Featuring data from every state legislative contest in the 2006 and 2008 elections, this article seeks to explore the role of money in political campaigns. While many of the traditional expectations held (winners spent more losers, Senate candidates spent more than House candidates, and candidates spent more money overall), the spending of the political parties was the most drastic change in the 2006 and 2008 elections. Both parties, but especially the Democrats, experienced a significant decline in their campaign spending. With Republicans controlling both houses of the Oklahoma legislature, this does not bode well for Oklahoma Democrats in the future if this trend does not change.

In Oklahoma in 2008, the excitement was not with the presidential elections. State experts had long predicted that Republican John McCain would win Oklahoma's popular vote tally. Not only were they correct, but Oklahoma gave the largest vote percentage to John McCain of any

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state in the union. Rather, most of the excitement was with the state races. The Republicans won a majority of seats in the State Senate for the first time in history, picking up two seats for a 26 to 22 advantage. In the House Republicans gained four seats, guaranteeing a 61-40 margin and the largest number of seats in both houses held by Republicans in state history.

Yet, the McCain-Obama election was not without impact in Oklahoma. Prior to the election, state Democrats had been worried. Given McCain's predicted strong win in Oklahoma, Democrat Barack Obama chose not to campaign in the state. This had put state Democrats on edge, fearing that their voters would fail to turn out to vote as heavily not only for the presidential race, but for the state races as well. The Democrats knew that having Obama in Oklahoma could have helped their candidates since loyal Democrats would have been more likely to give money if Obama visited the state. Republicans, on the other hand, knew that the presidential race, with McCain and Sarah Palin at the top of the ballot, could only help their candidates, particularly in a "red" state like Oklahoma.

As it turns out, though, the results of these statewide elections should not have been a surprise. The last few elections have brought some ominous signs for Democrats. One of these signs has been campaign finance. A quick glance at House candidate average fundraising in the 2006 elections shows this. Oklahoma House Democrats raised only \$30,573 while their House Republican colleagues raised \$51,201. Even scarier for Democrats was the list of the top 10 political action committees, or PACs, in 2006. These are the PACs that gave the largest average donation to candidates, with a minimum of 20 donations. These are exactly the PACs that candidates covet, because with high average donations, candidates might be able to get by with fewer donors. Yet, a glance at this list reads like a Who's Who in the Republican Party; the Oklahoma State Republican Senatorial Committee was #1 with a \$4,166 average donation, but was followed at #2 by the Republican State House Committee, at #4 by the Republican PAC to the Future, and at #6 by the Fund for a Conservative Future. All told, of the 10 PACs, seven gave either entirely or almost entirely to Republicans, two PACs split their donations between the two parties, and only one, LEGAL, gave exclusively to Democrats. Yet, in the 2008 elections this news got even worse for Democrats: LEGAL, the one PAC on the

2006 list that gave exclusively to Democrats donated only to two candidates in 2008.

This essay will examine these signs and others by looking at campaign finance in both the 2006 and 2008 elections. Unfortunately for Democrats, these 2006 election numbers should have made Democrats fear 2008, while sending Republicans running to the polls. But, 2008 was not much better for Democrats. Several days before the November 2008 election, the Republican state legislative candidates had raised \$6 million or about \$1.8 million more than their Democratic challengers (Killman and Hoberock 2008). This essay will also look at the trend of expensive campaigns to see if state-level candidates followed the trend of extensive campaign spending at the federal level, with candidates spending more money to win elections. This essay will also investigate the role of PACs. Who receives money from these PACs? Does it make a difference if it is a House or Senate candidate, a Democrat or Republican, or an incumbent or a challenger? This essay will answer these questions by exploring the role of money in Oklahoma elections. The data for this information was gathered candidate by candidate using Oklahoma Ethics Commission website information for races in 2006 and 2008.<sup>1</sup>

## **OVERALL SPENDING AND AVERAGES BY CANDIDATE**

At first glance there seemed to be some remarkable similarities between the 2006 and 2008 Oklahoma legislative elections. For example, in 2008, a total of \$10,347,694.64 was received by House legislative candidates while in 2006, that amount was \$9,413,899.05 (Table 1). There are similar results for the Senate with \$6,654,587.45 received in 2008, and \$8,123,077.64 in 2006. Likewise, House candidates spent \$9,229,494.73 in 2008 and \$8,124,363.76 in 2006. For the Senate, those numbers were \$5,482,185.17 in 2008 and \$6,911,798.07 in 2006, respectively. With total PAC money, \$4,772,273.00 was received in PAC money by state legislative candidates in 2006 and \$5,004,641.01 in the 2008 elections.

These similarities continue when the location of the PAC money is considered (see Table 2). All PAC contributions were coded for whether they came from in-state or out-of-state contributors. This was done by

**TABLE 1**  
**Receipts, Expenditures, PAC \$, PAC Donations by type of candidate -- 2008**

<b>Year</b>	<b>House Candidates' Receipts</b>	<b>House Candidates' Expenditures</b>	<b>Senate Candidates' Receipts</b>	<b>Senate Candidates' Expenditures</b>	<b>Total PAC \$</b>
2006	\$9,413,899.05	\$8,124,363.76	\$8,123,077.64	\$6,911,798.07	\$4,772,273.00
2008	\$10,347,694.64	\$9,229,494.73	\$6,654,587.45	\$5,482,185.17	\$5,004,641.01

**TABLE 2**  
**In or Out of State PAC Money in the 2006 and 2008 Legislative Elections**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>IN or OUT</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>% by Amount</b>	<b>% Count</b>
<b>2008</b>	\$4,324,950	IN	4747	\$911.09	86.4	81.1
<b>2008</b>	\$679,691	OUT	1017	\$667.82	13.6	18.9
<b>2006</b>	\$4,771,725	IN	4989	\$956.45	83.2	83.2
<b>2006</b>	\$548,087	OUT	1011	\$542.12	16.9	16.9

looking at the PAC's address, and not its name, as occasionally there are PACs that sound like they should be from Oklahoma (anything with "Sooner" in it, for example), but are actually based elsewhere, including Texas. The lion's share of out-of-state PAC money comes from Texas, which is not surprising considering the large number of oil and gas PACs on the list. There were 4,989 in-state contributions in the 2006 elections and 4,747 in 2008, accounting for 89.7% of the PAC money in 2006 and 86.4% in 2008. The average amount given by in-state PACs was \$956.45 in 2006 and \$911.09 in 2008. The out-of-state PACs were even more similar with 1,011 in 2006 for 10.3% of the donations, and 1,017 in 2008 for 13.6% of the donations. The average donation in 2006, though for out-of-state PACs was \$542.12, while in 2008 it was \$667.82. Thus, the average in-state donation went down slightly from the 2006 to 2008 elections, while the average out-of-state donation increased.

Typically, both House and Senate candidates would be expected to raise and spend more in the 2008 elections than they did in 2006 (Table 3). This matches the general trend for increased campaign finance spending every election year (Jacobson 2008). However, in Oklahoma, the results were a bit different with this being true for the House, but not the Senate. This was despite the fact that the House was considerably less competitive in 2008 than it was in the 2006 elections, and the races for Senate seats were actually more competitive in 2008 when the candidates raised and spent less.

One of the factors to consider in Oklahoma is the difference in political party spending. Until recently, Oklahomans traditionally voted for Democrats for state legislative seats and were more likely to vote for Republicans for congressional seats and for President (Harris 2009). In fact, no Democrat has won Oklahoma's presidential vote since 1964 (Hardt 2005). This explains why President Barack Obama, a Democrat, did not visit this state while campaigning for President in 2008. Yet, the trend of voting for Democrats in local elections has clearly changed, with Republicans holding now both the state House and the State Senate after the 2008 elections. Thus, it would be natural to expect that Republican candidates should receive more money than the Democrats. That certainly is the case. In 2006, the House Democratic candidates received only \$30,573 on average while House Republicans received \$51,201. In 2008, the difference between the two parties in the House

stayed about the same, although with slightly higher amounts as the Democrats received \$36,110, while the Republicans received \$57,083 on average. There are similar expenditures in the House with the Democrats spending \$22,416 in 2006 (\$30,584 in 2008) and the Republicans spending \$45,673 (\$52,593 in 2008).

Given the prestige of Senate seats and the fact that they are up every four years compared to two in the House, Senate candidates should raise and spend more than their House colleagues. This is similar to results at the federal level, where US Senate candidates have typically out-raised and spent their House counterparts about 7 to 1 (Jacobson 2008). The Oklahoma Senate candidates spent and raised more on average in 2008 than they did in 2006 (Table 3). Yet, here is where the story differs, with Oklahoma Senate Democrats doing much better than their Republican colleagues in 2006 and in 2008. The Senate Democrats for example raised \$125,764 in 2006 and \$173,042 in 2008 on average, while for Republicans it was only \$86,470 and \$120,242. With expenditures, Democrats spent \$105,725 in 2006 and \$137,909 in 2008, while only \$75,517 in 2006 and \$102,211 in 2008 for the Republicans on average.

