

SHOW ME THE MONEY: CAMPAIGN FINANCE IN THE 2000 AND 2002 OKLAHOMA ELECTIONS

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To understand Oklahoma's elections, one needs to examine campaign finance. Campaign finance information not only reveals which candidates might win the race, but it will also reveal how candidates get their money, which candidates are getting more money, whether the political parties are competitive, and how active interest groups are in Oklahoma. This essay examines Oklahoma campaign finance for both the 2000 and 2002 elections using both data readily available from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission on the candidates, but also data that was gathered on the political action committees who contributed to the candidates. These two sources of information reveal that incumbents do better than challengers and that many races became more competitive in Oklahoma as seats became open as a result of term limits. However, there are substantial differences between not only the Oklahoma House and Senate candidates in terms of the donations they receive, but also between the Republicans and the Democrats. Particularly noteworthy was the substantial decline of the Democratic Party in 2002 compared to 2000 in raising funds. Hence, it was not a surprise that Republicans were able to capture the state House in 2004, and this does not bode well for the Democrats in 2006.

Never has there been a more important time to study campaign finance in Oklahoma than right now. Oklahoma is on the precipice of a new era of elections as a result of the state's decision to enact term limits on its state legislative offices. Oklahomans began to see the impact of these term limits in the 2004 elections as numerous incumbents were forced out of office, creating open seats in both the state house and the state senate. This has a direct impact on the amount of money candidates need to run for office. Open seats are usually more competitive because candidates know that this is their window of opportunity to run, i.e. the one chance when they will not have to face a deeply entrenched, sure-to-win incumbent. As a result, candidates from both parties usually file heavily for these races producing large numbers of candidates on both sides. Many of these candidates will either be inexperienced candidates or new to this particular office and thus will need to spend more money on these open seat races to make themselves known to their voters.

By examining past elections, i.e. those prior to 2004, we can see the impact of money in those elections, so that we have a baseline with which to judge future campaigns in Oklahoma. To do this, it is important to examine campaign finance law, for this provides the legal guidelines under which candidates can raise money. There are really two distinct sets of campaign finance laws in the United States, both of which apply to Oklahoma. Presidential and congressional seats are governed by the federal campaign finance law commonly known as the McCain-Feingold Bill, or more formally known as the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002. The two most important provisions of the BCRA law are the limits it places on contributions raised from individuals (\$2,000 per campaign per election) and political action committees, or PACs (\$5,000 per campaign per election). The purpose of the BCRA was to encourage candidates to raise their money in small amounts from lots of donors. BCRA, being a federal law, would thus apply only to the presidential, U.S. House, U.S. Senate races in Oklahoma.

All the other contests in Oklahoma are governed by the second set of campaign finance laws, those produced by the state of Oklahoma. Oklahoma campaign finance law was created by the Oklahoma legislature and is now administered by the Oklahoma Ethics Commission established in 1990. The state of Oklahoma like the other forty-nine

states had a choice when it created its campaign finance law. It could have made a system that was either stronger or weaker than the federal law. Oklahoma in fact chose a compromise position, with some aspects of its law tougher on candidates than the BCRA law, while some aspects are weaker. One of the weakest aspects of the Oklahoma law is the ability of corporations to give to candidates by creating political action committees. Thus, in Oklahoma there is a Chesapeake Energy Corporation PAC, an Oklahoma Phillips Petroleum Company PAC, and a Conoco Inc. PAC. These types of PACs are strictly prohibited under federal law which also prohibits electioneering communications by corporations or labor unions using treasury funds (<http://www.campaignlegalcenter.org/attachments/1429.pdf>). Yet, the limit on the amount PACs can give reveals another difference. In Oklahoma, the PAC limit is \$5,000 per campaign in a calendar year, while in federal elections PACs can only give \$5,000 per campaign per election. Since most candidates will typically compete in two or even three elections, given a primary, a general, and perhaps a runoff election, PACs in Oklahoma can donate less than under federal law. Oklahoma's law is also different from the federal law when it comes to individual donations. Individuals in Oklahoma can give the same amount as PACs, or \$5,000 per calendar year, yet under the federal law, that amount is \$2,000 per campaign per election.

Yet studying campaign finance at the federal level is much easier than studying campaign finance in Oklahoma. There is a simple reason for this. The federal law requires that candidates and PACs submit their campaign finance information electronically. Thus, there are various websites available such as *www.crp.org* or *www.fec.gov* where anyone with a computer can access the campaign finance information for federal candidates. This information is completely sorted by computer so one can look up an individual contributor, a PAC, or a specific candidate, and find out information on both the receipts and expenditures.

In Oklahoma, this is a much more arduous task, despite the fact that Oklahoma was one of the first states to require mandatory electronic filing from most of its candidates. This program began on July 1, 1997, with \$700,000 spent on the system. Ironically, \$135,000 of that money came from former Governor David Walter's campaign as part of his 1994 plea agreement for ethics laws violations. But alas,

this was a system not meant to last. Less than one year later, at the end of the 1998 legislative session, the Oklahoma legislature voted to make electronic submission of campaign finance information voluntary, instead of mandatory. There were many reasons for this including glitches in the computer software and the realization by many incumbents that they might be putting their own careers at risk by making their campaign finance information available to their challengers.

As a consequence, any student of Oklahoma campaign finance must be willing to do some serious digging. The only comprehensive information (i.e. that includes more than one race) available from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission is a report available after every election cycle starting in 1998. This report lists the candidate, the seat, the level of race sought, the money raised, the money spent, and the amount of cash-on-hand. Thus, the report, while incredibly useful, is much more noteworthy for what it does not include, rather than for what it actually contains. This report does not mention the party identification, the incumbency status, the vote percentage, nor the gender of the candidate, among other items. This makes it much more difficult to make comparisons across races or to look at campaign finance in Oklahoma as a whole.

Even more difficult is gathering individual contributor, expenditure, or PAC information in Oklahoma. Obtaining this type of information requires going through every single file for a given election year at the Oklahoma Ethics Commission. Fortunately this study has done just that. This study examines the 2000 and 2002 elections by looking at three different sources of information: 1) the easily accessible information on Oklahoma congressional candidates; 2) data from the comprehensive report with additional variables added, such as party identification, gender, whether the candidate won the race, whether the candidate was an incumbent, and the vote percentage obtained; and 3) information hand-gathered from the last two election cycles, 2000 and 2002, on PAC donations in Oklahoma. Only then, can we get a full picture of Oklahoma campaign finance before term limits were enacted.

FEDERAL RACES IN OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma's congressional campaign climate is fairly similar to that of most states across the country. The incumbents already in office are fairly entrenched and rarely lose. Nationally, only 3-5% of incumbents have lost their seats. Yet, in 2002, because of redistricting and running for higher office, three of Oklahoma's five U.S. House seats changed hands. These seats vacated by incumbents became open seats attracting numerous candidate with large sums of money spent. Yet, of the three open seats in Oklahoma in 2002, only one was truly competitive, the Fourth District seat between Republican Tom Cole and Democrat Darryl Roberts. This seat became open in 2002 when Representative J.C. Watts Jr. (R-OK) decided to retire to pursue other interests. What followed was a very competitive race for the seat, with two primaries featuring a total of seven candidates, and a heated general election.

The general election featured Tom Cole, a Republican, who was a former Oklahoma State Senator, had held key posts with the Republican National Committee, and was a familiar figure in Oklahoma Republican politics. His opponent was Darryl Roberts, a Democrat, who had competed for this same seat in 1998. Most of Roberts' funds, or \$309,000 of his \$560,038, came during the last three weeks of the campaign, when the Democratic Party and labor organizations decided that he had an opportunity to win (Casteel 2002). There was also a very active advertising campaign conducted by both candidates with Roberts accusing Cole of dodging the draft, and Cole refuting the charge by showing documentation that he registered for the draft but wasn't called (Hinton and Casteel 2002). In the end, Roberts was unable to overcome his slow start. Representative Cole defeated Roberts, 54% to 46%. Much of the victory could probably be attributed to the substantial difference in fundraising; Representative Cole was able to raise more money, \$1.19+ million to the \$560,038 raised by Roberts. The two candidates, though received their money from very different sources. While 47.4% of Representative Cole's PAC money came from business, only 6.2% of Roberts' PAC money came from business. Roberts instead raised most of his PAC money, or 64.4% from labor organizations (*www.crp.org*).

The other 2002 congressional races were much more predictable. Each had victory margins of greater than 10%. For Oklahoma's other four congressional seats, the three who faced major party opponents (Frank Lucas in the 3rd did not) each spent \$1.070+ million on average, while their opponents spent \$275,006 on average. The outcome of Oklahoma's U.S. Senate seat was never really in doubt; James Inhofe, the Republican incumbent, outspent David Walters, the former Democratic governor, \$3.6+ million to \$2.4+ million and defeated him, 57% to 36% (*www.crp.org*).

The 2000 elections were also fairly drama-free. Oklahoma had six congressional seats contested that year, but only one was competitive, the 2nd District seat, which featured a contest between Representative Brad Carson and Republican Andy Ewing. Carson outspent Ewing \$1.2+ million to \$988,161, and thus it is not a surprise, that Carson won that seat, 55% to 42%. All the other seats featured incumbents who won their races by more than 20% of the vote. The incumbents outspent their challengers, \$749,134 to \$103,814, with the largest gap coming with the 3rd District seat, where Representative J.C. Watts, Jr. (R-OK) outspent his challenger, Larry Weatherford (D), \$1,827,649 to \$57,455 (*www.crp.org*).

Thus, most of the drama and suspense in Oklahoma has not been in the federal races. Rather, state races have experienced most of the excitement. But again, studying campaign finance at the state level is not an easy experience because of the lack of electronic campaign finance data. This study seeks to remedy that by using both the information that is readily available from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission as well as the author's comprehensive database of PAC and contribution information for the 2000 and 2002 races to provide a clearer picture of campaign spending in Oklahoma.

