



Campaign Finance Activity by Political Action Committees in Massachusetts

2011 & 2012

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines campaign finance activity by political action committees in Massachusetts during the 2011-12 state election cycle.

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF) administers Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 55, which provides for disclosure and regulation of campaign finance activity on the state, county and municipal levels. Several types of political committees in Massachusetts file reports with OCPF, including political action committees (PACs), independent expenditure PACs (IEPACs) and people's committees.

PACs are political committees organized to receive and expend funds to support or oppose candidates, generally based on a unifying principle or purpose as defined in their original statements of organization.

Independent Expenditure PACs are political committees organized to raise and spend funds to support or oppose candidates, but cannot coordinate with or make contributions to candidates or political parties.

People's Committees are committees that originated as PACs, but receive contributions only from individuals at a maximum annual amount that is indexed biennially by OCPF (the limit is now \$156). Contributions from people's committees do not count toward a candidate's statutory limit on annual aggregate contributions from PACs.

Unless specifically noted otherwise, the term "PAC" in this report also includes people's committees and independent expenditure PACs.

PAC Disclosure Requirements

Section 18 of Chapter 55 requires PACs to disclose their campaign finance activity in reports filed regularly with OCPF. The filing schedule varies by the year: PACs are required to file reports two times in a non-election year and three times in a state election (even-numbered) year. For a non-election year, the reports are due by July 20 and on the following Jan. 20. In an election year, those reports are filed eight days prior to the primary election in September; eight days prior to the November election; and on the following Jan. 20.

A limited number of PACs are organized on the municipal level. These PACs file campaign finance reports with local election officials and are not included in this study.

All PACs that file with OCPF file electronically. Reports e-filed by PACs and all other candidates and committees may be found in OCPF's Electronic Filing System, which is accessible through OCPF's website, www.ocpf.us. For the time period covered by this

report, PACs were required to disclose their account balances at the beginning of each reporting period; aggregate receipts for the reporting period; aggregate expenditures for the reporting period; in-kind contributions for the reporting period; itemized receipts over \$50; itemized expenditures over \$50; and all outstanding liabilities.

The maximum amount a PAC or people's committee may contribute to a Massachusetts candidate is \$500 in a calendar year. The campaign finance law also sets aggregate annual limits on what individual candidates may receive in total from all PACs. That limit ranges from \$150,000 for a candidate for governor to \$18,750 for a Senate candidate and \$7,500 for a House candidate. There are no aggregate limits for municipal candidates, and there is no limit on the aggregate amount any candidate may receive from people's committees.

Methodology

The statistical information contained in this study is based on information received by OCPF in campaign finance reports filed by PACs for the calendar years 2011 and 2012. Because the report is based primarily on the figures reported by PACs, not those provided by candidate's committees, the numbers contained herein are subject to amendment after a routine cross-check by OCPF with reports filed by candidates and committees. This study includes corrections, additions and deletions that may occur as a result of any review conducted by OCPF or amendments filed by PACs, candidates or political committees. However, some changes, especially those taking place after the spring of 2013, are not included in this study.

Those interested in determining the exact amount of PAC and people's committee contributions accepted by individual candidates and committees are advised to check those candidate and committee reports for the relevant time periods to determine the amounts that were accepted.

This study was compiled and written by OCPF based on information filed with the office by PACs. Those seeking further information on the study or any other facet of the Massachusetts campaign finance law may contact the Office of Campaign and Political Finance, John W. McCormack Building, One Ashburton Place, Room 411, Boston, MA 02108. This study and other data are available on the office's Web site, at www.mass.gov/ocpf.

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FINDINGS

I. Overview

The 2011-12 election cycle saw typical political action committee activity in Massachusetts, even with the addition in 2010 of Independent Expenditure PACs, commonly known as “Super PACs,” (IEPACs are addressed on page 12).

PACs reported contributions of \$2,637,514 to state and county candidates during the 2011-12 state election cycle, years without statewide elections. This total is short of the record of \$2,744,437 from the 2009-10 cycle, which was a statewide election cycle.

The \$1,486,182 in contributions to state and county candidates in 2012 was the third highest total for a single year. The record was set in 2010 at \$1,626,966.

PACs reported a total of \$6,694,105 in expenditures for the 2011-12 election cycle, short of the \$6.9 million record set in 2009-10.