Winner should also be expected to raise more money than the losers. Donors typically want to give money to a winning campaign, so that they will not waste their money. Any money given to a candidate tends to attract more money, just furthering the advantage for winning candidates (Gierzynski 2000). Many of these winners were either incumbents or open seat candidates, but not challengers. In fact, in the 2006 and 2008 elections only seven challengers were successful in defeating incumbents. Thus, not surprisingly most of the winners raised and spent more than their losing competitors. House winners raised \$67,612 on average in the 2008 elections, while the losers only raised \$24,597 (Table 4). This represents a 2.7 to 1 advantage for House winners over losers. This gap has actually increased since 2006 when it was only 2.5 to 1. The gap also exists with the House, with winners spending \$60,245 while the losers only spent \$22,207. This too is a 2.7 to 1 advantage for the winners. In the Senate, the gap fell from the 2006 to 2008 elections, although the winners still outspent the winners. In 2006, the winners outraised the losers 2.8 to 1 (\$207,669 to \$74,872). But in 2008, that gap was only 2.3 to 1 (\$194,508 to \$86,365 for the losers). Likewise, the winning Senate candidates spent more than their

**TABLE 3**  
**Partisan Differences – Receipts/Expenditures**

	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Republicans</b>	<b>Independents</b>
2008 House Receipts	\$36,110	\$57,083	\$3,419
2006 House Receipts	\$30,573	\$51,201	\$1,543
2008 House Expenditures	\$30,584	\$52,593	\$3,184
2006 House Expenditures	\$22,416	\$45,673	\$996
2008 Senate Receipts	\$173,042	\$120,242	
2006 Senate Receipts	\$125,764	\$86,470	
2008 Senate Expenditures	\$137,909	\$102,211	
2006 Senate Expenditures	\$105,725	\$75,517	

**TABLE 4**  
**Winners/Losers – Receipts and Expenditures**

	<b>Winners</b>	<b>Losers</b>
2008 House Receipts	\$67,612	\$24,597
2006 House Receipts	\$58,063	\$22,924
2008 House Expenditures	\$60,245	\$22,207
2006 House Expenditures	\$51,592	\$22,054
2008 Senate Receipts	\$194,508	\$86,365
2006 Senate Receipts	\$207,669	\$74,872
2008 Senate Expenditures	\$149,775	\$82,069
2006 Senate Expenditures	\$171,478	\$69,477

losing colleagues in 2008 with a 1.8 to 1 advantage (\$149,775 to \$82,069), compared to 2.4 to 1 in the 2006 election (\$171,478 to \$69,477 for the losers).

In past Oklahoma elections, the incumbent has typically raised more than the challenger, with open seat candidates usually falling in between the two in terms of money raised (Gierzynski 2000). Oklahoma donors clearly considered incumbent candidates to be the safer bet in both the 2006 and 2008 elections (Table 5). House incumbents received \$50,399 and \$62,657 on average while their challengers only received \$16,427 and \$22,545, for a 2.8 to 1 difference in the 2008 elections, down from 3.1 in 2006. For House expenditures the tale is the same, with 2.5 to 1 difference in 2008 (\$55,021 to \$21,288). Similarly, Senate incumbents (\$185,243 and spending \$130,811) also received and spent more money than their challengers (\$116,428 and \$112,086). It is interesting to note, however, that the winner to loser gap narrows considerably for the Senate with only 1.6 to 1 for receipts, and 1.2 to 1 for expenditures. Senate races, though, tend to attract higher-quality challengers, both in experience and in fundraising than do House races so this may not be as much of a surprise as one might first think.

Open seat races, where no incumbent is running, are typically much more competitive than incumbent-challenger races. Given the advantages of incumbents, potential candidates will wait for an open seat to develop, so when it does there are usually a large number of candidates (Francis-Smith 2009). This has been particularly the case in Oklahoma which has been experiencing the impact of twelve-year term limits. While they were first enacted in 1990, they did not take effect for the legislators until 2004, and as a result there have been more open seat races in Oklahoma in recent years. For example, there were fourteen open seat races in the House in 2008 and eight in the Senate. Thus, open seat races should be competitive in terms of the money raised, with typically greater amounts than raised by the challenger candidates (Francis-Smith 2009). Open seat candidates raised and spent around \$40-50,000 in 2006 and 2008, which is more than the \$15-25,000 raised/spent by challengers but considerably less than the \$45-62,000 raised/spent by incumbents (Table 5). One exception is House District seat 1, where Dennis Bailey (D) and Rusty Farley (R) raised only \$21,944 *combined* prior to the election (Killman and Hoberock 2008). Yet the 2008 Senate races were more competitive, with Senate open seat



**TABLE 5**  
**Incumbents/Challengers/OS – Receipts/Expenditures**

	<b>Incumbents</b>	<b>Challengers</b>	<b>Open Seats</b>
2008 House Receipts	\$62,658	\$22,545	\$48,792
2006 House Receipts	\$50,399	\$16,427	\$45,038
2008 House Expenditures	\$55,021	\$21,288	\$44,233
2006 House Expenditures	\$44,995	\$15,362	\$37,140
2008 Senate Receipts	\$185,243	\$116,428	\$116,976
2006 Senate Receipts	\$111,003	\$59,818	\$138,112
2008 Senate Expenditures	\$130,811	\$112,086	\$107,556
2006 Senate Expenditures	\$81,718	\$53,974	\$127,777

candidates raising \$116,976 and spending \$107,556 on average. This is actually down from the 2006 elections, with \$138,112 raised and \$127,777 spent.

### TOP 10 PAC LISTS

Since it has been shown that Senate candidates raise more money than House candidates, it is also not a surprise to look at the top 10 recipients and spenders of campaign funds in 2006 and 2008 and find mostly Senate candidates on the list. In fact, in 2008 as Table 6 shows, only one House candidate made the list of the top 10 recipients, although two House candidates made the list for top 10 spenders. At the top of the list was Senate candidate Richard Lerblance who raised \$583,469.70 for his Senate bid. Part of this money came from personal loans, over \$137,500 in loans prior to the election (Killman and Hoberock 2008). The next four candidates were in the \$400,000-\$500,000 range with Senate candidates Nancy Riley, Thomas Adelson, Daniel Newberry, and James Edmund Halligan. The lone House candidate on the list was Douglas Gene Cox who raised \$269,240.16. Lerblance and Riley competed against each other for the Senate District 37 seat. This race attracted considerable attention because Nancy Riley had switched her party registration from Republican to Democrat and the Senate was now evenly divided, with 24 Republicans and 24 Democrats. Thus, many felt that this race would decide majority party control. Newberry took advantage of PAC money in this race raising more than \$344,000 from PACs, and defeated the incumbent Riley, winning 63 percent of the vote (Francis-Smith 2009).

It is interesting to note, however, that Lerblance's fundraising did not match the top recipient of 2006, Senate candidate Michael Burrage who raised \$651,755. In that election year, only three candidates were \$400,000+ fundraisers, compared to five in the 2008 elections. This does not mean though that the candidates spent all that money. In fact, looking at the top 10 list of spenders, only four were in the \$400,000+ range, with once again Senate candidate Richard Lerblance getting the top slot, spending \$573,141. Yet, five of the top ten candidates only spent in the \$200,000-\$300,000 range. Among these spenders were Douglas Gene Cox and Todd Mark Thomsen, both House candidates, with \$258,030 and \$237,698 respectively. In the 2006 elections, the top spender was once again Michael Burrage who spent \$639,493.

**TABLE 6**  
**Top 10 Recipients & Spenders**

<b>2008 Candidates -- Recipients</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1. Lerblance, Richard for Senate	\$583,470
2. Riley, Nancy for Senate	\$447,924
3. Adelson, Thomas for Senate	\$446,551
4. Newberry, Daniel for Senate	\$446,364
5. Halligan, James Edmund for Senate	\$440,942
6. Paddack, Susan for Senate	\$372,560
7. Erwin, Keith for Senate	\$349,635
8. Barrington, Don for Senate	\$338,746
9. Nichols, Jonathan E. for Senate	\$278,166
10. Cox, Douglas for Rep	\$269,240

<b>2008 Candidates -- Spenders</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1. Lerblance, Richard for Senate	\$573,141
2. Riley, Nancy for Senate	\$446,488
3. Halligan, James Edmund for Senate	\$430,756
4. Newberry, Daniel for Senate	\$426,250
5. Erwin, Keith for Senate	\$326,902
6. Adelson, Thomas for Senate	\$296,242
7. Barrington, Don for Senate	\$294,641
8. Cox, Douglas for Rep	\$258,030
9. Nichols, Jonathan E. for Senate	\$254,353
10. Thomsen, Todd Mark	\$237,698

<b>2006 Candidates--Recipients</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1. Burrage, Michael for Senate	\$651,755
2. Cargill, Lance for House	\$445,675
3. Kerr, Robbie C. for Senate	\$419,043
4. Bingman, J. Brian for Senate	\$399,913
5. Ivester, Thomas for Senate	\$384,693
6. Sparks, John Hunt for Senate	\$374,359
7. Schulz, Mike for Senate	\$369,025
8. Branan, Cliff for Senate	\$325,137
9. Potts, Patricia J. for Senate	\$293,647
10. Easley, Mary L. for Senate	\$273,106

<b>2006 Candidates--Spenders</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1. Burrage, Michael for Senate	\$639,493
2. Cargill, Lance for House	\$423,357
3. Kerr, Robbie C. for Senate	\$406,109
4. Bingman, J. Brian for Senate	\$398,178
5. Ivester, Thomas for Senate	\$369,678
6. Schulz, Mike for Senate	\$361,149
7. Sparks, John Hunt for Senate	\$336,505
8. Branan, Cliff for Senate	\$329,353
9. Potts, Patricia J. for Senate	\$293,533
10. Easley, Mary L. for Senate	\$254,477

Another way to examine the top fundraisers is to look at the top 10 PAC recipients of the 2006 and 2008 elections (Table 7). Once again, there are not many similarities on these lists because many of the top PAC recipients were Senate candidates and they run only every four years. These amounts ranged from \$228,169 for Daniel Newberry (#4 on Top 10 recipient list) to \$107,000 for Jonathan Nichols (#9 on the Top 10 recipient list). Two House candidates were on this list, Todd Thomsen who raised \$118,200 in PAC money and Guy Liebmann who raised \$107,311 in PAC money. Somewhat surprisingly, the top recipient of overall money in 2008, Senate candidate Richard Lerblance, was not on the Top 10 PAC recipient list.

One can also look at who received the largest number of PAC contributions in the 2006 and 2008. Analyzing the amount of PAC contribution list (Table 7) and the number of PAC contribution list (Table 8), it is not a surprise to see a strong similarity between these lists. After all, a candidate who receives the most amount of PAC money probably will be a strong candidate for the largest number of contributions. Thus, in the 2006 and 2008 elections, there were six repeat players in 2006 and seven repeats in 2008. These lists are remarkably alike with the exception of Senate candidate Don Barrington who was able to get 166 PAC contributions, the most of any candidate in the two elections. One difference does appear between the 2006 and 2008 elections, however. The 2008 election is dominated by Senate candidates, with only one House candidate, Mike Thomson, on the list. Yet the 2006 elections seemed to buck the trend as four House candidates were on this list: Cargill, Peters, Worthen, and Morgan.<sup>2</sup>

Up to this point, there have been more similarities than differences with the 2006 and 2008 elections. The amount of fundraising and the total amount of PAC money raised were about the same. Moreover, most of the expectations held for both elections: Senate candidates raised and spent more than House candidates, Republicans generally outraised and spent the Democrats, particularly in the House, and the winners outraised and spent the losers (Jacobson 2008). There were numerous changes in the Top 10 lists of fundraisers, but much of that can be explained by the high number of Senate candidates on each list and the fact that they run for four-year terms.