STATE RACES IN OKLAHOMA – FROM READILY AVAILABLE CAMPAIGN FINANCE INFORMATION

The Oklahoma Ethics Commission since the 1998 election has created a report which does provide some comprehensive campaign finance information for the state of Oklahoma. Interested citizens can find in a tabular form for each of these election years the name of the

candidate, the type of race, the specific seat, the money spent by the candidate, the money received, and the amount of cash on hand.

This information suggests that the type of race makes a difference in Oklahoma as shown in **Table 1**. As would be expected, the higher the prestige of the race, the more money that is raised and spent to win the seat. Races for Governor, Attorney General, Lt. Governor, Insurance Commissioner, and Corporation Commissioner are the most prestigious state-wide seats. Thus, it is not surprising that candidates have raised more money for these seats. Yet, the 1998-2002 elections reveal an anomaly. Even the most prestigious seats may not require that much money to win the seat. This can be seen in the substantial discrepancies in the amounts for Governor, Lt. Governor, State Auditor and Inspector, and Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1998 and 2002. What made the difference in these races was the amount of competition. The 2002 election versus the 1998 election for governor is a good example of this. In 2002, there was a highly competitive race

TABLE 1

1998/2000/2002 Average Money Spent by Type of Seat Sought

	2002 Elections	2000 Elections	1998 Elections
Attorney General	\$584,685.71		
Corporation Commissioner	\$148,917.80	\$53,806.00	
District Attorney	\$30,163.50		\$32,340.20
Governor	\$998,172.80		\$577,095.90
House	\$24,062.36	\$26,495.00	\$25,969.55
Insurance Commissioner	\$185,327.28		\$168,056.80
Associate District Judge	\$30,673.63		\$67,220.59
District Judge	\$11,798.68		\$19,467.66
Labor Commissioner	\$63,085.15		\$102,746.50
Lt. Governor	\$236,734.50		\$843,953.50
Senate	\$71,954.59	\$47,349.00	\$57,082.29
State Auditor & Inspector	\$79,467.85		\$224,765.10
Sup. Public Instruction	\$71,954.60		\$2,724.92

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

between a former U.S. House member, Republican Steve Largent, and a member of the State Senate, Democrat Brad Henry. Also in the race was an Independent, Gary Richardson, who scared away many early opponents, despite being an Independent, by running a series of highly expensive television ads. He ended up spending \$2.63 million, while Largent spent \$3.18 million and Henry spent \$2.28 million. This was the closest gubernatorial election in thirty-two years, with Henry getting 43.2% of the vote, Largent 42.6%, and Richardson with 14.2% of the vote. In 1998, the race was different. Republican Frank Keating, a well-liked incumbent, ran against Democrat Laura Boyd. Keating won with 57.9% of the vote, while Boyd received only 40.9%. Boyd, however, only spent about \$500,000 for the race, while Keating spent about \$2.6 million (English and Hinton 1998).

Unlike the statewide races, the House and Senate races were more true to form. Those with the most prestigious offices usually spent the most money, and thus as expected, candidates for Oklahoma Senate seats spent 2/3rds more than their House counterparts. In 2002, for example, Senate candidates spent \$71,954.50 on average, while House candidates spent \$24,062.36 on average to win their seats. In 1998 and 2000, the gap narrowed somewhat, with Senators only doubling the amount that House candidates spent. Thus, in 1998 House candidates spent \$26,495.00, while Senate candidates spent \$47,349.00 and in 2000 House candidates spent \$25,959.55, while Senate candidates spent \$57,082.29.

The difference in the amount of spent in 2002 compared with the earlier years probably can be explained by the number of open seats, or races without an incumbent candidate. In 2002, there were more open seat races because of redistricting at the state level, which forced some legislators to compete against each other and created some new districts where there would be open seats. Also, many of the candidates were aware that term limits would effectively begin in 2004 for some legislators, and they might have decided to retire or run for another office early. Open seat candidates are more likely to spend larger sums of money because these races feature more candidates and are thus more competitive. In 2000, there were only 14 candidates competing in open seats for state legislative races in Oklahoma, while in 2002, there were 83 open seat candidates.

Yet in one sense, state House and Senate races have not followed a typical pattern. Nationwide, each year of elections has brought more and more campaign spending in the states, making each year more expensive than those in the past (Schultz 2002). In Oklahoma, however, House candidates actually spent less on average in 2002 (\$24,062.36), than they did in 2000 (\$26,495.00). For the Oklahoma Senate, the opposite was true; Senators' races were more expensive in 2002 (\$71,954.59 on average) than in 2000 (\$47,349.00), as shown in Table I. Given the propensity for Senate candidates to spend more money, particularly in 2002, it is not surprising that most of the top fundraisers in 2000 and 2002 were Senate candidates. In 2002, nine of the top ten recipients of campaign contributions among legislative candidates were Senators, and in 2000 it was eight out of ten, as shown in Table 2. The top campaign fundraiser in 2002 was Senator Stratton Taylor who raised \$413,945.91 and spent \$488,885.17 on his 2002 Senate race, while in 2000 the top fundraiser was Senator Mike Morgan who raised \$257,860.27 and spent \$239,533.42.

By adding a few additional variables to the information provided by the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, more can be learned about campaign finances in Oklahoma. For example, with the addition of party identification, one can find out whether Democrats or Republicans raise and spend more money on their campaigns. Until the recent 2004 election, the Oklahoma legislature has been consistently majority Democrat in both houses except for 1921 and 1922. Thus, one would expect that Democrats should receive more contributions and spend more money on their campaigns than Republicans. This is indeed the case. Republicans on average raised only \$28,717.53 in 2000 compared to the Democrats' \$41,011.08. A similar gap appears in 2002 when the Republicans raised only \$33,871.05, while Democrats raised \$46,878.07. The expenditure figures show a similar difference, with \$25,703.97 being spent by Republicans in 2000 and \$39,456.35 spent by Democrats in 2000. In 2002, Republicans spent \$29,766.50 and Democrats spent \$42,820.60.

For the third party candidates, it becomes immediately clear why very few run for state legislative office, and why they are almost never successful. None of the five third party candidates in 2000 and the four third party candidates in 2002 had a chance, at least looking at the amount of money raised and spent. Compared to the major party

TABLE 2

2000/2002 Top Recipients/Spenders in State Legislative Races

	Party	Office	Received	Spent
For 2000:				
Morgan, M	Democrat	Senate	\$267,860.27	\$239,533.42
Henry	Democrat	Senate	\$233,479.53	\$225,195.05
Adair	Democrat	House	\$176,483.53	\$189,361.03
Martin, P	Democrat	Senate	\$173,258.00	\$168,390.50
Benson	Democrat	House	\$161,425.66	\$247,729.45
Williams	Democrat	Senate	\$160,078.45	\$183,341.84
Helton	Democrat	Senate	\$150,597.97	\$174,180.42
Robinson	Democrat	Senate	\$143,994.86	\$114,564.12
Long	Democrat	Senate	\$138,325.66	\$130,173.36
Snyder	Republican	Senate	\$136,050.51	\$123,574.23
Brown	Democrat	Senate	\$117,470.46	\$117,852.82
Milacek	Republican	Senate	\$112,616.01	\$87,550.37
For 2002:				
Taylor, S	Democrat	Senate	\$413,945.91	\$488,885.17
Hobson	Democrat	Senate	\$383,976.84	\$200,338.67
Easley, K	Democrat	Senate	\$362,365.55	\$259,638.46
Walker, J	Democrat	Senate	\$242,555.10	\$222,189.34
Branan	Republican	Senate	\$236,245.74	\$233,473.14
Crutchfield, J.	Democrat	Senate	\$220,961.30	\$163,386.39
Harry	Democrat	Senate	\$173,758.50	\$158,711.41
Boren	Democrat	House	\$169,561.37	\$165,024.66
Herbert	Democrat	Senate	\$162,891.80	\$161,464.59
Coates, H	Republican	Senate	\$161,652.45	\$139,269.22
Smith, Joe	Democrat	Senate	\$153,205.83	\$152,817.68
Gumm	Democrat	Senate	\$142,715.61	\$131,754.61

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

candidates, these candidates raise and spend paltry sums of money, raising \$1,550.54 on average for House candidates, and \$17,004.95 for Senate candidates in 2002. This was better, however, than the third party candidates did in 2000, when they raised only \$277.25 on average for House races, and \$1,010.00 for Senate races.

In most races, whether across Oklahoma or even the nation, incumbents typically are more successful in both raising and spending money than are their challengers, or those that run against incumbents (Jacobson 2004, Hardt 2005). Most individuals and PACs tend to give to incumbents because they have better name recognition, they have a track record, and they can provide more services to their constituents (Jacobson 2004). As shown in **Table 3**, incumbents are the clear winner in the money race. On average, incumbents raise and spend three times more than their counterparts, with incumbents raising \$49,731.20 and spending \$43,715.04 on average, while their challengers raised only \$17,705.59 and spent only \$16,218.19. These figures are for 2002, and as can be seen in Table 3, the figures are similar for 2000. Clearly, the financial advantage alone gives incumbents a major advantage.

TABLE 3
2000 and 2002 Average Expenditures and Contributions,
by Type of Candidate

Type of Candidate	2000 Average Expenditures	2000 Average Contributions	2002 Average Expenditures	2002 Average Contributions
Republicans	\$25,703.97	\$28,717.53	\$29,766.50	\$33,871.05
Democrats	\$39,406.35	\$41,011.08	\$42,280.60	\$46,878.07
Third Party	\$ 251.70	\$ 439.80	\$ 5,414.14	\$ 6,251.66
Incumbents	\$46,166.23	\$48,929.05	\$43,715.04	\$49,731.20
Challengers	\$15,255.43	\$16,554.17	\$16,218.19	\$17,705.59
Open Seats	\$51,421.79	\$57,031.07	\$37,146.92	\$40,936.08
Winners	\$45,755.69	\$49,274.29	\$49,010.68	\$55,559.22
Losers	\$18,836.69	\$19,564.21	\$21,441.34	\$24,430.62
House	\$26,495.05	\$27,647.01	\$24,062.36	\$25,799.12
Senate	\$43,774.92	\$53,135.68	\$71,954.59	\$84,977.82
Male	\$29,423.15	\$31,325.24	\$34,708.89	\$39,149.59
Female	\$41,245.16	\$45,674.00	\$28,353.49	\$29,200.28

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

With more money, the incumbents can hire more staff, produce more campaign flyers, create more campaign advertisements, etc.