During the 2011-12 election cycle, three independent expenditure PACs reported \$299,534 in expenditures. IEPACs are prohibited from contributing directly to candidates. Instead, IEPACs make expenditures to support or oppose candidates without coordinating with any candidate committee.

The number of PACs registered with OCPF at any one time has remained at just over 300 in recent years. A total of 303 PACs were registered with OCPF at the end of 2011 while 305 were open at the end of 2012.

A total of 455 candidates were reported as recipients of at least one PAC contribution in 2012. The 2010 total was 433 candidates.

Union and labor PACs continued to be the top contributors in the 2011-12 cycle. Unions and labor organizations accounted for 18 of the top 20 PACs in terms of contributions to state and county candidates.

State and county candidates averaged \$3,266 in total PAC contributions in 2012 (the average only includes candidates who received at least one PAC contribution in 2012). In the previous election cycle, 433 state and county candidates received \$3,757 in PAC contributions in 2010, on average.

Democrats received more PAC contributions than Republicans in the 2011-12 cycle. Democrats received a total of \$2,242,385, making up 85 percent of all contributions. A total of \$201,186 went to Republican Party candidates.

PAC Campaign Finance Activity by Election Cycle (2011-12 & 2009-10)

<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>
210	216	PACs contributing to state and county candidates*	195	227
348	455	State and county candidates listed as recipients of PAC contributions	296	433
\$1,151,332	\$1,486,182	Total contributions by PACs to state and county candidates	\$1,117,471	\$1,626,966
\$3,308	\$3,266	Average total amount of PAC contributions made to a state or county candidate**	\$3,775	\$3,757
\$314	\$343	Average PAC contribution to an individual candidate	\$314	\$335

*State office includes any of the six statewide constitutional offices (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Treasurer, Secretary of State or Auditor), Governor's Council, Senate and House of Representatives. County office includes District Attorney, Sheriff, County Commissioner, Clerk of Courts, Treasurer, Register of Deeds and Register of Probate.

**The campaign finance law sets an aggregate annual limit on what an individual candidate may receive in total from all PACs. The limit ranges from \$150,000 for a candidate for governor to \$18,750 for a Senate candidate and \$7,500 for a House candidate.

II. Breakdown of PAC Activity

Aggregate Spending

PACs reported spending a total of \$6,694,105 in 2011-12, down three percent from the previous two-year cycle. The \$6,881,367 spent in the 2009-10 cycle is the highest ever recorded in a two-year cycle.

PAC expenditures for a cycle have exceeded \$5 million only six times: in addition to the last five cycles, the mark was cracked in 1989-90, when total PAC spending reached \$5,046,256. The 2009-10 cycle was the first time that PAC spending exceeded \$6 million.

Contributions from PACs to candidates (state, county and some municipal) accounted for 44 percent of all PAC spending in 2011-12, the same percentage as in the 2009-10 cycle.

Aggregate Receipts and Expenditures by PACs in 2011 and 2012

Total Receipts	\$7,107,748
Total Expenditures	\$6,694,105
Contributions to candidates (state, county & certain local)	\$2,949,994
Contributions as percentage of total spending	44%

By law, a PAC may expend money only “for the enhancement of the principle” for which it was organized, which may include other categories of expenditures as long as those expenditures meet that test. Examples of additional spending by PACs include administrative and fundraising expenses, independent expenditures supporting or opposing candidates, and contributions to other political committees, including federal and state party committees, local and federal candidates not registered with OCPF and ballot question committees.

Breakdown of PAC Contributions by Type of Recipient 2011-12

<i>From PACs To:</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>Cycle</i>
<i>State and county candidates*</i>	\$1,151,332	\$1,486,182	\$2,637,514
<i>Local candidates**</i>	\$190,048	\$122,431	\$312,479
<i>PACs, parties and BQs</i>	\$63,654	\$206,343	\$269,997
<i>TOTAL: Contributions to all candidates and committees</i>	\$1,405,034	\$1,814,956	\$3,219,990

*Includes Governor’s Council candidates.

** This category is mostly made up of candidates for mayor and councilor-at-large in Boston, Cambridge, Lowell, Springfield and Worcester, who report their campaign finance activity to OCPF, but also includes some candidates for mayor in cities with populations between 40,000 to 100,000 and other local candidates.

Activity by Cycle

PAC contributions to state and county candidates in 2011-12 totaled \$2,637,514, the third highest total ever recorded.