Yet when one looks at the top 10 PAC lists, one can see clear differences in these two elections. As stated previously, the top 10

**TABLE 7**  
**Top 10 PACS Recipients**

<b>2008 Candidates</b>	<b>PAC Amount</b>	<b>2006 Candidates</b>	<b>PAC Amount</b>
1. Newberry, Daniel	\$228,169	1. Schulz, Mike	\$183,450
2. Barrington, Don	\$191,272	2. Bingman, Brian	\$174,000
3. Laster, Charlie M.	\$150,532	3. Shaffer, Ami	\$122,725
4. Paddack, Susan	\$125,542	4. Cargill, Lance	\$120,850
5. Riley, Nancy	\$119,550	5. Wofford, Mark	\$119,800
6. Thomsen, Todd Mark	\$118,200	6. Easley, Mary	\$112,700
7. Halligan, James Edmund	\$117,150	7. Balkman, Thad	\$108,403
8. Adelson, Thomas	\$112,595	8. Lawler, Daisy	\$106,850
9. Liebmann, Guy H. for House	\$107,311	9. Ivester, Thomas	\$104,200
10. Nichols, Jonathan E. for Senate	\$107,000	10. Branan, Cliff	\$101,300

**TABLE 8**  
**Top 10 PAC Recipients for # of Donations**

<b>2008 PACs</b>	<b>2008 Avg</b>	<b>2006 PACs</b>	<b>2006 Avg</b>
1. Barrington, Don	166	1. Cargill, Lance	134
2. Newberry, Daniel	137	2. Bingman, Brian	133
3. Laster, Charles	136	4. Branan, Cliff	113
4. Lerblance, Richard	123	4. Peters, Ron	113
5. Adelson, Thomas	111	5. Worthen, Trebor	112
6. Jolley, Clark	106	6. Lawler, Daisy	111
7. Nichols, Jonathan	105	7. Schulz, Mike	105
8. Thompson, Mike	100	8. Easley, Mary	101
9. Paddack, Susan	92	9. Morgan, Danny	99
10. Riley, Nancy	88	10. Sweeden, Joe	96

PAC donation average list (with a minimum of 20 donations) was dominated by the Republicans in 2006 (Table 9). Four of the top six PACs that gave the highest average donation were Republican Party PACs or Republican ideological PACs. These include the Oklahoma State Republican Committee, the Oklahoma Republican State House Committee, the Republican PAC to the Future, and the Fund for the Conservative Future. In fact, arguably only one PAC on the “average” list gave mostly to Democrats, LEGAL, or a fund for attorneys to give money. The average donations for the Republican groups ranged from \$2,479 to \$4,176 which can be a lot of money for Oklahoma candidates considering that the maximum legal donation for a PAC is \$5,000. As one lobbyist said, “If you really want to make a difference in races these days, you have to give in the \$5,000 range” (Francis-Smith 2009).

Yet, in looking at 2008, it is almost an entirely different list. The only similar organization was the Energy for Oklahomans PAC which was 7th in 2006, but 3rd in 2008. All the other PACs were different, with only one ideological PAC making the list, Gro-PAC Growing Rural Oklahomans which gives to Democrats. Thus, no Republican Party or Republican ideological PACs made the list. Most PACs on the top 20 list for 2008 were business-related PACs or professional PACs such as the Oklahoma City Business Council or the Associated Anesthesiologists PAC. Given the poor economy in 2008, the average PAC donation decreased, with a range of \$1,789 to \$4,166 for 2006, but \$1,349 to \$3,475 for 2008.

The most notable feature on this list was the almost complete absence of party/ideological PACs. So where did they go? They still gave money in the 2008 elections, but just not as much. As an example, the two top PACs in the Democratic Party in terms of the number of contributions were both county PACs, from Cleveland and Canadian counties. But they gave only six contributions each, and they averaged between \$300-400, so they were not eligible for the list. What about the Democratic Party of Oklahoma, one might ask? Well, it gave only five contributions for a total of \$949.99, with an average of \$189.99 per candidate. The Republicans fared better with the Oklahoma Republican Party giving fifteen contributions with an average contribution of \$2133.33, and a total of \$32,000. But again, these totals were not sufficient to make the list. Three Senate Republican PACs, the Republican Senate Victory PAC, the Oklahoma State Republican Senatorial Committee,

**TABLE 9**  
**Top 10 – Average (but minimum of 20 donations)**

<b>2008 PACs</b>	<b>2008 Avg</b>	<b>2006 PACs</b>	<b>2006 Avg</b>
1. Oklahoma City Business Council	\$3,475	1. OK State Republican Sen Committee	\$4,166
2. Gro-PAC Growing Rural Oklahoma	\$2,935	2. Repub State House Committee	\$3,576
3. Energy for Oklahomans PAC	\$2,321	3. Central OK Business Alliance	\$2,981
4. Associated Anesthesiologists PAC	\$2,295	4. Republican PAC to the Future	\$2,785
5. Devon Energy Corporation Oklahoma PAC	\$2,097	5. LEGAL	\$2,724
6. Realtors PAC of Oklahoma	\$1,860	6. Fund for a Conservative Future	\$2,479
7. Okla Society of Anesthesiologists PAC	\$1,696	7. Energy for Oklahomans	\$2,017
8. Oklahoma Public Employees Association PAC	\$1,471	8. Working Oklahomans Alliance	\$1,964
9. Oklahoma Medical PAC (OMPAC)	\$1,462	9. Sooner Fund PAC	\$1,934
10. Okla Independent Energy PAC (OKIE PAC)	\$1,349	10. Center for Legislative Excellence	\$1,789

and the Senate Opportunity PAC, if combined would have topped the list, because together they gave 24 contributions at just over \$104,000, with an average contribution of \$4,306. But this list since the 2000 elections has treated each named PAC separately, and since the 2000 elections typically 2-4 Republican Party or ideological PACs have made the list, but not for the 2008 elections (Hardt 2006).

Given the above results, it is not a surprise that there are also no ideological or party PACs on the 2008 top 10 total PAC donation list, even though three Republican Party PACs were there in 2006 (Oklahoma State Republican Senatorial Committee, Republican State House Committee, and the Republican Media Fund) as shown in Table 10. In 2008, once again, business groups, energy organizations, and professional groups topped the list. The largest contributor of PAC money in the 2008 elections was the Energy for Oklahomans PAC (\$181,000). The second and third largest were the Realtors PAC and Oklahoma Independent Energy PAC (\$143,200 and \$122,750 respectively). These total amounts are actually higher than those for the 2006 elections, with Chesapeake Energy Corporation topping that list at only \$139,250.

The one top 10 PAC list where there is some similarity is the top 10 number of donation list (Table 11). This is probably not a surprise. Many of these PACs give small donations to a large number of candidates, hoping to influence public policy in Oklahoma. With the exception of the Oklahoma Independent Energy PAC (OKIE PAC), the average contribution of these PACs is under \$1000, and it took a minimum of 91 donations to make this list for the 2008 elections. In fact, four of the top five PACS were the same in the 2006 and 2008 elections. The Oklahoma Optometric PAC and SURE (Speak Up for Rural Electrification) were #1 and #2 respectively in both the 2006 and 2008 elections, with the Oklahoma Optometric PAC giving a high of 167 donations in 2006, and 188 in 2008. The other two similar PACS were the Oklahoma Osteopathic PAC (#4 in 2006, #3 in 2008), and the OK Ag Fund (#3 in 2006, #5 in 2008).

In considering these top 10 PAC lists, Indian organizations were not included. This is because under Oklahoma Ethics Commission guidelines, Indian organizations are not treated as committees (on a schedule A1 form); rather, they are considered as separate contributors. Thus accounting for Indian donations in Oklahoma is more difficult, because one needs to know all of the possible Indian tribe names in



**TABLE 10**  
**Top 10 – Amount of PAC Donations**

<b>2008 PACs</b>	<b>2008 Amt</b>	<b>2006 PACs</b>	<b>2006 Amt</b>
1. Energy for Oklahomans PAC	\$181,000	1. Chesapeake Energy Corporation	\$139,250
2. Realtors PAC of Oklahoma	\$143,200	2. Center for Legislative Excellence	\$130,450
3. Okla Independent Energy PAC (OKIE PAC)	\$122,750	3. Oklahoma Independent Energy PAC	\$128,100
4. Oklahoma Medical PAC (OMPAC)	\$115,500	4. OK Ag Fund	\$100,200
5. OK Ag Fund	\$104,000	5. Okla State Rep Sen Comm	\$100,000
6. Chiropractic PAC	\$94,050	6. Working Oklahomans Alliance PAC	\$96,250
7. Oklahoma Public Employees Assoc PAC	\$82,350	7. Realtors PAC of Oklahoma	\$86,600
8. Gro-PAC, Growing Rural Oklahoma PAC	\$79,250	8. Repub State House Comm	\$82,250
9. Okla Society of Anesthesiologists PAC	\$78,000	9. Central Oklahoma Business Alliance	\$80,500
10. Cox Communications PAC Fund	\$77,750	11. LEGAL	\$79,000
		11. Republican Media Fund	\$79,000

**TABLE 11**  
**Top 10 in # of Donations**

<b>2008 PACs</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>2006 PACs</b>	<b>#</b>
1. Okla Optometric PAC	188	1. Okla Optometric PAC	167
2. SURE – Speak Up for Rural Electrification	137	2. SURE	117
3. Oklahoma Osteopathic PAC	132	3. OK Ag Fund	112
4. American Electric Power Comm for Responsible Government (AEPPAC)	125	4. Oklahoma Osteopathic PAC	106
5. OK Ag Fund	110	5. Oklahoma Dental PAC	97
6. Chiropractic PAC	109	6. Okla Assn of Career & Tech	94
7. Farmers Employees and Agent PAC (FEAPAC)	108	7. ConocoPhillips SPIRITPAC	88
8. Thoroughbred PAC	104	8. Okla Bankers	87
9. Cox Communications Oklahoma PAC Fund	91	9. Okla Society of CPAs	86
9. Okla Independent Energy PAC (OKIE PAC)	91	10. Okla Independent Energy PAC	82

Oklahoma to look up Indian donations, using the Advanced Contributor List. Another complicating factor is that these contributions can be listed in multiple ways, making it very difficult to tell exactly how much is given by each tribe. In addition to the advanced contributor list, one can look at Indian donations by looking at the employer or even by the tribe's address (even though the tribe may/may not be listed as an employer).