But it is also instructive to compare incumbents and challengers for either House seats or Senate seats, instead of lumping them together, because of the substantial difference in money raised/spent by House and Senate candidates. This is when the true advantage (or disadvantage, as is the case for challengers) can be seen. Most of the disadvantage as shown in Table 3, is not with the House candidates; the House incumbents generally raise and spend about twice as much as their challengers. But in the Senate, the disadvantage is huge, with incumbents raising and spending about ten times more than their challengers. Just looking at 2002 alone, Senate incumbents raised \$116,660.59 and spent \$90,545.12 on average, while their challengers raised \$11,902.25, and spent \$10,070.72.

Candidates for an open seat, where there is no incumbent in the race, typically do better than challengers, and sometimes even spend more money than incumbents. This is because open seats are the most competitive. Open-seat candidates know that they will not face an entrenched incumbent with name recognition, a huge financial war chest, and years of constituent service. Yet, at the same time, there is a Catch-22 with these open-seat contests; usually there will be more candidates in the race (Jacobson 2004).

Oklahoma seems to follow these national trends. Most state legislative open-seat races in 2000 and especially 2002 typically featured 7-8 candidates, with typically a very competitive primary at least in one party with 5-6 candidates, and then a competitive general election with two high-quality candidates. A good example of this is State House District 98 in 2002. The incumbent, Tim Pope (R), had his original district eliminated by redistricting, and now that district represents Broken Arrow, instead of Mustang, Pope's home base. As a result, he ran in an unsuccessful bid to unseat State Labor Commissioner Brenda Reneau. The Republican primary was thus a free-for-all with five candidates competing, including Melissa Mahan, the winner of the primary, and John Trebilcock, the second-place finisher. Because of the closeness of this race, Oklahoma law dictated a runoff election, and Trebilcock defeated Mahan. In the general election, Trebilcock faced a third close contest, defeating Michelle Sutton (D) for the victory. The campaign finances for this race were similarly competitive.

Competing in three contests, Trebilcock raised \$64,218 and spent \$62,008, while Michelle Sutton raised \$43,313 and spent \$36,370 for only the general election, since she did not face an opponent in the Democratic primary. Overall, open-seat candidates elsewhere in the state fared just as well in their campaign fundraising efforts. Open seat candidates in 2002 were able to raise \$40,936.08 and spend \$37,146.92, roughly two times more than challengers, and just a little less than that of incumbents. Yet in 2000, open seat candidates were actually more successful than incumbents, raising \$57,031.07 and spending \$51,421.79 on average.

Also, as expected, winners generally do better than losers, both in raising and spending money. With more money, candidates can buy more campaign circulars, more campaign advertisements, and more staff to better publicize their campaigns. Generally speaking, winning state legislative candidates tend to raise and spend about 2.5 times more money in Oklahoma than their competitors. Thus, in 2000 winners raised \$49,274.29 and spent \$45,755.69, while losers raised only \$19,564.21 and spent only \$18,836.69 on average. For 2002, the difference between winners and losers is fairly similar. Winners spent \$49,010.68, and raised \$55,559.22, while losers spent only \$21,441.34 and raised \$24,430.62.

Another issue that can be looked at is whether male or female legislators are better at raising money in Oklahoma. This is an issue because of the relatively small number of female legislators in Oklahoma. In 2004, only 12.7% of the legislators, or 19 out of 149, in Oklahoma were women, compared with 22% nationwide. After the 2004 election, the number of female legislators did increase to 22, but this still ranked Oklahoma 49th, in terms of the percentage of women legislators nationwide (Council of State Governments 2004). Perhaps there are fewer female legislators in Oklahoma because they are not as successful as the men in raising and spending money on their campaigns. Well, in 2000, this was not the case. Female candidates for the Oklahoma legislature actually raised and spent more money than their male colleagues, raising \$45,674.00 and spending \$41,245.16 on average, compared with \$31,325.24 and \$29,423.15 for the male candidates. Given that there was only one female versus male race during these years, this could have given females an edge in terms of competing against their male colleagues. Yet, there wasn't a significant

difference in the percentage of males versus females in terms of winning their races, with females winning fewer of their races with only 40.6% won, compared with the males who won 42.9%. In 2002, there was both good news and bad news for female candidates. The good news was that there were more female candidates in 2002, 37 as compared with 32, and fewer male candidates (228, as compared with 259). Yet, females did much worse when it came to both raising and spending money. Females were able to raise only \$29,900.28 and spend \$28,353.49 on average in 2002, yet males were able to raise \$39,149.59 and spend \$34,708.89 on average. Moreover, only 32.4% of the female candidates were able to win their races in 2002, compared with 45.6% of the male colleagues. Thus, it looks like the small percentage of females in the Oklahoma legislature will continue for some years to come.

GOING BEYOND READILY AVAILABLE DATA – THE WORLD OF PAC MONEY

While the readily available data do provide information about aggregate campaign spending in Oklahoma, giving us detail about whether House members spent and received more money than Senators for example, it does not provide any detail about specific individuals or groups who have spent and received money in Oklahoma. Thus, many of the important questions that political scientists often ask about campaign finance are left unanswered by the readily available data. For example, nationwide Democrats generally receive more money from labor groups and Republicans generally receive more money from business groups (Herrnson 2004). But is this true in Oklahoma as well? One would expect, for example, that labor groups in Oklahoma might be more limited in terms of their financial donations because of the fact that Oklahoma is not a very pro-labor state (Hardt 2005). Moreover, some groups might decide that they want to distribute their money in a bipartisan manner and provide smaller donations to more members. Other groups might decide that their best strategy is to maximize their influence by giving larger donations to a smaller cadre of candidates. But the readily available data tell us nothing about which groups spend the most money in Oklahoma or how those groups spend their money.

Thus, this study seeks to go further than the readily available data by doing something that has never been done before in the state of Oklahoma – gathering comprehensive group and candidate campaign finance information for multiple years. As previously mentioned, for Oklahoma this is an almost painful process. Unlike California and other states that have computerized their campaign finance information and made it available online, Oklahoma still does its campaign finance using paper and pencil. Thus, in order to get any comprehensive information, every campaign document must be examined and recorded by hand in order to look at all the candidates. This is a painstaking process because each candidate may have anywhere from four or five pages (typically these candidates received no contributions) to over 1000 pages for some candidates. With 292 Oklahoma House and Senate candidates in 2000 and 277 candidates in 2002, that is a lot of pages just to get comprehensive information for just two election cycles.

Nevertheless, that is what this study has done. Now for the first time, Oklahomans can find out which interest group gives the most money in Oklahoma, and find out whether certain interest groups or corporations give more money to Republicans or Democrats, House members or Senators, winners or losers, and incumbents, challengers, or open-seat candidates. One can also get a comprehensive picture of the PACs formed by these interest groups and corporations. Do they have particular patterns of giving? Are there numerous PACs in Oklahoma or just a few? What sector of the Oklahoma economy seems to have the most PACs? Do candidates get more money from in-state PACs or out-of-state PACs? These questions can finally be answered.

PERCENTAGE OF THE BUDGET AND AVERAGE PAC DONATION

One of the first basic questions to answer is the number of PACs in Oklahoma. If there are few PACs in Oklahoma, or if they don't give very much money, then they might not even be interesting to look at. Alas, this is not the case. PACs are a very significant player in Oklahoma's elections as shown in **Table 4**. In 2000, there were 416 PACs that gave \$3,490,313 in contributions to 293 candidates, for an average candidate contribution of \$11,912. In 2002, the PACs actually

Table 4

2000 and 2002 Percent PAC/Non-PAC By Type of Candidate

	All Contributions	PAC	Percent PAC	Percent Non-PAC	Average PAC \$
2000					
Democrats	\$4,267,361.75	\$2,133,630.31	50.0	50.0	\$15,240.22
Republicans	\$5,307,469.25	\$1,356,682.73	25.6	74.4	\$8,925.54
House	\$6,414,107.13	\$2,491,111.03	38.8	61.2	\$10,737.55
Senate	\$3,160,723.87	\$593,633.30	18.8	81.2	\$9,893.89
Winners	\$6,350,528.16	\$2,410,177.20	38.0	62.0	\$19,128.39
Losers	\$3,224,302.84	\$1,080,195.84	33.5	66.5	\$6,507.20
Incumbents	\$6,018,383.80	\$2,441,995.82	40.6	59.4	\$19,693.51
Challengers	\$2,482,387.06	\$762,493.51	30.7	69.3	\$5,016.40
Open Seats	\$798,434.94	\$285,823.71	35.8	64.2	\$20,415.98
Female	\$1,461,568.13	\$535,265.94	36.6	63.4	\$16,220.18
Male	\$8,113,262.87	\$2,955,047.10	36.4	63.6	\$11,409.45
2002					
Democrats	\$4,030,654.65	\$2,164,998.06	53.7	46.3	\$13,967.73
Republicans	\$5,859,858.35	\$1,423,296.70	24.3	75.7	\$11,666.37
House	\$5,443,614.42	\$2,453,141.05	45.1	54.9	\$11,252.94
Senate	\$4,588,802.53	\$1,135,153.71	24.7	75.3	\$19,239.89
Winners	\$6,611,546.75	\$2,676,438.00	40.5	59.5	\$20,909.67
Losers	\$3,420,870.20	\$911,856.64	26.7	73.3	\$6,119.84
Incumbents	\$5,370,969.37	\$2,662,003.00	49.6	50.4	\$23,767.88
Challengers	\$1,106,310.34	\$540,236.17	48.8	51.2	\$6,838.43
Open Seats	\$3,315,822.39	\$386,056.00	11.6	88.4	\$4,651.28
Female	\$1,794,276.17	\$358,988.46	20.0	80.0	\$9,447.06
Male	\$8,926,106.61	\$3,229,306.30	36.2	63.8	\$13,741.73

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

gave more money in contributions, \$3,675,764 to fewer candidates (277), but there were also fewer PACs with only 318 PACs giving money in 2002, for a smaller average donation of \$509.67.

