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FPPC Data Shows a Few Spend the Most on California Ballot Measures

With upcoming elections, the FPPC is continuing its efforts to use technology to shed light on political spending. FPPC Chair Jodi Remke and the Commission today unveiled new data visualization on ballot measure contributions in California. Looking at the data and trends, this interactive tool provides invaluable disclosure on how a small number of entities and individuals are influencing the outcomes on some of the most important issues facing the state. The visualizations also show how much corporations, unions and other special interests contributed, as well as how much money is coming from out of state.

In 2016, 86% of the almost \$450 million dollars contributed to state ballot measures came from 164 contributors. The remaining contributions came from more than 40,000 contributors. The results were similar for contributions for the 2014 state ballot measures.

Corporations made up nearly 40% of the money contributed in 2016, with non-profits second at almost 18%, followed by individual contributors, unions, and associations. The FPPC analysis shows out-of-state contributions to California ballot measures rose from less than 7% in 2014 to almost 30% of all funds contributed in the 2016 election.

“The proof is in the numbers, which continue to show a small number of people account for the vast majority of money influencing California’s ballot measures, and now a growing percent of that influence is coming from out of state,” said FPPC Chair Jodi Remke. “We hope that data visualization will increase the public’s understanding of these significant influences and trends before the onslaught of political spending in the 2018 elections.”

The new data visualization on Top 10 contributors is located at the bottom of the home page of the [Commission’s website](#). The data visualization breaking it down by entity and state can be found on the [Transparency Portal of the FPPC website](#).

In 2014, the Legislature passed and Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 27 which further strengthened the state’s law against dark money. SB 27 requires the Commission to post on the Commission’s website the top ten contributors to state committees when the committee has spent over \$1 million to support or oppose a state candidate or state ballot measure.

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