The \$2,744,437 in PAC contributions to state and county candidates in 2009-10 is the highest ever recorded in a two-year election cycle.

Two-year Cycles with the Highest Total PAC Contributions to State and County Candidates

<i>Cycle</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Statewide election?</i>
2009-10	\$2,744,437	Y
2007-08	\$2,684,944	N
2011-12	\$2,637,514	N
2005-06	\$2,596,977	Y
2003-04	\$2,419,304	N
1989-90	\$2,289,158	Y
2001-02	\$2,253,586	Y
1993-94	\$2,140,468	Y
1997-98	\$2,136,116	Y
1999-00	\$2,054,479	N

Activity by Year

Total contributions to state and county candidates in 2010, a statewide election year, reached an all-time high, eclipsing a record set two years earlier. The 2012 total was the third highest at \$1,486,182 (statewide candidates were not on the ballot in 2012).

**Years with the Highest Total PAC Contributions to State and County Candidates
1982-2012**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Contributions</i>	<i>Type of year</i>
2010	\$1,626,966	(e)(s)
2008	\$1,491,006	(e)
2012	\$1,486,182	(e)
2006	\$1,443,627	(e)(s)
1994	\$1,401,299	(e)(s)
2004	\$1,397,259	(e)
1990	\$1,376,908	(e)(s)
2002	\$1,294,807	(e)(s)
1998	\$1,246,213	(e)(s)
1992	\$1,220,585	(e)

(e) = State election year. (s) = State election year that also included statewide offices.
(n) = Non-election year.

Average PAC Contributions

The average PAC contribution to an individual candidate in both 2011 and 2012 was \$314 and \$343, respectively. The \$343 average is the highest ever recorded, surpassing the previous high of \$335 posted in 2010. The all-time lowest average was the \$200 figure recorded in 1996.

The 216 state and county candidates in 2012 who received at least one PAC contribution averaged \$3,266 in total PAC contributions. That is a drop from the 2010 average of \$3,757. The average in 2011 was \$3,308.

III. Contribution Recipients

PACs continued to support the types of candidates who have received the bulk of their contributions in past years, such as incumbents and Democrats.

Office Sought

Contenders for the House and Senate received 69 percent of all contributions to state and country candidates in the 2011-12 cycle, or \$1,819,184. Legislative candidates received 74 percent of contributions in 2009-10.

Party Affiliation

PACs directed the bulk of their contributions to Democrats in the 2011-12 election cycle.

Democrats and their committees received a total of \$2,242,385 in 2011-12, making up 85 percent of all contributions. A total of \$201,186 went to Republican candidates and committees. The remainder went to candidates and committees that were not members of either of the two major parties. In 2009-10, Democrat candidates and committees received a total of \$2,562,227, making up 89 percent of all contributions.

Incumbency

Legislative incumbents were more likely to receive PAC contributions than those who were not in office. PAC contributions to legislative incumbents on the 2012 ballot accounted for \$1,567,599, compared to \$251,585 for non-incumbents. In 2009-10, incumbents accounted for more than \$1.5 million and non-incumbents received \$425,290.

IV. PAC Characteristics

Number of PACs

The number of PACs organized with OCPF is a fluid number, with various committees organizing and dissolving throughout an election cycle. The number of PACs registered with OCPF at any one time has remained at just over 300 in recent years.

A total of 303 PACs were registered with OCPF at the end of 2011 and 305 were open at the end of 2012.

The level of activity of PACs varies, with many committees reporting significant activity, and some posting few receipts and expenditures.

In recent cycles, up to two-thirds of all PACs have been active contributors to candidates in any one year. A total of 210 PACs reported contributing in 2011, and 216 did so in 2012.

The 227 PACs contributing in 2010 broke the previous record of 221, which was set in 2006.

Top Contributors

PACs representing labor, business and professional interests continued to dominate in terms of contributions to candidates.

Of the top 20 PACs in terms of total contributions, 18 represented unions or labor organizations, one more than in 2009-10. The remaining two PACs on the list represented realtors and beer distributors.

The 1199 SEIU MA PAC reported the highest total contributions to state and county candidate in the 2011-12 election cycle, \$200,250. Of that total, \$157,250 was contributed in 2012.