Three tribes in Oklahoma gave more than others in the 2006 and 2008 elections: the Chickasaw Nation, the Cherokee Nation, and the Choctaw Nation. This is not a surprise because if anyone has ever watched TV in Oklahoma he/she is sure to have seen a TV commercial for one of these three tribes. The Cherokee Nation would in fact have reached the #1 position on two of the top 10 PAC lists in 2008. It had the highest total PAC donations (\$218,900), and the highest average PAC donation (\$3,980). It would not have made the third list because it gave only 55 contributions in 2008. Choctaw Nation, on the other hand, would have been 9th on the top 10 average PAC donation list, giving \$1,684.52 on average in 2008. All total in the 2008 elections, there were 9 Indian tribes or organizations that gave a total of 250 contributions, averaging \$1736.21 to state legislative candidates. The Chickasaw Nation would have also made these lists, although its donations are woefully undercounted if looking only at the advanced contributor search. At first glance the total amount of money as shown under the advanced contributor search for Indian organizations, \$434,051.60, might suggest that Indian organizations might have a role in actually deciding elections. But the reality is actually very different, because while the amount of money is substantial, often Indian organizations will "hedge their bets" by giving equal amounts to both candidates in a state legislative race. Such was the case in the 2008 House District 25 race, in which the Chickasaw Nation gave the maximum \$5000 contribution to three candidates: two candidates in the Democratic primary (Gary Starns and Darrel Nemecek) and to Todd Thomsen, the Republican Incumbent.

### **LOOKING AT THE PAC DONATIONS CODED BY CATEGORY**

Two other interesting PAC lists to look at for the 2006 and 2008 elections can be created by arranging the PACs first by the number of

contributions they gave and then by the size of the contribution. When this is done, some obvious similarities emerge. First, looking at the number of contribution list (Table 12), 75-76% of PACs in Oklahoma in 2006 and 2008, gave less than 20 contributions. Thus, while there is much talk about powerful special interests, Oklahoma PACs still give to relatively few candidates. This trend was also evident in the 2000, 2002, and 2004 elections (Hardt 2006). Moreover, these PACs do not necessarily give large amounts of contributions as seen in size of the contribution list (Table 13). The top PAC in the 2008 legislative elections only gave \$181,100 (Energy for Oklahomans PAC) and there were only six that gave \$100,000+ in the 2008 elections, with five in the 2006 elections. In fact, in both elections, 65% of the PACs gave less than \$10,000 each.

Once the PAC information was collected for every legislative candidate in the 2006 and 2008 elections, each PAC contribution was then coded by category, such as agriculture, education, or telecommunications. Then the PAC contributions were sorted by category, thus allowing the opportunity to see which type of PAC is most active (Table 14). In both the 2006 and 2008 elections health PACs were the #1 contributors. In the 2008 elections, health PACs such as Oklahoma Hospital Association (OHA) and the Okla Medical PAC gave \$874,247.43, the most of any type of PAC. Moreover, the health PACs also gave 531 more contributions than the second largest type of PAC, oil and gas PACs, for a total of 1246 contributions.

The biggest surprise, however, was the decline of the political parties. Republican Party PACs were the #4 category of PAC in 2006, giving \$501,518.00 in 256 contributions, with an average of \$1,960.61 per candidate and accounting for 14.9% of the contributions. Yet in 2008, the Republicans ranked 10<sup>th</sup> among all types of PACs, with a measly 3.89% of the contributions, and giving \$203,395.45 and an average of \$1,937.09 per candidate with only 105 contributions. Thus, although the average amount is the same, some Republican candidates probably were not helped in the 2008 elections, when they might have been during the 2006 elections. This might have been okay if the Republicans had received some “make-up” money in 2008 from another Republican-oriented source, such as an ideological PAC. However, this was not the case. Compared to 2006, Republican ideological PACs did give more money, \$313,950 (2008) compared to \$219,990 (2006), with a

**TABLE 12**  
**# of Contributions – PACS**

	<b>2008 Elections</b>	<b>2006 Elections</b>
1-2	10	107
3-9	111	106
10-19	42	63
20-50	53	58
51-99	22	30
100+	8	5

**TABLE 13**  
**Total Amount Donated by PACs**

	<b>2008 Elections</b>	<b>2006 Elections</b>
\$100,000+	6	5
\$250,000-\$99,999	16	19
\$25,000-\$49,999	27	29
\$15,000-\$24,999	42	42
\$10,000-\$14,999	28	32
\$5,000-\$9,999	55	65
\$1,000-\$4,999	113	59
\$0-\$999	57	87

**TABLE 14**  
**2006 vs 2008 Elections -- Type of PAC -- Which Ones Give the Most and Least?**

TYPE OF PAC	2006 Elections			AVG	2008 Elections			
	SUM	%	#		Sum	%	#	AVG
AGRICULTURE	\$201,735.00	4.39	327	\$616.93	\$284,675.00	6.42	471	\$604.41
BANKING	\$234,250.00	5.09	458	\$511.46	\$199,053.84	4.49	376	\$529.40
BUSINESS	\$387,918.44	8.44	455	\$852.57	\$338,870.00	7.64	359	\$943.93
CONSTRUCTION	\$76,750.00	1.67	140	\$548.21	\$98,950.00	2.23	110	\$899.55
EDUCATION	\$97,930.00	2.13	279	\$351.00	\$84,950.00	1.92	232	\$366.16
ENVIRONMENT	\$4,200.00	0.09	11	\$381.82	\$3,100.00	0.07	8	\$387.50
GUNS	\$17,210.00	0.37	69	\$249.42	\$2,450.00	0.06	7	\$350.00
HEALTH	\$747,434.00	16.25	1,187	\$629.68	\$874,247.43	19.72	1246	\$701.64
IDEOLOGY- R	\$219,990.00	4.78	142	\$2,056.27	\$313,950.00	7.08	129	\$2,433.72
IDEOLOGY-D	\$93,128.00	2.03	60	\$1,552.14	\$106,049.99	2.39	44	\$2,410.23
INSURANCE	\$86,650.00	1.88	145	\$597.59	\$114,850.00	2.59	207	\$554.83
LABOR	\$222,625.00	4.84	315	\$706.75	\$139,899.99	3.16	144	\$971.53
OIL AND GAS	\$587,275.00	12.77	706	\$831.83	\$718,350.16	16.20	714	\$1,006.09
OTHER	\$519,433.34	11.30	297	\$1,748.93	\$205,600.00	4.64	143	\$1,437.76
PARTY -- REPUBS	\$501,918.00	10.91	256	\$1,960.61	\$203,395.46	4.59	105	\$1,937.10
PARTY -- DEMS	\$73,462.64	1.60	96	\$765.24	\$23,199.99	0.52	52	\$446.15
PROFESSIONAL	\$303,550.00	6.60	438	\$693.04	\$292,965.55	6.61	231	\$1,268.25
PUB EMPLOYEE	\$9,550.00	0.21	16	\$596.88	\$88,200.00	1.99	60	\$1,470.00
SENIOR	\$11,650.00	0.25	33	\$353.03	\$2,000.00	0.05	2	\$1,000.00
TELECOMM	\$79,450.00	1.73	167	\$475.75	\$134,900.00	3.04	196	\$688.27
TOBACCO	\$2,500.00	0.05	11	\$227.27	\$13,360.00	0.30	33	\$404.85
TRANSPORTATION	\$67,800.00	1.47	131	\$517.56	\$69,850.00	1.58	133	\$525.19
UTILITIES	\$52,150.00	1.13	222	\$234.91	\$120,950.00	2.73	137	\$882.85

slightly higher average contribution of \$2433.72, compared to \$2,056.27 in 2006. Yet, this “little bit” more money cannot make up for the fact that Republican Party spent almost \$300,000 less on its candidates in 2008, than it did in 2006.<sup>3</sup>

With the Democratic Party, the story is similar, except the numbers were even more dismal. The Democratic Party spent only \$73,462.64 on 96 candidates in the 2006 elections, for an average contribution of \$765.24. Thus, the Democrats were outspent by the Republicans 6.8 to 1, with more than double the average contribution. Then, in the 2008 elections, the Republicans spent \$203,295.46 on their candidates while the Democrats only spent \$23,199.99 for an 8.8 to 1 difference. The average contribution per candidate also decreased for the Democrats, spending only \$446.15, while the Republicans spent \$1,937.10. Unfortunately for the Democratic Party, they did not make up for that deficit in ideological PAC money, with the ideological Republican PACs outspending the ideological Democrat PACs 3:1 in 2008.

Another large source of PAC funds in both the 2006 and 2008 elections was not surprisingly oil and gas money. Oil and gas PACs were #2 for both elections, giving \$718,350.16 in 2008 to 714 candidates for an average of \$1,006.09. Oil and gas PACs along with a few other PACs (insurance PACs, public employee PACs, telecommunications PACs, and utility PACs) are the anomalies; they are the few types of PACs where more money was spent in the 2008 elections than in 2006. As an example, utility PACs more than doubled their donations in the 2006 elections for 2008, going from \$52,150 to \$120,950. This allowed utility PACs to increase their average per candidate from \$234.91 in 2006 to \$882.85 in the 2008 elections.

## **DIFFERENCES IN DONATING MONEY BY TYPE OF CANDIDATE**

### **THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

The PAC money given in the 2006 and 2008 elections was compared by party (Table 15). In previous Oklahoma elections, certain types of PACs were attracted to just Democratic candidates, including education PACs, labor PACs, Democratic Party/ideological PACs, and fire PACs. Similarly, Republicans received more of their money from banking, business, insurance, and Republican Party/ideological PACs.