PAC money also constitutes a substantial portion of a candidate's budget, depending on the type of candidate. Because Democrats have

had majority control of the Oklahoma legislature except for 1921 and 1922, and more recently in 2004-2005, it is understandable that the Democrats not only received more PAC money than Republicans both in total and on average, but that it also constituted a greater proportion of the Democrat's campaign budget. In 2000, PAC money constituted only 25.6% of the Republican candidates' budgets, but 50.0% of the Democrats' budgets. Democrats also had a huge advantage in the average amount of money received compared with the Republicans in 2000, \$15,240.22 as compared to \$8,925.54. Thus, it is not surprising that the Democrats were more successful in their campaigns with an almost 2:1 advantage in terms of PAC money received. Yet, the tides began to change in 2002. For the first time, Republicans had a legitimate chance to capture majority control of the House. Although they fell short by three seats, making up the difference in PAC money seemed to help. While the percentages for PAC money as a part of the campaign budget were fairly similar to what they had been in 2000, 53.7% for the Democrats as compared with 24.3% for the Republicans, Republicans were able to get more money from PACs on average than they did in 2000. Republicans had almost made up the difference receiving \$11,666.37 on average from PACs as compared with the Democrats who received \$13,967.73 on average.

Alas, the winners were still winning and the losers were losing, at least in terms of the PAC money race. In both 2000 and 2002, the losers faced more than a 3:1 disadvantage in terms of the average PAC money given to campaigns. The losers received only \$6,119.84 on average in 2002, and \$6,507.20 on average in 2000, compared with the winners who received \$20,909.67 and \$19,128.39 on average, respectively. Unfortunately for the losers, this is typical PAC behavior. PACs are much more likely to give money to winners because they have a greater chance of being successful and voting on public policy once they are in office. Most of the winners are also incumbents, meaning that they have proven track record for the PACs to examine (Biersack, Herrnson, and Wilcox 1994).

Not surprisingly, this trend continues when looking at how the challengers did versus the incumbents in raising PAC money. Here, though, the results are a bit more mixed. Particularly in 2002, challengers were successful in keeping the percentage of PAC money in their campaign budgets comparable to those of incumbents, with incumbents

receiving 49.6% of their money from PACs, and challengers 48.8% of their money. Yet, there was more of a gap in 2000, with 40.6% of the campaign budget coming from PACs for incumbents, but only 30.7% for challengers. But the real difference in both elections was in the average amount of PAC money received. Here, challengers just cannot compete, receiving only \$6,838.42 on average in 2002, compared with the incumbents who received \$23,767.88. In 2000, the gap was only marginally better for challengers, \$5,016.40 on average for them, versus \$19,693.51 for incumbents.

One of the most striking changes in 2002 as compared to 2000, came with the open seat races. Remembering that 2002 was the beginning of numerous open seat races because of redistricting and then later term limits, this change is reflected in terms of the PAC money that was given and the percentage of the candidates' budgets. There were only 14 open seat candidates in 2000, versus 83 in 2002. The PACs actually gave over \$100,000 more in 2002 than they did in 2000, but with the greater number of candidates, each candidate actually received much less on average. Thus, in 2000, open seat candidates were not only able to get more money on average from PACs, or \$20,415.98 as compared with \$4,651.28 in 2002, but PAC money also constituted a much larger portion of their budgets in 2000, or 35.8% versus 11.6% in 2002.

The PACs were less consistent in 2000 and 2002 in terms of giving to male or female candidates. In 2000, the percentage of the campaign budget coming from PACs was almost equal, with 36.6% for females and 36.4% for males. Yet, in 2002 there was a tremendous difference, with males staying fairly consistent at 36.2%, but females dropped to only 20%. Likewise, the average amount of money given by PACs to males and females was also inconsistent, with females getting less money average in 2002, \$9,447.06 versus \$13,741.73, but more money in 2000, or \$16,220.18 as compared to \$11,409.45.

DO OKLAHOMANS GET MORE PAC MONEY FROM IN-STATE OR OUT-OF-STATE?

One of the issues that frequently comes up during various campaigns is whether the candidate is being supported by his/her

constituents or by people that cannot even vote for the candidate. In the Carson-Coburn U.S. Senate race in 2004, for example, it was noted during the race that both candidates relied heavily on out-of-state donations. Thus, it is not surprising that over 50% of their donations came from out-of-state contributors. In 2002, Oklahoman members of Congress were much more mixed in terms of receiving out of state contributions, with a high of 46% for Representative Ernest Istook (R-OK), and a low of 4% for Representative John Sullivan (R-OK), for an average of 26.2% for all members of Congress.

One would expect that state and local races would feature mostly in-state donations. That is the case in Oklahoma. Only 12.1% of the donations in 2000 and 18.5% of the donations in 2002 were from out-of-state PACs. Candidates in Oklahoma received roughly six times more donations from in-state PACs than they did from out-of-state PACs in both 2000 and 2002. The average donation from in-state and out-of-state PACs was also remarkably similar, particularly for 2002, with candidates receiving an average donation of \$460.74 from in-state PACs and \$400.44 from out-of-state PACs in 2002.

Most of the out-of-state PACs for Oklahoma state legislative candidates include the Telecommunications PACs and the oil/gas PACs, mainly based in Texas. These include such corporations as BP Amoco, Duke Energy, Koch Industries, Conoco, and AT&T Communications. Many of the other out-of state PACs are almost a who's who list of major corporations in the United States, including Bank of America, Eli Lilly, and Glaxo Wellcome. But some of the out-of state PACs are national party PACs or leader PACs, which are PACs started mostly by members of Congress. These PACs are more ideological in nature and tend to give mostly to one party, and only when the race is competitive. These include such PACs as the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) PAC and the American Renewal PAC. In checking the location of the PACs, it is important not to rely on the title of the PAC alone, but rather the address of the PAC because all of the following, despite their names, are out-of-state PACs for Oklahoma candidates: Phillip Morris-OK PAC, Texaco-Oklahoma PAC, and Oklahomans for Better Government.

THE BIGGEST PACS AND THE AMOUNT OF MONEY GIVEN

In looking at the size of PACs in Oklahoma, PACs can be ranked on three different dimensions: the total sum given, the average donation given, and the number of donations given. PACs may choose to give a limited number of large donations, thus hoping to maximize the impact of each donation. So thus, PACs may only give to the most competitive races, hoping to get a legislator that is more amenable to their public policy position. Or PACs may decide to curry favor with as many legislators as possible, thus giving very small donations, but giving lots more of them. These three dimensions can thus truly illustrate which are the most active PACs in terms of the amount of money given and the size of the contribution.

With the top ten PACs, certain PACs do seem to get noticed. The most active PACs seem to be the ideological and party PACs, such as the Republican Majority Fund, the Oklahoma State Republican Senate Committee, the Oklahoma Republican Party, and the Working Oklahomans Alliance PAC. These PACs not only rank consistently high in terms of the average donation given for both the 2000 and 2002 elections (as shown in **Table 5**), but are also giving the most money, as shown in the total amount donated in **Table 6**. Many of these organizations are giving fairly close to the maximum PAC donation possible to an Oklahoma candidate, which is \$5,000. They are also giving substantial sums of money overall.

What is interesting about these tables, though, from 2000 to 2002 is the groups that have declined in terms of their giving. Most of these groups, such as the Oklahoma State AFL-CIO, the Oklahoma House of Representatives Democratic PAC, and the Transportation Workers Union of America, consistently support Democratic candidates. Moreover, the Oklahoma Democratic Party in particular dropped from third largest PAC in average donations in 2000, to off the list in 2002. The reason for this is fairly simple: the Democrats had less money to spend on campaign assistance in 2002, than they did in 2000. When the contributions from the Oklahoma Democratic Party, the Oklahoma House of Representatives Democratic Caucus, and the Democrats of the Oklahoma State Senate are combined, the Democrats only gave a total of \$31,500 in contributions in 2002, compared to the \$248,600

TABLE 5

**2000 and 2002 Top Ten PACs by Average Amount of Donation
(minimum 20 donations)**

2000	Name of PAC	Average Donation	2002	Name of PAC	Average Donation
1.	Republican Majority Fund	\$3,041.66	1.	OK State Republican Senate Committee	\$3,050.00
2.	OK State Republican Senate Committee	\$2,767.85	2.	Republican Majority Fund	\$2,537.00
3.	OK House of Rep Democratic Caucus	\$2,167.05	3.	Oklahoma State AFL-CIO	\$2,278.00
4.	OK Republican Party	\$2,039.74	4.	Transportation Workers Union	\$2,065.00
5.	House GOP PAC	\$2,039.47	5.	House GOP PAC	\$2,008.00
6.	New Leadership Fund	\$1,661.29	6.	OK Republican Party	\$1,438.967
7.	The New Oklahoma	\$1,484.52	7.	Chesapeake Energy Corporation PAC	\$1,414.89
8.	Working OK Alliance	\$1,420.00	8.	Center for Legislative Excellence	\$1,107.88
9.	Transportation Workers Union	\$1,254.16	9.	LEGAL	\$1,105.62
10.	LEGAL	\$1,234.84	10.	Working OK Alliance	\$1,061.36

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

given in 2000. Making their situation even worse, similar organizations on the Republican side actually improved from 2000 to 2002, contributing only \$166,050 in 2000, but \$232,355.88 in 2002. To add even more financial misery for the Democrats, the Republican Majority Fund continued to give strongly to Republicans in 2000 and 2002, providing the largest average donation in 2000 (\$3,041.66) and the second largest average donation in 2002 (\$2,537.00). Fortunately, the Democrats did get some help in 2002. The Oklahoma AFL-CIO, which typically gives to Democrats, only gave \$696.12 on average to 103 candidates, ranking it 19th on the list of average donations for 2000.