The Retired Public Employees PAC fell to the second slot in total contributions to state and county candidates with \$125,150 in contributions. Before the 2011-12 cycle, the PAC had been at the top of the list since the 1997-98 election cycle.

PACs with the most contributions to state and county candidates are listed on the next three pages.

**Top 20 PACs by Total
Contributions to State and County Candidates
2011-2012 Election Cycle**

	Committee	Total Contributions
1.	1199 SEIU MA PAC	\$200,250
2.	Retired Public Employees PAC	\$125,150
3.	Professional Firefighters of MA People's Committee	\$96,250
4.	Ironworkers Union Local 7 PAC	\$72,570
5.	State Police Assoc of Mass. PAC	\$72,250
6.	Massachusetts Brick Layers People's Committee	\$69,730
7.	MA Assoc. of Realtors PAC - MA RPAC	\$67,200
8.	Pipefitters Local #537 PAC	\$60,700
9.	Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 17 People's Committee	\$55,200
10.	American Federation of Teachers MA PAC	\$54,450
11.	MA & Northern NE Laborers' District Council PAC	\$52,650
12.	Plumbers Union Local #12 PAC	\$51,675
13.	New England Regional Council of Carpenters PAC	\$51,450
14.	Boston Carmen's Union PAC	\$50,850
15.	Local 509 SEIU MA Workers' PAC	\$48,635
16.	Beer Distributors' PAC	\$45,925
17.	MA Correction Officers Federated Union PAC M.C.O.F.U PAC	\$45,850
18.	Ch. 25 Nat'l DRIVE PAC of the Int'l Brotherhood of Teamsters	\$37,350
19.	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 103 PAC	\$36,299
20.	Int'l Union of Operating Engineers Local 4 Social PAC	\$36,225

Top 20 PACs by Total Contributions to State and County Candidates 2011

	Committee	Total Contributions
1.	Retired Public Employees PAC	\$59,450
2.	Professional Firefighters of MA People's Cttee	\$45,725
3.	1199 SEIU MA PAC	\$43,000
4.	Ironworkers Union Local 7 PAC	\$41,760
5.	State Police Assoc of Mass. PAC	\$37,000
6.	Massachusetts Brick Layers People's Committee	\$35,755
7.	MA Assoc. of Realtors PAC - MA RPAC	\$32,000
8.	Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 17 People's Cttee	\$30,000
9.	Pipefitters Local #537 PAC	\$29,225
10.	MA & Northern NE Laborers' District Council PAC	\$26,575
11.	Plumbers Union Local #12 PAC	\$24,475
12.	MA Correction Officers Federated Union PAC M.C.O.F.U PAC	\$23,000
13.	American Federation of Teachers MA PAC	\$22,750
14.	New England Regional Council of Carpenters PAC	\$22,200
15.	Boston Carmen's Union PAC	\$19,700
16.	Ch. 25 Nat'l DRIVE PAC of the Int'l Brotherhood of Teamsters	\$19,600
17.	Utility Workers Union of America AFL-CIO Local 369 PAC	\$19,500
18.	Int'l Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 2222 PAC	\$18,775
19.	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 103 PAC	\$18,215
20.	Int'l Union of Operating Engineers Local 4 Social PAC	\$18,150

Top 20 PACs by Total Contributions to State and County Candidates 2012

	PAC	Total Contributions
1.	1199 SEIU PAC	\$157,250
2.	Retired Public Employees PAC	\$65,700
3.	Professional Firefighters of MA People's Committee	\$50,625
4.	State Police Association of Mass. PAC	\$35,250
5.	MA Association of Realtors PAC	\$35,200
6.	Local 509 SEIU Committee on Political Education PAC	\$34,950
7.	Massachusetts Brick Layers People's Committee	\$33,975
8.	American Federation of Teachers MA PAC	\$31,700
9.	Pipefitters Local #537 PAC	\$31,475
10.	Boston Carmen's Union PAC	\$31,150
11.	Ironworkers Union Local 7 PAC	\$30,810
12.	New England regional Council of Carpenters PAC	\$29,250
13.	Beer Distributors' PAC	\$28,625
14.	Plumbers Union Local #12 PAC	\$27,200
15.	MA & Northern NE Laborers' District Council PAC	\$26,075
16.	Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 17 People's Committee	\$25,200
17.	MA Correction Officers Federated Union PAC	\$22,850
18.	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 103 PAC	\$18,084
19.	International Union of Operating Engineers Local 4 PAC	\$18,075
20.	Painters District Council #35 PAC	\$18,000

Independent Expenditure PACs

An IEPAC is a new type of political committee in Massachusetts that receives donations to make independent expenditures and only makes independent expenditures. **An independent expenditure** is an expenditure made to expressly advocate for the election or defeat of a candidate, without coordinating with any candidate’s committee.