Moreover, some Oklahoma PACs (agriculture, oil and gas, telecommunications and utility PACs) have been party neutral – giving to both sides to ensure that the PACs are represented no matter which party wins (Hardt 2006).

One fact is obvious after a careful glance at the table for both elections by type of party (Table 15). Especially in 2008, with almost every type of PAC, the Republicans received more, both in total amounts, and in the amount of contributions. This was true in the 2008 elections for 14 of the 22 types of PACs, including agriculture, banking, business, health, transportation, telecommunications, and many others. Two glaring examples of this are with the health and oil and gas PACs. With the health PACs the Democrats received only 390 contributions for a total of \$244,689.00, while the Republicans got 856 contributions for a total of \$692,558.53. With the oil and gas PACs, the Republicans again came out the winners receiving 312 more contributions (513 to 201) and over \$200,000 more (\$329,750 to \$108,550) in the 2008 elections.

Yet for many of these 14 types of PACs where Republicans received both more money overall and more contributions, they often managed to get about the same amount on average as did the Democrats. Telecommunications PACs, for example, gave \$682.26 to Democrats on average and \$691.04 to Republicans in the 2008 elections. Utilities PACs reacted the same way, giving \$326.45 to Democrats and \$381.41 to Republicans. These overall averages might give the impression that the utilities were “hedging their bets” by giving to both parties. In reality, however, the utilities mostly gave to incumbents in 2008, regardless of party. One notable exception to this was Senate seat 37 featuring Daniel Newberry (R) and Nancy Riley (D) where AEPPAC (American Electric Power) and SURE (Speak Up for Rural Electrification) each gave almost the same amounts to the two candidates.

Some PACs besides the Democratic Party/ideological PACs gave substantially more to Democrats, but they are not very many. In both the 2006 and 2008 elections, construction, education, environment, fire, and labor PACs all gave more to Democrats than they did Republicans. The case of labor is interesting because as expected Democrats received more donations in 2008 (136 to 8), and also a larger overall amount (\$121,199.99 to \$18,700), yet the eight Republican contributions from labor were obviously substantial ones because the average per Democrat was \$891.18, while a Republican received \$2,227.50. This is a marked



change from the 2006 elections, when labor PACs averaged \$725.00 per Republican candidate.

In addition to the party/ideological PACs, some PACs clearly changed their spending patterns from the 2006 to the 2008 elections. Perhaps because of the poor national economy in 2008, several PACs reduced their donations, especially those from nationally oriented PACs. Gun PACs, for example, gave 136 contributions for a total of \$30,950 in 2006, but only 4 contributions for a total of \$1,150 in 2008. Tobacco PACs also substantially altered their donations, with \$2,562.50 on average to Democrats in the 2006 elections, but \$358.23 for 2008. The 2008 Republicans also lost tobacco money, with only \$415.19 per candidate, but \$2,050 in 2006. Some PACs that were more local in nature actually increased their contributions from the 2006 to the 2008 elections. These included construction PACs who gave more on average to Republicans, Democratic ideological PACs which gave more on average as well as professional and state employee PACs which both gave more to Democrats and Republicans. Professional PACs are a notable example, donating \$993.33 and \$627.28 to Democrats and Republicans respectively in the 2006 elections, but giving \$1,513.24 and \$1,074.54 for 2008.

#### WINNERS VERSUS LOSERS

In previous elections in Oklahoma, PACs were more likely to donate to winners, rather than losers. Thus, winning candidates should receive a larger number of contributions and more money overall (see Table 16). However, the average donations for losers are sometimes higher than those for winners (Hardt 2006). This can happen for several reasons: a) the PAC mistakenly thought that the candidate had a chance to win; b) the PAC thought the candidate would lose but was still hopeful that a big donation might make a difference; c) the PAC had given to both candidates, hoping to “hedge its bets.” Of the 24 types of PACs in the 2006 and 2008 elections, only 4 gave more overall money to losers in the 2008 elections (fire, ideology-Democrats, labor, and the Democratic Party), and only one did in the 2006 elections (the Democratic Party). All of these PACs give mostly (or entirely) to Democrats. During the last few years, the Democrats were scared that they would lose control of the Oklahoma legislature and in the 2008 elections they finally did. Thus, these PACs may have been trying to stem the tide by giving to some weaker Democratic candidates, hoping they would prevail.

**TABLE 15**  
**2008 PAC Donations by type of PAC and by Party**

**2008 Elections**

Type	#	Democrats		#	Republicans	
		Amount	Average		Amount	Average
Agriculture	190	\$117,700.00	\$619.47	281	\$166,975.00	\$594.22
Banking	112	\$52,651.12	\$470.10	264	\$146,402.72	\$554.56
Business	108	\$102,350.00	\$947.69	251	\$236,520.00	\$942.31
Construction	40	\$55,100.00	\$1,377.50	70	\$43,850.00	\$626.43
Education	140	\$56,900.00	\$406.43	92	\$28,050.00	\$304.89
Environment	8	\$3,100.00	\$387.50			
Fire	132	\$79,850.00	\$604.92	25	\$19,800.00	\$792.00
Guns	4	\$1,150.00	\$287.50	3	\$1,300.00	\$433.33
Health	390	\$244,689.00	\$627.41	856	\$692,558.43	\$735.47
Ideology	44	\$106,049.99	\$2,410.23	129	\$313,950.00	\$2,433.72
Insurance	65	\$33,650.00	\$517.69	142	\$81,200.00	\$571.83
Labor	136	\$121,199.99	\$891.18	8	\$18,700.00	\$2,337.50
Oil and Gas	201	\$108,550.00	\$540.05	513	\$329,750.00	\$642.79
Other	36	\$64,350.00	\$1,787.50	110	\$142,750.00	\$1,297.73
Party all	52	\$24,099.99	\$463.46	105	\$202,495.46	\$1,928.53
Professional	102	\$154,350.00	\$1,513.24	129	\$138,615.55	\$1,074.54
Senior				2	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00
State Employees	31	\$38,250.00	\$1,233.87	29	\$49,950.00	\$1,722.41
Telecommunications	62	\$42,300.00	\$682.26	134	\$92,600.00	\$691.04
Tobacco	6	\$2,150.00	\$358.23	27	\$11,210.00	\$415.19
Transportation	45	\$17,800.00	\$395.56	88	\$52,050.00	\$591.48
Utilities	138	\$45,050.00	\$326.45	199	\$75,900.00	\$381.41

## 2006 Elections

Type	Democrats			Republicans		
	#	Amount	Average	#	Amount	Average
Agriculture	163	\$83,325.00	\$511.20	164	\$118,410.00	\$722.01
Banking	165	\$81,450.00	\$493.64	293	\$152,800.00	\$521.50
Business	168	\$103,170.00	\$614.11	287	\$284,748.00	\$992.15
Construction	84	\$46,700.00	\$555.95	56	\$30,050.00	\$536.61
Education	204	\$76,360.00	\$374.31	75	\$21,570.00	\$287.60
Environment	11	\$4,200.00	\$381.82	0		
Fire	14	\$67,850.00	\$498.90	14	\$5,550.00	\$396.43
Guns	136	\$30,950.00	\$483.59	5	\$1,200.00	\$240.00
Health	64	\$228,934.00	\$495.53	724	\$518,250.00	\$715.81
Ideology	462	\$93,128.00	\$1,552.14	142	\$219,990.00	\$2,056.27
Insurance	60	\$16,550.00	\$424.36	106	\$70,100.00	\$661.32
Labor	39	\$213,925.00	\$706.90	12	\$8,700.00	\$725.00
Oil and Gas	273	\$207,725.00	\$760.90	433	\$379,550.00	\$876.56
Other	151	\$247,583.00	\$1,639.62	131	\$226,450.00	\$1,728.63
Party all	96	\$73,462.00	\$765.24	256	\$501,618.00	\$1,959.45
Professional	135	\$134,100.00	\$993.33	153	\$96,050.00	\$627.78
Senior	5	\$1,800.00	\$360.00	11	\$7,750.00	\$704.55
State Employees	21	\$16,250.00	\$773.81	12	\$7,100.00	\$591.67
Telecommunications	54	\$22,650.00	\$419.44	113	\$56,800.00	\$502.65
Tobacco	4	\$10,250.00	\$2,562.50	5	\$10,250.00	\$2,050.00
Transportation	58	\$21,400.00	\$368.97	73	\$76,400.00	\$1,046.58
Utilities	111	\$34,550.00	\$311.26	111	\$37,600.00	\$338.74

TABLE 16

## 2006 and 2008 Election PAC Donations to OK Legislative Candidates divided by Winner and Loser

## 2008 Elections

Type	Count	Winners		Count	Losers	
		Total	Average		Total	Average
Agriculture	423	\$234,825.00	\$555.14	48	\$49,850.00	\$1,038.54
Banking	319	\$161,553.84	\$506.44	57	\$37,500.00	\$657.89
Business	306	\$250,870.00	\$819.84	53	\$88,000.00	\$1,660.38
Construction	87	\$53,500.00	\$614.94	23	\$45,450.00	\$1,976.09
Education	199	\$66,800.00	\$335.68	33	\$18,150.00	\$550.00
Environment	6	\$2,400.00	\$400.00	2	\$700.00	\$350.00
Fire	101	\$48,900.00	\$481.16	56	\$50,750.00	\$906.25
Guns	5	\$2,150.00	\$430.00	2	\$300.00	\$150.00
Health	1118	\$786,558.16	\$703.54	128	\$87,689.27	\$685.07
Ideology - Democrat	5	\$11,000.00	\$2,200.00	39	\$90,549.99	\$2,321.79
Ideology - Republican	109	\$253,200.00	\$2,327.52	20	\$60,250.00	\$3,012.50
Insurance	179	\$93,000.00	\$519.55	28	\$21,850.00	\$780.36
Labor	79	\$62,350.00	\$789.24	65	\$77,549.99	\$1,193.08
Oil and Gas	628	\$314,400.00	\$500.00	86	\$124,300.00	\$1,445.35
Other	110	\$134,500.00	\$1,222.73	36	\$72,600.00	\$2,016.67
Party - Democrat	6	\$5,450.00	\$908.33	47	\$18,249.99	\$388.30
Party - Republican	82	\$160,204.46	\$1,953.71	22	\$42,691.00	\$1,940.50
Professional	196	\$240,915.55	\$1,229.16	35	\$52,050.00	\$1,487.14
Public Employees	43	\$63,350.00	\$1,473.26	17	\$24,850.00	\$1,461.76
Senior	2	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00			
Telecommunications	175	\$119,300.00	\$681.71	21	\$15,600.00	\$742.86
Tobacco	27	\$11,110.00	\$411.48	6	\$2,250.00	\$375.00
Transportation	116	\$61,550.00	\$530.60	17	\$8,300.00	\$488.24
Utilities	310	\$108,800.00	\$350.97	27	\$12,150.00	\$450.00