TABLE 6

2000 and 2002 Top Ten PACs by Total Amount Donated

2000	Name of PAC	Total Donation	2002	Name of PAC	Total Donation
1.	OK House of Rep Democratic Caucus	\$184,200.00	1.	OK Independent Energy PAC (OKIEPAC)	\$164,700.00
2.	Republican Majority Fund	\$109,500.00	2.	Center for Legislative Excellence	\$161,750.00
3.	WINPAC	\$81,550.00	3.	Chesapeake Energy Corporation PAC	\$133,000.00
4.	OK AGC Fund (General Contractors)	\$80,580.00	4.	Republican Majority Fund	\$104,000.00
5.	OK Republican Party	\$79,550.00	5.	LEGAL	\$98,400.00
6.	Working OK Alliance	\$78,100.00	6.	House GOP	\$82,350.00
7.	House GOP	\$77,550.00	7.	OK State AFL-CIO	\$77,450.00
8.	OK State Republican Senate Committee	\$77,500.00	8.	OK Republican Party	\$74,825.88
9.	OK State AFL-CIO	\$71,700.00	9.	SW Bell Employees PAC	\$71,250.00
10.	The New Oklahoma	\$62,350.00	10.	Transportation Workers Union	\$64,000.00

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

But in 2002, it was ranked 3rd on the list of average donations, providing \$2,278.00 on average to candidates.

Also notable is that **Table 7** showing the total number of donations given by PAC features almost entirely a different list of PACs. These PACs obviously want to demonstrate their influence by giving to as many state legislative candidates as possible. Many of these PACs are vocational or professional PACs including the OK Optometric PAC (#1 in 2000, and #6 in 2002), the Oklahoma Osteopathic Association (#9 in 2000 and #2 in 2002), and the Certified Public Accountants (#7 in 2000 and #5 in 2002). Another set of PACs on this list are the PACs interested in energy issues, although not the oil and gas companies.

Table 7

2000 and 2002 Top Ten PACs by Total Number of Donations

2000	Name of PAC	Total # of Donations	2002	Name of PAC	Total # of Donations
1.	OK Optometric	164	1.	OK Assn of Career & Tech Education	230
3.	OKC Firefighters PAC	156	2.	OK Osteopathic Association	226
3.	OK Independent Energy PAC (OKIEPAC)	156	3.	Speak Up for Rural Electrification (SURE)	217
4.	OK Vocational Assoc	139	4.	OK Independent Energy PAC (OKIEPAC)	200
5.	SW Bell Employees PAC	138	5.	Certified Public Accountants	190
6.	Speak Up for Rural Electrification (SURE)	135	6.	OK Optometric PAC	176
7.	Certified Public Accountants	124	7.	Public Service Co. PAC	158
8.	OK UAW PAC Council	124	8.	Farmers Employee/ Agent PAC	156
10.	OK Osteopathic Assoc	120	9.	Center for Legislative Excellence	146
10.	Public Service Co. PAC	120	10.	OKAGC (General Contractors)	133

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

These include Speak Up for Rural Electrification (#6 in 2000 and #3 in 2002), the Oklahoma Independent Energy PAC (#3 in 2000 and #4 in 2002), and the Public Service Company PAC (#10 in 2000 and #7 in 2002). Although the PACs giving the most donations were fairly similar from 2000 to 2002, there were some interesting absences in the two elections. The OKC Firefighters were #2 in 2000, but did not make the top ten for 2002. A similar story is true with the Oklahoma Association of Career and Tech Education which made the list at #1 in 2002, but did not make the list two years earlier.

Not surprisingly, the lists comparing the total number of contributions donated by PACs and the total amount donated by PACs

for 2000 and 2002 are similar as well, as shown in **Table 8** and **Table 9**. These lists reveal that most of the PACs in Oklahoma contribute to only a few candidates and give fairly small contributions. This is particularly true for 2000 when there were 193 PACs which gave one or two contributions, but only 69 that gave this amount in 2002. Thus, although there were more PACs in 2000 than in 2002, much of the difference came from PACs that gave only a few contributions. This explains why the total amount given from the PACs was remarkably similar in both years, with \$3,391,358.20 given in 2000 and \$3,399,174.76 given in 2002. This is despite the fact that although candidates for House races spent roughly the same amount on average in 2000 and 2002 (\$26,495.00 and \$24,062.36, respectively), there was greater than a \$24,000 increase in the average cost of Senate campaigns during this time (from \$47,349 to \$71,954.59). The number of contributions given by the PACs also was fairly similar, with 7,405 different contributions in 2000 and 7,695 in 2002.

TABLE 8**Number of Contributions Donated by PACs in 2000 and 2002**

Contributions	# of PACs in 2000	# of PACs in 2002
1-2 Contributions	193	69
3-9 Contributions	81	63
10-19 Contributions	38	37
20-50 Contributions	60	45
51-99 Contributions	39	37
100+ Contributions	16	16

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

TABLE 9

Total Amount Donated by Number of PACs in 2000 and 2002

Amount Donated	# of PACs in 2000	# of PACs in 2002
0-\$100	3	0
\$100-999	162	36
\$1,000-4,999	124	90
\$5,000-9,999	40	45
\$10,000-14,999	21	32
\$15,000-24,999	29	30
\$25,000-49,999	18	19
\$50,000-99,999	14	12
\$100,000+	2	4

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

THE AVERAGE PAC DONATION

To both the candidates and the PACs, the size of the PAC contribution does matter. For candidates, obviously, they are trying to secure as many campaign funds as possible, because candidates with more money are generally more likely to win their elections. But the size of the contribution also matters to candidates because if that candidate is successful, the legislators may pay more attention to PACs that gave them larger contributions once they are in office. For PACs, this can result in anything from more access to the member to getting favorable public policies passed. Thus, both candidates and PACs pay attention to whether a PAC has “maxed out” for a candidate, or given the maximum donation. Both also need to take notice for legal reasons; a donation over the maximum would put both in violation of campaign finance laws. In Oklahoma, the maximum donation possible for a PAC is \$5,000.

Some PACs try to set themselves apart through their campaign finance donations. Most notable among these was the Phillips 66 Oil and Gas Company which made it a practice to give either \$250.66 or \$500.66 to each of its candidates. The Oklahoma Federation of

Republican Women gave the rather strange amounts of \$132.14 in 2000 and \$397.50 in 2002. Most of the PACs, though, seemed to have some strategy in mind when giving. Some PACs, for example, gave a set ladder of donations (i.e. \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$750). This example is actually the most common ladder used, and was the strategy exercised by such PACs as the ABC PAC of Eastern Oklahoma, Public Service Company PAC, and the Household International PAC (HOUSEPAC). Other organizations followed a more consistent pattern of giving, giving the same contribution across the board (i.e. \$1,000). The Oklahoma Nurses Association, for example, gave \$200 to each of its chosen candidates in 2002. Most of the party/ideology PACs relied on the same strategy, although their contributions probably got more attention because of the size of the contribution. The Oklahoma Values Coalition, for example, gave exclusively to Republican candidates in 2002, and its contributions were in the \$1,000-\$1,500 range, while DRIVE (Democrats, Republicans, Independents for Voter Education) despite its title gave exclusively to Democrats in 2002 and gave a \$1,000 contribution to all of its chosen candidates except Kenneth Fulbright who received \$4,000.

As is already apparent, most PACs in Oklahoma give far less than the maximum donation possible, but those that come close can really make a substantial difference. This becomes evident when **Table 10** is examined which shows the average amount of PAC donations per type of candidate for both the 2000 and 2002 elections.¹ House candidates typically receive substantially less than Senate candidates. At the congressional level, races for the House are seen as having less prestige, they occur more frequently, and typically may be less competitive than those for the Senate and thus PACs typically give House candidates less money (Jacobson 2004). The same is generally true for state House and Senate candidates (Schultz 2002). Thus, the average PAC contribution for a House candidate was \$425.81 in 2000 and \$415.00 in 2002, while the average PAC contribution for a Senate candidate was \$480.16 and \$571.00, respectively.

The most surprising outcome with the average PAC contributions was the difference between winners and losers. The traditional literature suggests that winners tend to receive more PAC contributions because they are more capable of putting the public policies desired by the PACs into place once in office (Jacobson 2004). Yet, in Oklahoma,

Table 10

The Average Amount of Each PAC Donation Compared by Type of Candidate in 2000 and 2002

	2000	2002
House	\$425.81	\$415.00
Senate	\$480.16	\$571.00
Democrat	\$421.44	\$452.40
Republican	\$476.29	\$456.27
Winner	\$397.20	\$407.37
Loser	\$578.82	\$683.04
Incumbent	\$379.03	\$404.00
Challenger	\$720.24	\$676.14
Open Seat	\$715.84	\$735.34
Male	\$431.49	\$456.76
Female	\$489.93	\$429.93

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

losers received more in average PAC contributions than did winners, with an average contribution of \$578.82 in 2000, and \$683.04 in 2002. Yet the winners received only \$397.20 and \$407.37, respectively. But it is important to note that these are average PAC donations, not the total PAC donations. In 2000, for example, the winners received an average total of \$19,755.06 versus the losers' average total of \$6,667.88.

Yet, still this difference between winners and losers was curious. Much of the difference is accounted for by the type of contribution. Winners tended to receive money from all different kinds of PACs, including party/ideology PACs, health PACs, telecommunications PACs, employee PACs, and oil/gas PACs. Yet, losers received much more of their money from party and ideology PACs, not the other types of PACs. Party and ideology PACs have a different donation strategy that they tend to share. These PACs tend to give large donations

(\$2,000-\$5,000) to a small number of competitive races, hoping that they can be efficient in their spending by contributing to races where the seats have the greatest possibility of changing parties. The other PACs, particularly the employee PACs and the energy PACs (especially not oil/gas PACs), distributed their funds more widely, giving 130-150 contributions of roughly \$200-\$500, as opposed to just 15-20 smaller contributions.