The IEPAC designation was created in Massachusetts after two court decisions in 2010 – the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* decision and the *SpeechNow.org v. FEC* decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. The Supreme Court ruled that independent expenditures made by corporations to influence candidate elections cannot be limited, because doing so would not be consistent with the First Amendment. The appeals court held that individuals can provide funds without limit to independent-only committees.

Unlike other PACs, independent expenditure PACs can receive contributions from individuals without limit, and from corporations and other entities that are otherwise prohibited from contributing to PACs. An IEPAC may not directly or indirectly coordinate its campaign activity with any Massachusetts candidate or political committee, and cannot make contributions directly to candidates. IEPACs are commonly referred to as “Super PACs.”

During the 2011-12 election cycle, five IEPACs were organized with OCPF. Of those five, two reported making expenditures to expressly support or oppose candidates – the Stand for Children MA IEPAC and the Mass. Values IEPAC. The Mass Courage IEPAC, which dissolved in August, 2012, reported expenditures of \$56,128, but did not disclose any expenditures expressly advocating for or against candidates.

Receipts and Expenditures by Independent Expenditure PACs: 2011-12

IEPAC	Receipts	Expenditures
Mass. Values IEPAC	\$166,076	\$118,673
Stand for Children MA IEPAC	\$124,733	\$124,733
Mass Courage IEPAC	\$56,055	\$56,128*
We The People IEPAC	0	0
Neighbor to Neighbor IEPAC	0	0
Totals:	\$346,864	\$299,534

**This IEPAC did not report any expenditures made to expressly support or oppose candidates. The committee dissolved in August, 2012.*

The Stand for Children IEPAC reported \$124,733 in expenditure in 2011 and 2012. Of that total, the IEPAC reported spending \$119,293 in support of Democrats.

The Mass. Values PAC reported \$118,673 in expenditures in 2011 and 2012. Of that total, the IEPAC reported spending \$85,919 to oppose Republicans.

People's Committees

A people's committee is a form of PAC that receives contributions only from individuals up to a maximum annual amount that is indexed biennially by OCPF, and is now \$156.¹ Contributions from people's committees do not count toward a candidate's statutory limit on annual aggregate contributions from PACs.

The number of people's committees organized with OCPF during the 2011-12 cycle was eight, the same number as the 2009-10 cycle. The greatest number of people's committees organized for a cycle was 12, set in 2007-08.

Total Contributions by People's Committees 2011-12

	Committee	Total
1.	Professional Firefighters of MA PC	\$94,700
2.	Mass. Brick Layers PC	\$76,460
3.	Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 17 PC	\$62,800
4.	UFCW Local 1459 PC	\$18,630
5.	Elevator Constructors Local 4 PC	\$14,750
6.	Brockton Fire Fighters PC	\$13,200
7.	National Association of Industrial & Office Properties PC	\$7,800
8.	Mass. Dental Society PC	\$7,750

A total of \$271,010 was donated by people's committees in 2011-12, a drop of six percent from the previous two-year election cycle.

The 2007-08 total of \$319,735 was the highest contribution total ever for people's committees, exceeding the previous record set in 2005-06 by more than \$100,000.

The total donated by people's committees in 2011-12 was 9.2 percent of the total amount contributed by PACs and people's committees during the cycle.

¹ This limit is next due for adjustment at the end of 2013.

Three people's committees made the list of top 20 PACs in terms of contributions: the Professional Firefighters, the Mass. Brick Layers and the Sheet Metal Workers Local 17.

Contributions by People's Committees 1999 to 2012

Cycle	Amount Contributed	% of total PAC contributions
2011-12	\$296,090	9.2 percent
2009-10	\$288,415	8.7 percent
2007-08	\$319,735	10.2 percent
2005-06	\$213,297	8.2 percent
2003-04	\$196,144	8.1 percent
2001-02	\$163,227	7.2 percent
1999-00	\$158,175	7.7 percent

For a breakdown of individual PAC activity by year, [click this link](#).