**2006 Elections**

	Winners			Losers		
	Count	Total	Average	Count	Total	Average
Agriculture	266	\$155,535.00	\$584.72	52	\$43,450.00	\$853.58
Banking	406	\$207,050.00	\$509.97	45	\$24,650.00	\$547.78
Business	380	\$267,450.00	\$703.81	65	\$116,668.44	\$1,794.90
Construction	114	\$59,450.00	\$521.49	26	\$17,300.00	\$665.38
Education	221	\$69,730.00	\$315.52	51	\$26,450.00	\$518.63
Environment	6	\$2,350.00	\$391.67	5	\$1,850.00	\$370.00
Fire	108	\$53,900.00	\$459.07	42	\$19,500.00	\$464.28
Guns	53	\$17,100.00	\$322.64	14	\$14,450.00	\$1,032.14
Health	1003	\$598,984.00	\$597.19	145	\$134,350.00	\$926.55
Ideology – Democrat	48	\$53,828.00	\$1,312.88	19	\$39,300.00	\$2,068.42
Ideology – Republican	90	\$183,340.00	\$2,037.11	53	\$111,400.00	\$2,101.89
Insurance	126	\$72,800.00	\$577.78	14	\$11,600.00	\$828.57
Labor	207	\$134,475.00	\$649.64	107	\$87,650.00	\$819.16
Oil and Gas	611	\$493,975.00	\$808.47	55	\$53,650.00	\$975.45
Other	2047	\$299,983.34	\$1,449.19	73	\$173,600.00	\$2,378.08
Party- Dem.	43	\$34,143.85	\$794.04	53	\$39,318.79	\$741.86
Party- Rep.	159	\$324,373.00	\$2,040.08	97	\$177,545.00	\$1,830.36
Professional	255	\$181,500.00	\$711.76	30	\$47,450.00	\$1,581.67
Public Employees	18	\$13,650.00	\$758.33	15	\$9,700.00	\$646.67
Senior	14	\$6,800.00	\$485.71	2	\$2,750.00	\$1,375.00
Telecommunications	151	\$72,500.00	\$480.13	10	\$4,450.00	\$445.00
Tobacco	9	\$2,500.00	\$277.78	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Transportation	118	\$48,950.00	\$414.83	12	\$18,350.00	\$1,529.16
Utilities	193	\$63,150.00	\$327.20	16	\$4,850.00	\$303.12

Some changes took place with the 2006 and 2008 elections in terms of the different types of PACs giving to winners and losers. Several types of PACs stayed consistent in giving and these were for the most part PACs that could weather the national economic turmoil surrounding the 2008 elections. These included PACs such as utilities, education, public employees, and the environment. There is always going to be a need for education and there is always going to be the need for utilities, no matter what the economic situation is. One potential surprise in this group was the addition of banking PACs given all the economic crises in 2008. Yet in earlier elections such as 2000, 2002, and 2004, the banking PACs were known for their consistency. They gave evenly to both sides, whether winners or losers, perhaps hedging their bets (Hardt 2006). Yet the business PACs in both the 2006 and 2008 elections did not follow that pattern; instead, they contributed consistently more to losers rather than winners on average. A number of PACs donated more to losers in the 2006 elections, but either roughly equal amounts or much less in 2008. This included health PACs, gun PACs, ideology-Democrat PACs, the professional PACs, and the transportation PACs. The transportation PACs as an example gave \$1,529.16 to losers in the 2006 elections, but only \$414.83 to winners. Yet, in the 2008 elections, they donated around \$500.00 each to both candidates.

#### HOUSE VERSUS SENATE

Another difference is whether a candidate is running for the House or the Senate (Table 17). In previous Oklahoma elections, PACs donated more to Senate rather than House candidates (Hardt 2006). In comparing the size of donations for House and Senate candidates, per candidate averages should be examined, not overall amounts, given the greater number of House candidates. In the 2006 and 2008 elections, the expectation mostly held. Of the 24 types of PACs, 20 each in those elections gave more to Senate candidates than House candidates on average. Sometimes it was considerably more. This was certainly the case with both ideological PACs and both Party PACs. In the 2008 elections, the control of the Senate was at stake, with the Democrats wanting to retain at least one body, the Senate, while the Republicans hoping to control both for the first time. Both the party and ideological PACs were thus fighting for every Senate seat and so they donated substantially more to Senate candidates. Another big difference was

with state employee PACs who gave about twice as many contributions for the 2008 elections compared to 2006, but on a per average basis donated substantially more to Senate candidates (\$1,040.28 to House candidates in 2008, but \$2,114.58 to Senate candidates). This is despite the fact that in both elections state employees actually gave a larger number of contributions to House candidates (36 to 24 in 2008, 25 to 8 in 2006). House candidates in the 2006 elections only received a measly \$52.00 per candidate from the state employee PACs.

Which PACs gave more to House candidates than Senate candidates? As shown in Table 17, there were only four each in both the 2006 and 2008 elections. Two of these, gun and senior PACs, appeared on both lists, but they perhaps should not matter as much because they gave such small donations. Senior PACs only donated two \$1,000 contributions in 2008 to House candidates, and in 2006 there were only 16 contributions for a total of \$9,500 to both houses. With the gun PACs it was a similar story. Gun PACs had only 7 contributions in 2008, for a total of \$2,450. In 2006, they had more contributions (69 total), but the total was still low (\$17,210). Thus, Senate candidates received a measly \$59.29 each on average. The pattern of giving for environment PACs, one of the four from 2008, was similar with 8 contributions totaling \$3,100 in 2008 and 11 totaling \$4,200 in 2006. Tobacco was on this list for 2006, but it only gave 11 contributions in that election compared to 33 for the 2008 elections. The two notable exceptions that gave more to House candidates than Senate candidates, and yet still gave substantial contributions were oil and gas PACs in 2008 (\$644.72 on average to House candidates, only \$549.35 to Senate candidates) and banking PACs in 2006 (\$513.29 to \$453.57), but these differences are small.

#### INCUMBENT, CHALLENGER, OR OPEN SEAT CANDIDATES?

The last significant difference among candidates is whether they were incumbents, challengers, or running for open seats. In previous Oklahoma elections PACs have given more overall money to incumbents, even though the average donation might favor the challenger over the incumbent (Hardt 2002; Hardt 2005). The reason for this is that in recent years the majority control of the House and the Senate has been an issue and PACs want to insure that they are helping certain legislators get re-elected. Another advantage of giving more money to a challenger

TABLE 17

## 2006 and 2008 elections: PAC Donations divided by House and Senate

Type of PAC	2008 House			2008 Senate		
	Count	Total	Average	Count	Total	Average
Agriculture	291	\$146,000.00	\$501.72	180	\$138,675.00	\$770.42
Banking	222	\$110,452.72	\$497.53	154	\$88,601.12	\$575.33
Business	300	\$152,470.00	\$508.23	154	\$186,400.00	\$1,210.39
Construction	52	\$39,850.00	\$766.35	58	\$59,100.00	\$1,018.97
Education	161	\$48,450.00	\$300.93	71	\$36,500.00	\$514.08
Environment	6	\$2,600.00	\$433.33	2	\$500.00	\$250.00
Fire	110	\$60,250.00	\$547.73	47	\$39,400.00	\$838.30
Guns	3	\$1,300.00	\$433.33	4	\$1,150.00	\$287.50
Health	858	\$466,339.00	\$543.52	434	\$407,908.43	\$939.88
Ideology-D	17	\$16,549.99	\$973.53	27	\$89,500.00	\$3,314.81
Ideology-R	72	\$131,750.00	\$1,829.86	57	\$182,200.00	\$3,196.49
Indian	181	\$332,251.60	\$1,835.64	82	\$126,900.00	\$1,547.56
Insurance	141	\$72,050.00	\$510.99	66	\$42,800.00	\$648.48
Labor	89	\$58,199.99	\$653.93	55	\$81,700.00	\$1,485.45
Oil and Gas	483	\$311,400.00	\$644.72	231	\$126,900.00	\$549.35
Other	87	\$82,650.00	\$950.00	59	\$124,450.00	\$2,109.32
Party - Dem.	34	\$8,649.99	\$254.41	18	\$14,550.00	\$808.33
Party - Rep.	55	\$61,976.50	\$1,126.85	50	\$141,418.96	\$2,828.38
Professional	152	\$149,190.55	\$981.52	79	\$143,775.00	\$1,819.94
Senior	2	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00			
State Employees	36	\$37,450.00	\$1,040.28	24	\$50,750.00	\$2,114.58
Telecommunication	140	\$85,100.00	\$607.86	56	\$49,800.00	\$889.29
Tobacco	27	\$8,860.00	\$328.15	6	\$4,500.00	\$750.00
Transportation	85	\$35,500.00	\$417.65	48	\$34,350.00	\$715.63
Utilities	240	\$79,900.00	\$332.92	97	\$41,050.00	\$423.20