Given this discrepancy between winners and losers, it is not a surprise that the same gap arises between incumbents and challengers. Once again, the challengers received larger individual PAC donations on average (\$720.24 versus \$370.03 in 2000, and \$676.14 versus \$404.00 in 2002), yet still received fewer PAC donations overall (getting only \$5,187.03 on average versus \$20,016.36 for incumbents in 2000). In fact, the challengers resembled open seats when it came to the average PAC donations. Open seat candidates received an average PAC contribution of \$715.84 in 2000 and \$735.34 in 2002. Once again, the PAC contributions to open seat candidates were less diverse, with those candidates receiving more of the big-money contributions from the parties and the ideological PACs. Since many open seats can be captured by either party, it makes sense for the party and ideological PACs to target these seats.

Somewhat surprisingly, there was not a huge gap between Democrats and Republicans in terms of the average PAC donation for 2000 and 2002. The Democrats received \$421.44 on average in 2000 and \$452.40 in 2002, while the Republicans averaged \$476.29 and \$456.27, respectively. This is despite the fact that the Democratic Party did substantially better in contributing money in 2000 than it did in 2002, as noted previously. Yet, the Democrats were obviously able to compensate by getting funds from other sources other than the party/ideology PACs, such as the AFL-CIO, the Transportation Workers Union, and other PACs which give more to Democrats. The average PAC donations for male and female candidates were also fairly similar with females doing better in 2000 (\$489.93 for females versus \$431.49) and males doing better in 2002 (\$456.76 for males versus \$429.93).

CLASSIFYING THE PACS INTO CATEGORIES

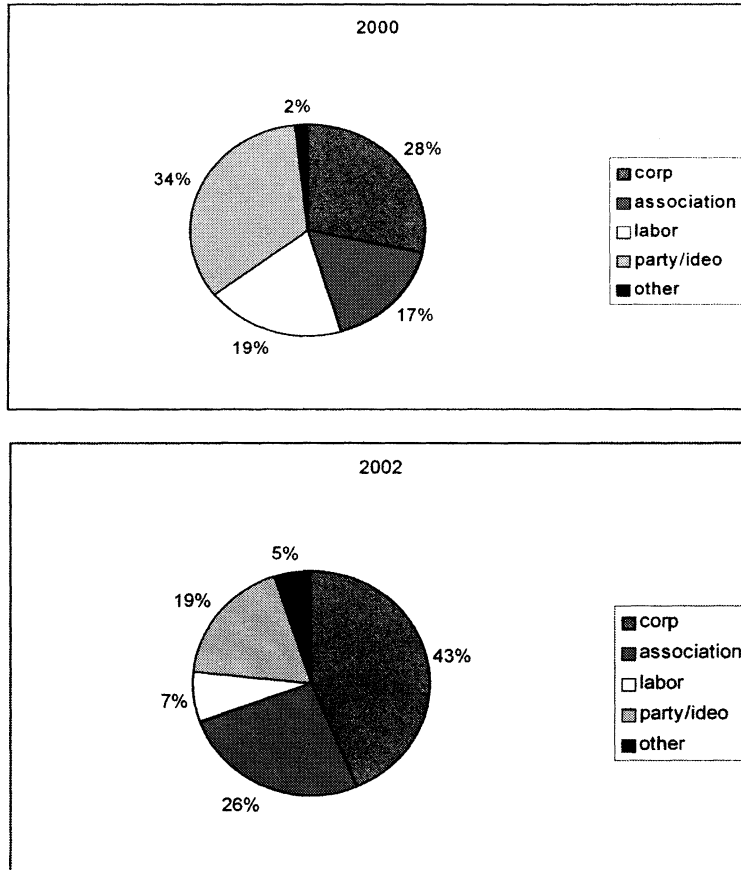
The type of PAC does seem to have made a difference. Certain types of PACs, namely those with an ideological or partisan bent, seem to follow a different strategy of giving than other PACs. But is this really the case? To determine this, it makes sense to take the 416 PACs in 2000 and the 318 PACs in 2002 and to classify them according to categories. This way, it can be determined if different types of PACs employ different strategies of giving. Also, one can look at the major industries in Oklahoma and see if they give in large amounts to candidates.

Much of the literature on PACs seems to rely on a classification system that has five categories: association, corporation, labor, party ideology, and other. Relying on this scale, as shown in **Table 11**, the marked decline in giving by the Democratic Party in Oklahoma is very noticeable. Party/ideology PACs made up 32.6% of the PAC donations in 2000, but only 16.3% in 2002. Labor PACs also declined from 2000 to 2002, giving 18.5% of the donations in 2000, but only 7.2% in 2002. Yet, much of the difference was made up by the donations from corporation PACs and association PACs, which gave 16.2% and 9.9% more of the PAC donations in 2002 than in 2000. Some of these PACs gave almost exclusively to Democrats, such as Lawyers Encouraging Government and Law (LEGAL), helping Democrats to compensate for the loss of party funds in 2002.

Yet the five-fold classification system seems to confuse more than it seems to illuminate. Using this classification system, it is impossible to tell, for example, whether oil/gas PACs gave more than agriculture PACs, both major industries in Oklahoma. Of course, the only way to ascertain this information is to divide these categories even further. **Table 12** shows the different categories of PACs, the total amount given, the number of donations given, the percentage given of the total PAC donations, and the average amount given by that type of PAC.² In looking at the average PAC donation given by the type of PAC, two types of PACs should be noticed: ideological and party PACs. These types of PACs had the highest average PAC donation, averaging over \$1,000 each for both the 2000 and 2002 elections. Most of these PACs relied on the ladder strategy of giving, typically donating from \$1,000 to \$5,000 in thousand dollar increments.

TABLE 11

PAC Donations by Type of PAC for 2000 and 2003 Elections



Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

Typically, these are the donations that candidates rely on for winning their seats. After all, this is the goal of these PACs. They want candidates in office that can further their agendas, and strengthen the party's position.

TABLE 12
Types of PACs in the Oklahoma 2000 and 2002 Elections
by Total Amount Given, Percent Given, Number of Donations Given, and Average Donation

Type of PAC	2000 ELECTIONS				2002 ELECTION			
	Sum	Percent	Count	Average	Sum	Percent	Count	Average
Agriculture	\$42,200.00	1.24	221	\$190.95	\$32,450.00	0.92	135	\$240.00
Banking	\$138,225.00	4.08	517	\$267.36	\$189,535.00	5.39	598	\$316.95
Business	\$122,450.00	3.61	399	\$306.89	\$199,275.00	5.66	586	\$340.06
Construction	\$156,825.00	4.62	320	\$490.08	\$126,364.82	3.59	413	\$305.97
Education	\$72,964.00	2.15	351	\$207.87	\$127,266.92	3.62	505	\$252.01
Environment	\$2,400.00	0.07	9	\$266.67	\$4,300.00	0.12	11	\$390.91
Guns	\$19,450.00	0.57	95	\$204.74	\$24,250.00	0.69	172	\$140.99
Health	\$375,020.00	11.05	1,377	\$272.35	\$377,518.00	10.73	1,211	\$311.74
Ideology	\$168,250.00	4.96	135	\$1,246.30	\$361,700.00	10.28	316	\$1,144.62
Insurance	\$92,575.00	2.73	310	\$298.63	\$81,400.00	2.31	354	\$229.94
Labor	\$410,360.00	12.10	698	\$587.91	\$251,850.00	7.16	285	\$883.69
Oil and Gas	\$271,805.00	8.02	774	\$351.17	\$540,011.00	15.35	970	\$557.00
Other	\$26,902.00	0.79	23	\$1,169.65	\$18,300.00	0.52	34	\$538.23
Party	\$889,895.00	26.24	738	\$1,205.82	\$468,446.38	13.31	328	\$1,483.62
Professional	\$82,550.00	2.43	234	\$352.78	\$263,050.00	7.48	628	\$419.79
Pub Employee	\$59,500.00	1.75	118	\$504.24	\$80,486.00	2.29	115	\$699.88
Senior	\$24,100.00	0.71	81	\$297.53	\$2,950.00	0.08	8	\$368.75
Telecommunication	\$110,127.00	3.25	451	\$244.18	\$211,950.00	6.02	453	\$500.00
Utilities	\$151,862.00	4.48	576	\$263.65	\$157,441.00	4.47	600	\$262.40

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

Thus, the ideological PACs typically give to only one party or the other. Examples of these include the New Leadership Fund, the New Oklahoma PAC, and the Oklahoma Conservative PAC, all of which gave exclusively to Republicans. The Democrats, unfortunately for them, had smaller ideological PACs, such as the Advancing Oklahoma PAC which only gave \$20,800 to its chosen Democratic candidates. Compared to Party PACs, ideological PACs make up a small percentage of the total PAC money given, only 4.96% in 2000 and 5.68% in 2002, but they are important funds for candidates, because of the large average donation. These ideological PACs also give Republican candidates a substantial edge over Democratic candidates, since most of the PACs give to Republican candidates. Yet, it is worth noting that there is one ideological PAC which gives substantial donations to both parties. This is the Center for Legislative Excellence which gave \$161,750 to legislative candidates in 2002, almost equally to both parties, for an average donation of \$1,108. But in 2000, this PAC did not even exist.

The political party PACs are those created by the political parties, either at the local, state, or national level. Examples of each include the Okmulgee County Republican PAC at the local level, the Democratic Party of Oklahoma at the state level, and the various congressional district PACs at the national level. These party PACs also include leader PACs, which are PACs created by current leaders, whether in the state legislature, or beyond. An example of this, and one of the most prolific givers, is a national PAC, the Republican Majority Fund, which gave \$104,000 in 2002, for an average donation of \$2,537. The Republican Majority Fund was created by U.S. Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), who at the time was the majority leader of the U.S. Senate. There was a marked change in party PAC giving from 2000 to 2002. These party PACs continued to give the highest average donations, with \$1,205.82 on average in 2000 and \$1,483.62 on average in 2002. These PACs also gave the largest percentage of the PAC money to candidates in 2000, making up 26.2% of the PAC money. Yet in 2002, the party PACs gave only the second highest percentage, with only 13.3%. This represents a drop in political party money of over \$400,000 from 2000 to 2002. Most of this difference came from the decline in Democratic PAC money in 2002, with the Democrats giving \$382,255 in 2000, but only \$82,791 in 2002. Instead, oil/gas gave

the highest percentage of PAC money in 2002, providing \$544,011 to candidates, or 15% of the PAC money.

Looking at the traditional interests in Oklahoma, there are some surprises. Oklahoma, for example, is known as being an oil and gas state. Yet although the oil and gas industries were the largest contributor of PAC money in 2002, in 2000, they only contributed 8% of the PAC money in Oklahoma state races. Even more surprising is the average PAC donation for the oil/gas industries, with only \$351.17 on average in 2000 and \$557.00 in 2002. These are much smaller average donations than the amount given by either the parties or the ideological PACs. Even more of a surprise is the agriculture industry. Oklahoma is a major agricultural state, producing large amounts of wheat and pork, in particular. Yet, agriculture PACs donated only a paltry amount in 2000 and 2002, with only 1.2% and .91% of the PAC donations, respectively. Even the average donation was really low, with only \$190.95 given in 2000 and \$240.00 given in 2002. These agriculture PACs seemed to follow their own pattern of giving, with small donations (typically \$100 or \$250) given to almost every candidate. The gun PACs were also not a big contributor in Oklahoma, despite Oklahoma's reputation for being a "gun and pickup" state. Gun PACs only gave \$19,450 in 2000 and \$24,250 in 2002. Most likely, gun PACs gave only these small donations because they knew that most Oklahoma legislators would already be sympathetic to their pro-gun agendas.

Most outsiders would probably be surprised by the donations by two other types of PACs: health and labor. Most outsiders when they think of Oklahoma probably do not see Oklahoma as a state brimming with hospitals and physicians. Yet, there are a lot of health PACs in Oklahoma (42 in 2000 and 25 in 2002), and they are consistently the most active. In 2000, health PACs gave the second largest PAC amount in Oklahoma, or \$375,020.00, and in 2002, health PACs gave the fourth largest, or \$377,518.00. Health PACs include both in-state PACs such as the Chiro PAC, and out-of-state PACs such as the Eli Lilly and Co. PAC. Many of these PACs gave small contributions (typically \$100-\$500) to a large amount of candidates. Thus, the average contribution for these health PACs is relatively small, only \$272.35 in 2000 and \$311.74 in 2002.

The other noteworthy finding is the significant amount of PAC money given by labor organizations. Oklahoma does not have the

reputation for being a pro-labor state. In fact, Oklahoma has enacted a number of measures that were not supported by the major national labor organizations, including the Right to Work State Question adopted in 2001. Thus, it is probably not a surprise that labor organizations gave more PAC contributions in 2000 than they did in 2002, in an effort to fight this measure. That is indeed the case. In 2000, labor organizations gave \$410,360 or 12.1% of the PAC contributions, and in 2002, they gave \$251,850 or 7.0% of the PAC contributions. What is a surprise, however, is that the average donation was actually higher in 2002 (\$883.69) than it was in 2000 (\$587.91). Obviously, the labor organizations in their effort to defeat the measure were more concerned about giving contributions to as many candidates as possible (698 in 2000, but only 285 in 2002), rather than with the size of the contribution.

Finally, certain types of PACs seem to follow a consistent pattern of giving small donations (\$100-\$500) to a large number of candidates, with an average donation typically between \$250 and \$350. In Oklahoma, these include the banking PACs, the business PACs, the utility PACs, the education PACs, and the insurance PACs. These PACs typically give to 300 to 600 candidates in a given election year. In 2000, the telecommunications PACs also fit into this category, giving 576 donations for a total of \$110,127 with an average donation of \$263.65. But in 2002 there was a large jump in contributions, both in the total amount and the average amount donated, with \$157,441 given through 600 contributions donations in 2002, for an average donation of \$500.

COMPARING PAC CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CANDIDATES

Political action committees do give contributions to candidates, but does the type of candidate matter? Do PACs give more to House or Senate candidates? Do they give more to Democrats or Republicans? Do they give more to incumbents, challengers or candidates in open seat races? These so far are the questions that remain unanswered. The only way to investigate these questions is to examine the PAC contributions for a given election, but then divide them by the type of candidate. This study has done just that by looking

at the PAC contributions for the 2002 election.³ For all of these calculations, the Republican and Democratic Party PACs have also been examined separately because these PACs give exclusively to members of their own parties, and because there are distinct partisan differences.

One clear obvious trend as shown in **Table 13** is that House candidates received less PAC money than Senate candidates on average from all different kinds of PACs. In fact, only the firefighter PACs (Oklahoma Fire PAC, Tulsa Firefighters PAC, Oklahoma City Retired Firefighters Association PAC, etc.), gave more to House candidates than Senate candidates in 2002, and it wasn't by much, with \$681.25 going to House candidates and \$640.28 going on average to Senate candidates. With all the other PACs, Senate candidates received more PAC money on average from each type of PAC. In some cases, it was substantially more. Transportation PACs, Public Employees PACs, Professional PACs, Labor PACs, Ideology PACs, and Construction PACs all gave Senate candidates almost twice as much as they gave House candidates on average. There were also differences between the political parties here. While the Democrats gave \$1,074.65 and \$1,586.84 to House and Senate candidates, respectively, the gap for the Republicans was much narrower with \$1,449.46 going to House candidates and \$1,623.93 on average going to Senate candidates.

With Democratic and Republican candidates in **Table 14**, the story was more the same, but with Democrats in general receiving greater PAC contributions on average than their Republican colleagues. There were only a few exceptions to this, and these were expected. Business PACs and Gun PACs traditionally give more to Republicans than to Democrats (Biersack, Herrnson, Wilcox, 1994).⁴ Even here, though, the gap between the Democrats and the Republicans was very small with Republicans getting almost \$12 more on average from Business PACs. As stated previously, the 2002 election was not a good year for the Democratic Party PACs. Not only did they give fewer donations (\$82,971 for the Democrats, \$384,255 for the Republicans), but they also gave substantially smaller donations on average to their candidates (\$1,299.16 for the Democrats, and \$1,762.64 for the Republicans). Fortunately for the Democrats, they were able to compensate by receiving more from almost every type of PAC.

TABLE 13

2002 PAC CONTRIBUTIONS DIVIDED BY CATEGORY

					HOUSE			SENATE		
	Sum	Count	Percent of Sum	Average	Sum	Count	Average	Sum	Count	Average
Agriculture	32,450	135	0.9	\$ 240.00	20,200	91	\$ 221.98	12,250	44	\$ 278.41
Banking	189,535	598	5.3	316.95	123,535	438	282.04	66,000	160	412.50
Business	192,697	565	5.4	341.06	122,952	400	307.38	69,475	165	421.06
Construction	126,365	413	3.5	305.97	80,725	310	260.40	45,640	103	443.11
Education	127,267	505	3.6	252.01	85,649	382	224.21	41,618	123	338.35
Environment	4,300	11	0.1	390.91	3,800	10	380.00	500	1	500.00
Fire	46,150	69	1.3	668.84	32,700	48	681.25	13,450	21	640.48
Guns	24,250	172	0.7	140.99	17,350	126	137.70	6,900	46	150.00
Health	377,518	1,211	10.5	311.74	278,043	931	298.65	99,475	280	355.27
Ideology	103,500	117	2.9	884.62	96,000	108	888.89	7,500	9	833.33
Insurance	81,400	354	2.3	229.94	56,400	264	213.64	25,000	90	277.78
Labor	251,850	285	7.0	883.69	135,950	192	708.07	116,400	93	1,251.61
Oil/Gas	540,011	970	15.1	557.00	377,098	730	516.57	162,913	240	678.81
Other	283,078	254	7.9	1,114.48	213,678	199	1,073.76	69,400	55	1,261.82
Party -Republicans	384,255	258		1,489.36	288,443	199	1,449.46	95,812	59	1,623.93
Party - Democrats	82,791	68		1,217.51	52,641	49	1,074.65	30,150	19	1,586.84
Party - All	468,446	328	13.1	1,483.62	341,084	248	1,375.34	127,362	80	1,592.03

TABLE 13 (cont'd)

2002 PAC CONTRIBUTIONS DIVIDED BY CATEGORY

					HOUSE			SENATE		
	Sum	Count	Percent of Sum	Average	Sum	Count	Average	Sum	Count	Average
Professional	263.050	628	7.3	\$ 419.79	154.978	456	\$ 339.86	105.575	172	\$ 613.81
Public Employees	80.486	115	2.2	699.88	54.886	90	609.84	25.600	24	1,066.67
Senior	2.950	8	0.1	368.75	2.850	7	407.14	100	1	100.00
Telecomm	87.500	175	2.4	500.00	48.750	126	386.90	38.750	49	790.82
Tobacco	20.100	110	0.6	182.72	15.050	89	169.10	5.050	20	252.50
Transportation	124.450	278	3.5	447.66	70.600	194	363.92	53.850	84	641.07
Utilities	157.441	600	4.4	262.40	116.865	476	245.51	40.576	124	327.23