Type of PAC	Count	2006 House		2006 Senate		
		Total	Average	Count	Total	Average
Agriculture	216	\$106,885.00	\$494.84	111	\$94,850.00	\$854.50
Banking	444	\$227,900.00	\$513.29	14	\$6,350.00	\$453.57
Business	273	\$137,968.44	\$505.38	182	\$249,950.00	\$1,373.35
Construction	90	\$35,200.00	\$391.11	50	\$41,550.00	\$831.00
Education	178	\$43,955.00	\$246.94	101	\$53,975.00	\$534.41
Environment	7	\$2,600.00	\$371.43	4	\$1,600.00	\$400.00
Fire	103	\$47,150.00	\$457.77	47	\$26,250.00	\$558.51
Guns	41	\$15,550.00	\$379.27	28	\$1,660.00	\$59.29
Health	858	\$492,634.00	\$574.17	329	\$254,800.00	\$774.47
Ideology-D	85	\$152,140.14	\$1,789.88	59	\$142,850.00	\$2,421.19
Ideology-R	20	\$22,728.10	\$1,136.41	40	\$70,400.00	\$1,760.00
Indian	19	\$17,000.00	\$894.74	5	\$22,000.00	\$4,400.00
Insurance	100	\$46,200.00	\$462.00	45	\$40,450.00	\$898.89
Labor	225	\$129,500.00	\$575.56	90	\$93,125.00	\$1,034.72
Oil and Gas	447	\$368,975.00	\$825.45	229	\$218,300.00	\$953.28
Other	111	\$127,683.34	\$1,150.30	171	\$346,350.00	\$2,025.44
Party – Democrat	74	\$35,368.54	\$477.95	22	\$38,094.10	\$1,731.55
Party – Republican	172	\$302,293.00	\$1,757.52	84	\$199,325.00	\$2,372.92
Professional	194	\$122,050.00	\$629.12	94	\$108,100.00	\$1,150.00
Senior	14	\$8,550.00	\$610.71	2	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
State Employees	25	\$1,300.00	\$52.00	8	\$10,350.00	\$1,293.75
Telecommunication	123	\$56,050.00	\$455.69	44	\$23,400.00	\$531.82
Tobacco	4	\$100.00	\$25.00	7	\$1,500.00	\$214.29
Transportation	89	\$28,750.00	\$323.03	42	\$39,050.00	\$929.76
Utilities	158	\$27,750.00	\$175.63	64	\$24,400.00	\$381.25

over an incumbent is that a large PAC contribution usually means more to a challenger because of the fewer funds from individual sources. Yet at the same time, PACs still give more to incumbents because they know that they have a better chance of getting into office.

In the 2006 and 2008 elections, two trends were certainly evident with PACs giving to incumbents and challengers (see Table 18). Most of the PACs (21/24 in the 2008 elections, 22/24 in 2006) gave more money to incumbents than challengers. For most PACs this was not even a contest. Thus, looking at overall donations by PACs in the 2008 elections, the incumbents received \$2,635,317.39 while the challengers only received \$495,530.24, for a 5.3 to 1 difference. For the 2006 elections, the numbers were fairly similar, providing a 4.7 to 1 difference. The professional PACs were a perfect example; they gave \$681,639.00 in the 2008 elections to incumbents, but only \$24,089.27 to the challengers.

Four of the five exceptions were all ideological or party PACs, with the fifth being gun PACs in the 2006 elections, but these were rather small amounts. The four ideological/party PACs (ideological Republicans in 2006 and 2008, ideological Democrats and party Democrats in 2008) all gave considerably more money overall to challengers rather than incumbents. In the 2008 elections, for example, the ideological Democrat PACs gave \$54,349.99 to challengers, but only \$600 to incumbents. The ideological Republican PACs had a similar pattern of giving for the 2008 elections: \$70,500 to challengers and \$50,750 to incumbents. This was clearly a partisan strategy. The Democrats decided to spend their money on challengers hoping to prevent Republicans from capturing additional House and Senate seats. Unfortunately, in the 2008 elections the Democrats had reason to worry; they lost the Senate to the Republicans.

The distribution of the number of PAC contributions was even more lopsided. In the 2008 elections there were 4,574 PAC contributions, with 92.5% or 4,232, going to incumbents. In the 2006 elections, challengers did not do much better, because the incumbents had 92.2% of all contributions. This inequality is especially evident when a particular type of PAC is examined. Health PACs, for example, in the 2008 elections gave incumbents 1040 contributions, but only 29 to challengers. All total of the 24 types of PACs in the 2006 and 2008 elections, 22 gave more to incumbents in 2008, and 23 did in the 2006 elections. Once again, the Democrats were the notable exception in the 2008

elections, with both the party and ideological PACs giving considerably more to challengers (23 to 4 for ideological PACs, 25 to 3 for the party PACs). In the 2006 elections, it was the ideological Republican PACs who donated more to challengers, but with only 41 to 38 contributions.

The Democrats' strategy, whether through the party or ideological PACs, becomes more evident when the average contribution is compared to the overall amount of money. The Democratic Party PACs in 2008 clearly had to devise a strategy. They only had \$13,849.99 to spend compared to the Republican Party PACs who had \$111,845.96. As a result, the Democrats used their meager funds and gave the most to challengers, figuring that the incumbents would probably win anyway. Yet with so little to spend, their meager amounts just dwindled when distributed among 28 candidates in the 2008 elections. So they gave to a few incumbent candidates who were potentially in trouble with a \$1,450 average among those 3 candidates, with the poor Democratic challengers getting only \$380 each on average. The Republicans had the luxury with so much money of actually giving more on average to their incumbents in the 2008 elections than in 2006, \$2,167.12 compared to \$1,562.20.

The Democratic Party PACs were not the only type of PAC giving more in average donations to challengers than incumbents in the 2008 elections. In fact, in the 2008 elections 17 categories of PACs gave more to challengers, compared to only 13 in 2006. The categories of PACs that did this in both elections include agriculture, business, health, ideological Republican, insurance, oil and gas, other and professional PACs. Agriculture PACs, which include the Ag PAC, the Thoroughbred PAC, and the Okla Quarter Racing PAC, gave about 4-5 times more on average to challengers than incumbents in both the 2006 and 2008 elections. Thus, in the 2008 elections, they gave \$2085.71 per challenger, but only \$513.87 per incumbent. This was made easier, however, by the fact that there were only 12 agriculture donations to challengers in the 2008 elections, but 351 to incumbents.

## CONCLUSIONS

Campaign finance data from the 2006 and 2008 elections revealed a lot about Oklahoma campaign finance. First, it was clear that some of the standard old adages still apply. Incumbents do raise more money

**Table 18**  
**PAC MONEY -- divided by TYPE OF PAC and I/C/OS**

2008 ELECTIONS	Incumbents			Challengers			Open Seats		
	#	Sum	Avg.	#	Sum	Avg.	#	Sum	Avg.
Agriculture	366	\$ 188,075.00	\$513.87	14	\$29,200.00	\$2,085.71	91	\$67,400.00	\$740.66
Banking	305	\$ 166,202.88	\$544.93	14	\$5,500.00	\$392.86	57	\$27,350.96	\$479.84
Business	282	\$ 183,470.00	\$650.60	18	\$41,250.00	\$2,291.67	59	\$114,150.00	\$1,934.75
Construction	63	\$41,100.00	\$652.38	13	\$17,350.00	\$1,334.62	34	\$40,500.00	\$1,191.18
Education	190	\$63,550.00	\$334.47	14	\$6,550.00	\$467.86	28	\$14,850.00	\$530.36
Environment	4	\$1,900.00	\$475.00	1	\$200.00	\$200.00	3	\$1,000.00	\$333.33
Fire	93	\$44,900.00	\$482.80	36	\$31,050.00	\$862.50	28	\$23,700.00	\$846.43
Guns	5	\$1,700.00	\$340.00				2	\$750.00	\$375.00
Health	1040	\$681,639.00	\$655.42	29	\$24,089.27	\$830.66	177	\$168,519.16	\$952.09
Ideology - Repubs	42	\$50,750.00	\$1,208.33	18	\$70,500.00	\$3,916.67	69	\$192,700.00	\$2,792.75
Ideology - Dems	4	\$600.00	\$1,500.00	23	\$54,349.99	\$2,363.04	17	\$45,700.00	\$2,688.24
Insurance	176	\$92,800.00	\$527.27	4	\$3,650.00	\$912.50	27	\$18,400.00	\$681.48
Labor	72	\$47,900.00	\$665.28	35	\$24,649.99	\$704.29	37	\$67,350.00	\$1,820.27
Oil and Gas	598	\$335,250.00	\$560.62	25	\$44,250.00	\$1,770.00	91	\$58,800.00	\$646.15
Other	84	\$81,750.00	\$973.21	25	\$53,100.00	\$2,124.00	37	\$72,250.00	\$1,952.70
Party -- Democrat	3	\$4,350.00	\$1,450.00	25	\$9,499.99	\$380.00	24	\$9,350.00	\$389.58
Party -- Republican	48	\$75,004.96	\$1,562.60	17	\$36,841.00	\$2,167.12	40	\$91,549.50	\$2,288.74
Professional	191	\$227,065.55	\$1,188.22	10	\$20,750.00	\$2,075.00	30	\$45,150.00	\$1,505.00
Public Employees	45	\$57,700.00	\$1,282.22	6	\$14,500.00	\$2,416.67	9	\$16,000.00	\$1,777.78
Senior	2	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00						
Telecommunications	177	\$117,750.00	\$665.25	4	\$2,250.00	\$562.50	15	\$14,900.00	\$993.33
Tobacco	28	\$9,610.00	\$343.21	2	\$750.00	\$375.00	3	\$3,000.00	\$1,000.00
Transportation	112	\$55,950.00	\$499.55	4	\$1,200.00	\$300.00	17	\$12,700.00	\$747.06
Utilities	302	\$104,300.00	\$345.36	5	\$3,050.00	\$610.00	30	\$13,600.00	\$453.33