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

TABLE 14

2002 PAC contributions - Democrats vs. Republicans

	REPUBLICANS			DEMOCRATS		
	Sum	Count	Average	Sum	Count	Average
Agriculture	13,700	45	\$ 304.44	18,750	90	\$ 208.33
Banking	79,610	264	301.55	109,925	334	329.12
Business	77,462	223	347.36	115,325	342	337.21
Construction	34,175	162	210.96	92,190	251	367.29
Education	21,775	115	189.35	10,5491	390	270.49
Environment	300	1	300.00	4,000	10	400.00
Fire	1,000	2	500.00	45,150	67	673.88
Guns	5,550	38	146.05	18,700	134	139.55
Health	115,857	479	241.87	261,660	732	357.46
Ideology	103,500	117	884.62	0	0	
Insurance	36,800	178	206.74	44,600	176	253.41
Labor	10,650	34	313.24	241,200	251	960.96
Oil/Gas	218,419	413	528.86	321,592	557	577.36
Other	129,228	108	1,196.56	153,850	146	1,053.77
Party All	384,255	218	1,762.64	82,971	68	1229.16
Professional	68,475	220	311.25	192,078	408	470.78
Pub Employee	15,950	43	370.93	64,536	72	896.33
Senior	1,600	4	400.00	1,350	4	337.50
Telecomm	30,350	69	439.86	57,150	106	539.15
Tobacco	7,950	46	172.83	12,150	64	189.84
Transportation	11,700	74	158.11	115,250	207	556.76
Utilities	53,590	223	240.31	103,851	377	275.47

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

TABLE 15

2002 PAC Contributions - Winners vs. Losers

	WINNERS			LOSERS		
	Sum	Count	Average	Sum	Count	Average
Agriculture	24,300	115	\$ 211.30	8,150	20	\$ 407.50
Banking	163,750	529	309.55	25,785	69	373.70
Business	155,852	491	317.42	36,845	74	497.91
Construction	97,675	340	287.28	28,690	73	393.01
Education	89,429	397	225.26	37,838	108	350.35
Environment	3,000	6	500.00	1,300	5	260.00
Fire	28,400	47	604.26	17,750	22	806.82
Guns	21,350	147	145.24	2,900	25	116.00
Health	339,586	1,086	312.69	37,932	125	303.46
Ideology	44,350	49	905.10	59,150	68	869.85
Insurance	75,300	324	232.41	6,100	30	203.33
Labor	139,550	186	750.27	112,300	99	1,134.34
Oil/Gas	482,310	877	549.95	57,701	93	620.44
Other	199,700	194	1,029.38	83,378	60	1,389.63
Party All	231,170	146	1,583.36	237,276	182	1,303.72
Professional	209,600	546	383.88	53,450	82	651.83
Pub Employee	56,750	94	603.72	23,736	21	1,130.29
Senior	3,950	8	493.75	0		
Telecomm	78,250	157	498.41	9,250	18	513.89
Tobacco	16,700	95	175.79	3,400	15	226.67
Transportation	79,425	214	371.14	45,025	64	703.52
Utilities	136,041	521	261.12	21,400	79	270.89

Source: Author's calculations on data gathered by the author from the Oklahoma Ethics Commission.

The largest advantage for the Democrats came from three types of PACs: labor, public employee and transportation, with these PACs giving 3-4 times more on average to Democratic candidates.

Contrary to what some might expect, losers received more PAC money in average donations in 2002 than winners as seen in **Table 15**. Winners typically receive more PAC money because they tend to be a safer bet for most PACs who want to get their policies enacted. Thus, as reported previously, winners do receive more PAC money overall. Yet, most Oklahoma PACs gave more in average PAC donations to losers than winners. This was particularly the case for the agriculture PACs, the labor PACs, the professional PACs, and the transportation PACs. Only six types of PACs gave more to winners than losers: environmental PACs, firefighter PACs, gun PACs, health PACs, insurance PACs, and the Republican Party PACs. The last one is the most interesting because although the gap was not gigantic, \$1,697.57 to winners compared with \$1,313.35 for the Republican losers, the Democratic PACs actually gave more on average to losers than they did to winners.

With incumbents and challengers, the picture is much more mixed. Incumbents did better in getting large average donations with some types of PACs more than others. Fortunately for incumbents, they were more successful in getting money from the “big money” PACs. These include the party PACs and the ideology PACs. The incumbents received \$1,367.80 on average from these PACs combined, while the challengers received only \$1,184.06. Yet, the challengers were still competitive with these big money donations. Obviously, the party and ideology PACs were attempting to win as many seats as possible, whether held by the incumbents or the challengers. The challengers, though had even more successes, getting more money on average than incumbents from other “big money” PACs, including labor, public employees, firefighters, and transportation PACs. The biggest gaps appeared with the donations made by the public employee PACs and the transportation PACs. These PACs gave only \$596.70 and \$371.71 on average to incumbents respectively, but gave \$1,035.09 and \$735.19 to challengers. Apparently, these PACs want to see some changes in the makeup of the state legislature!

Open seat candidates are the most fortunate when it comes to PAC money. With most PACs, they receive more PAC money on

average than either incumbents or challengers. The most notable differences came with the labor PACs and the party PACs. The labor PACs gave \$1,511.11 on average to open seat candidates, but only \$754.86 to incumbents, and \$796.15 to challengers. With party PACs, the two parties seemed to have completely different strategies. The Republicans gave \$1,773.97 on average to incumbents, \$1,249.88 to challengers, and \$1,378.66 to open seat candidates, thus giving the most to incumbents. The Democrats, on the other hand, gave \$1,144.83 to incumbents, \$1,021.52 to challengers, and \$1,996.70 to open seat candidates, thus giving the most to open seat candidates. Since incumbents compete against challengers, this put the Democratic challengers at \$752 disadvantage compared to the Republican incumbent colleagues. Thus, the Democrats with their limited spending seemed to target the open seat races, spending \$618 more on average on their candidates than their Republican colleagues.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

This study of Oklahoma campaign finance shows that while some outcomes are predictable, others are not. It was predictable that most congressional candidates in Oklahoma faced fairly safe roads to get their congressional seats. It was also predictable that the more prestigious the race, the more money raised and spent. Thus, congressional seats are more expensive than those for governor, which are more expensive than those for the state Senate, and so on. Given the composition of the legislature throughout Oklahoma's history (or at least until 2004), it was also expected that Democrats would raise more money than Republicans. Likewise, winners were more successful in both raising and spending money overall than losers, and incumbents were more successful than challengers.

Yet, spending money in Oklahoma elections can also become unexpected. This was certainly the case with certain races in Oklahoma, such as the Lt. Governor races where \$843,953.50 was spent on average in 1998, but only \$236,734.50 was spent in 2002. But probably the most surprising was the ability of losers to obtain larger average PAC donations from most PACs than winners. Just looking at 2002, for example, winners had an average PAC donation of \$407.37

overall, compared to the losers' \$683.04. This oddity could only be explained by the looking at the type of donations received by both types of candidates, and the amount of the total donations. The losers received most of their donations from the "big money" PACs, particularly the party and ideology PACs, while the winners received donations from all PACs, including a large group of PACs that only gives \$100 or \$200 average donations. Moreover, the losers also received fewer PAC contributions overall, receiving only 4.5 PAC contributions on average compared to the 7.8 received by the winners. This makes it very difficult for losers to be competitive, despite the higher average PAC donation.

Similarly, the challengers and open seat candidates also did better than the incumbents in receiving higher average PAC donations. For the open seat candidates, that is not a surprise. The political parties and other PACs know that these seats are the most competitive, featuring the most candidates. They also know that these are seats that could give their group more power if captured. The open seat candidates received, however, most of their contributions from the political party and ideological PACs, averaging only 13.2 PAC donations.

Yet, the difference between incumbents and challengers in terms of the average PAC donation was again a surprise. Once again though, when the type of donation and the total amount given are examined, the world makes sense again. Like the losers, the challengers generally received less PAC money overall, but had higher average PAC donations because more of their money came from "big money" PACs. Like the losers, the challengers received only a paltry number of donations, averaging 5.1 donations compared to 45.5 average donations for the incumbents.

What does all of this mean for the 2006 elections and beyond? Both the candidates and political parties know that the enactment of term limits in 2004 means that the number of open seat races will only increase. This will make races more expensive, both for the candidates and the PACs that support them. The PACs, facing more candidates needing money, will have to be more strategic in how they donate money, either donating smaller amounts to the same number of candidates, or using a selective targeting strategy, giving only to the races that matter most to them.

Given the campaign finance of the 2000 and 2002 elections, this is probably more bad news for the Democrats. The Democratic candidates did not receive the financial assistance the Republicans received from either their party or ideological PACs. Thus, Democrats will have to find a way to overcome this disadvantage. In 2002, they managed to do that by securing more contributions from other types of PACs. They will need to continue to do this or the Democrats just may see a continuation of what happened to them in 2004 when they lost their majority in the Oklahoma State House. The Oklahoma Republicans, on their part, are just hoping that this trend will continue and even have dreams of taking over the Oklahoma Senate in 2006 and 2008. Whether that will happen, we will just have to wait and see.

NOTES

¹These averages only include those candidates who actually received PAC donations in 2000 and 2002.

²One might notice that Native American groups are missing from this list. Although several Oklahoma tribes gave substantial amounts in both the 2000 and 2002 elections, legally they are not treated as PACs by Oklahoma election law. Thus, the only way find out information for Indian donations is to look at each candidate's contribution list. The accuracy of these donations is thus more suspect because it is highly dependent on the individual listing his/her tribe. For the 2000 election, for example, Native Americans gave \$147,775 to state legislative candidates. Most active was the Chickasaw Nation with \$97,675 in donations, the Choctaw Nation was second with \$34,450 in donations, and the Absentee Shawnee Tribe was third with \$13,150 in donations.

³For simplicity, this part of the study only looks at the 2002 election. Similar calculations have also been completed for the 2000 election. For information on that election, see Jan Hardt, "The Fuel Behind Oklahoma's Politics – The Role of Money," in *Money, Politics, and Campaign Finance Reform Law in the States*, ed. by David Schultz, (Durham, N.C: Carolina Academic Press, 2002).

⁴Republicans also got more from senior PACs and the other category, but given the small number of donations in the senior category and the difficulty of classifying the PAC contributions in the other category by definition, these are not discussed above.

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