2006 ELECTIONS	Incumbents			Challengers			Open Seats		
	#	Sum	Avg.	#	Sum	Avg.	#	Sum	Avg.
Agriculture	212	\$115,135.00	\$543.09	8	\$15,000.00	\$1,875.00	107	\$71,600.00	\$669.16
Banking	359	\$183,700.00	\$511.70	7	\$3,250.00	\$464.29	92	\$47,300.00	\$514.13
Business	325	\$195,228.44	\$600.70	31	\$62,690.00	\$2,022.26	99	\$130,000.00	\$1,313.13
Construction	89	\$48,050.00	\$539.89	9	\$2,750.00	\$305.56	42	\$25,950.00	\$617.86
Education	184	\$54,280.00	\$295.00	5	\$1,400.00	\$280.00	90	\$42,250.00	\$469.44
Environment	3	\$1,300.00	\$433.33	3	\$1,100.00	\$366.67	5	\$1,800.00	\$360.00
Fire	87	\$44,250.00	\$508.62	10	\$4,400.00	\$440.00	53	\$24,750.00	\$466.98
Guns	47	\$1,400.00	\$29.79	4	\$3,000.00	\$750.00	18	\$14,950.00	\$830.56
Health	852	\$481,834.00	\$565.53	32	\$48,000.00	\$1,500.00	305	\$218,550.00	\$716.56
Ideology - Repubs	38	\$78,391.25	\$2,062.93	41	\$93,098.89	\$2,270.70	70	\$125,900.00	\$1,798.57
Ideology - Dems	13	\$10,400.00	\$800.00				47	\$82,778.10	\$1,761.24
Insurance	110	\$57,450.00	\$522.27	8	\$14,350.00	\$1,793.75	27	\$14,850.00	\$550.00
Labor	113	\$91,275.00	\$807.74	38	\$23,850.00	\$627.63	144	\$107,500.00	\$746.53
Oil and Gas	562	\$415,825.00	\$739.90	14	\$21,450.00	\$1,532.14	130	\$150,000.00	\$1,153.85
Other	146	\$179,200.00	\$1,227.40	23	\$59,900.00	\$2,604.35	113	\$234,933.34	\$2,079.06
Party -- Democrat	22	\$20,539.83	\$933.63	20	\$7,668.85	\$383.44	54	\$45,253.96	\$838.04
Party -- Republican	83	\$198,013.00	\$2,385.70	62	\$120,515.00	\$1,943.79	111	\$183,390.00	\$1,652.16
Professional	216	\$139,900.00	\$647.69	7	\$22,500.00	\$3,214.29	65	\$67,750.00	\$1,042.31
Public Employees	14	\$7,900.00	\$564.29				19	\$15,450.00	\$813.16
Senior	14	\$8,550.00	\$610.71				2	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
Telecom munications	126	\$60,400.00	\$479.37	2	\$600.00	\$300.00	39	\$18,450.00	\$473.08
Tobacco	8	\$2,250.00	\$281.25				1	\$250.00	\$250.00
Transportation	101	\$32,900.00	\$325.74	4	\$15,500.00	\$3,875.00	26	\$19,400.00	\$746.15
Utilities	176	\$57,400.00	\$326.14	2	\$500.00	\$250.00	44	\$14,250.00	\$323.86

overall than challengers, Senate candidates raise more money than House candidates, and in this state at least, Republicans tend to raise more money than Democrats. Despite the downturn in the national economy, more money was also spent on the 2008 elections than the 2006 elections, although some PACs clearly cut back, while some actually spent more. As a contrast, in the 2000 elections, House candidates raised \$27,647 on average and spent \$26,495. For the 2008 elections, those averages were \$46,402 and \$41,388. Thus, House candidates are raising and spending nearly double the amounts they did in the 2000 elections, in just eight years. For the Senate elections, the change was even more dramatic. The 2000 elections for raising and spending were \$58,279 and \$53,806, while today they are \$138,637 and \$114,212, respectively (Hardt 2002). Thus, it is not a surprise that PAC money has increased as well. Although there were fewer PACs in the 2008 elections compared to the 2000 elections (344 in 2008, 416 in 2000), they are giving more money in total contributions (\$5,941,827 compared to \$3,490,313 in the 2000 elections), and more money in average contributions (\$21,295 compared to \$11,912 in the 2000 elections) (Hardt 2002). Thus despite the drop in PACs and the number of candidates since the 2000 elections, PACs actually increased the percentage of total money spent from 36.4% in 2000 to 39.7% for the 2008 elections (Hardt 2002).

These increases in spending though may not be a surprise considered what has happened in Oklahoma since the 2000 elections. From 2000 to 2008, the Oklahoma legislature experienced a major shift in partisan power in both houses from the Democrats to the Republicans. This included an election where there was a 24-24 split in the Oklahoma Senate and a 57-44 split in the House (2006), thus creating more partisan competition. Another factor that created a need to spend money, however, was the addition of term limits. Although enacted in 1992, they did not take effect in Oklahoma until the 2004 elections. Oklahoma has 12-year lifetime term limits for its legislators. The term limits have created a tremendous increase in open seats with 28 in the 2004 House elections and 20 in the 2006 House elections alone. In the 2008 elections, there were 15 open seats in the House and 8 in the Senate. Open seats tend to traditionally be very competitive with multiple candidates raising great sums of money.

Yet although greater fundraising was generally the norm, there were some huge changes in campaign finance spending from the 2006

to the 2008 elections. Most notable among these, and also the title of this paper, is the drop in party/ideological contributions over this time period for BOTH parties. While the Democrats clearly were affected the most, raising very diminutive amounts compared to their Republican colleagues in 2008, the Republicans were clearly impacted as well. The Republican Party and ideological PACs held seven of the top 10 slots on the PAC money average donation list, and four of the top 10 slots on the overall PAC money list for the 2006 elections. In the 2008 elections, none of those PACs made either list. As a result of the loss of funds, the ideological and party PACs of both parties clearly changed their strategies for 2008. The Republican ideological PACs gave more of their money to winners rather than losers (\$253,200 versus \$60,250), but gave a slightly average higher donation to losers (\$3,012.50) than winners (\$2,357.52). With the Democratic ideological PACs, it was a different story. With over \$200,000 less to spend, the Democratic ideological PACs gave more in contributions to losers (\$90,549.99) than winners (\$11,000.00), but kept the average donations roughly the same (\$2200 for winners, \$2322 for losers).

With the party PACs in the 2008 elections, the tale was almost exactly the opposite with the Republicans giving more overall to incumbents (\$160,204.56 to \$42,961.00), but still keeping the average contributions consistent for the 2008 elections (\$1,953.71 to \$1,940.50 for losers). The Democrats, however, clearly had the greater challenge – how to stay competitive with the Republicans with almost \$180,000 less to spend. The Democrats chose to give more of their money to losing candidates (\$5,450 to \$18,249.99 for the losers), but the average contribution was much smaller (\$388.30, compared to \$908.33 for the winners).

One question that could be asked is “why?” – as in why the decline in political party money in Oklahoma? Answering this question is difficult as there are a number of factors that are involved. Most notably, Oklahoma is considered to be a “red” state, or a state where Republicans are more likely to be successful. This has been true in presidential and congressional elections, and more increasingly, with state legislative elections. Yet, the Republican Party experienced major challenges in fundraising in the 2008 elections. Not only did McCain raise considerably less money than Obama, but the Republican congressional committees also raised less money than their Democratic counterparts and the RNC

while raising more money was too busy at the national level trying to help McCain. For the Democrats in Oklahoma, their political party has experienced its share of troubles with both organizational and financial difficulties, and thus has not been able to match the success it had in the 2000 and 2002 elections.

Another change was that some PACs were clearly impacted by the declining national economic picture during the 2008 elections, compared to 2006, while some were not. Half of the PAC categories spent more in the 2008 elections than they did for the 2006 elections. Public employee PACs, for example, experienced the greatest percentage change, spending only \$9,550 in total for the 2006 elections, but \$88,200 for the 2008 elections, increasing their average per candidate by almost three times. The other types of PACs that increased their giving were probably some of the PACs least affected by the national economic picture, such as health, insurance, telecommunications, and utilities. People will need to spend money on their health and purchase utilities for their homes, regardless if the national economy is experiencing a slump. In Oklahoma, there was not as much of a slump with construction compared to elsewhere, so it is not a surprise that construction PACs spent more in the 2008 elections than they did in 2006. One of the more notable declines, besides the already discussed party PACs, was with labor in the 2008 elections which spent \$222,625 in 2006, but only \$139,899.99 for 2008. This makes sense though when the Obama factor gets figured into the equation. Many labor organizations were working hard to achieve for Obama in the 2008 elections, and perhaps spent less on local candidates. Despite the decline in the national economy, 18 of the 24 PACs spent more per average on the 2008 candidates than they did in 2006, even though they spent less overall. This includes such PACs as business, banking, education, guns, labor, professionals, and seniors. However, the average is probably what matters most to candidates. They probably don't care that professional PACs spent more than \$10,000 less for the 2008 elections, but they may care that the average contribution went up from \$693.04 in 2006 to \$1,268.25 in 2008. After all, candidates are concerned about the money they can individually raise and spend.

What about the 2010 elections? The national picture clearly favors the Republicans. The federal stimulus money and bailouts have stirred a strong anti-Federal government sentiment in Oklahoma, and with



Oklahoma already being a strong red state, Republicans will do well. There will be a change in the PAC law, however, that could affect both parties' candidates in the 2010 elections. Mike Reynolds (R-OKC) requested a rule change that went into effect July 2008 which states that PACs are no longer allowed to give donations to each other. Although this rule change took place four months before the 2008 elections, its impact was not fully realized because many PACs were giving to each other before July 2008, thus still making a difference in the 2008 elections. An example of this is the Working Oklahomans Alliance which gave \$113,750 before the law took effect (Francis-Smith 2009). However, the consequences of this law for the 2010 elections are unknown as for the first time this law will have taken full effect during the entire election. Thus, while both the Democratic and Republican parties in Oklahoma both had troubles raising money for their state legislative candidates in the 2008 elections, it looks like this trend will only continue in the 2010 elections.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Research done on any earlier races was gathered by hand as computerized campaign finance information for Oklahoma candidates was unreliable prior to 2006. Thus, the author looked at each individual paper copy of the campaign finance forms of all state legislative candidates to gather that information.

Native American tribes are not considered to be PACs in Oklahoma, and thus were treated separately later in the analysis after each tribe in Oklahoma was researched individually for the 2006 and 2008 elections.

<sup>2</sup> These names should look familiar to those who follow Oklahoma politics. Each one of these candidates left office early over issues with campaign funding and/or their taxes.

<sup>3</sup> Despite Republican electoral success in Oklahoma, the 2008 elections were not a good year nationally for Republican Party fundraising. Not only was there a strong decline in the economy in 2008, but the Republican Party was outraised significantly at the presidential candidate level (Obama versus McCain) as well as at the US Congress level. Thus, poor fundraising by state political parties may be a part of that larger picture.

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