



**AARP Annual Idaho  
Campaign Contributions  
Report:** *Corporate, business &  
Political Action Committee (PAC)  
money in Idaho politics.*

May, 2011

## Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the diligent work of the AARP Idaho volunteers who helped put this report together by reviewing public campaign records. All inquiries should be directed to the AARP Idaho State Office: 208-855-4004

**Methodology:** AARP reviewed all 2010 campaign reports (pre-primary, post-primary, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, pre-general, post general and annual) filed by candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor and State Legislature with the Idaho Secretary of State with a focus on individual contributions vs. those made by corporations, businesses and political action committees. The review of candidate reports was limited to those who won their respective elections.

## **AARP PRINCIPLES: Government Integrity and Civic Engagement**

The following principles reinforce and sustain government integrity and civic engagement:

- **Transparency**—Openness is a fundamental feature of democracies. Government institutions and processes should operate in public view.
- **Accountability**—Government officials and institutions must avoid conflicts of interest and the undue influence of special interests in the performance of their responsibilities. Ethical standards and safeguards must be in place and enforced to ensure the integrity of government decision-making. Greater reliance on public campaign financing should be used to prevent the electoral process from being skewed toward the concerns of major contributors rather than those of the larger public.
- **Access and participation**—The right of all citizens to vote in free and fair elections is among the most basic of all civil rights and must be vigorously upheld. Voting systems and registration procedures should be designed to encourage maximum participation in the electoral process.
- **Full and fair representation**—Legislative districts should be geographically compact and contiguous and reflect communities of interest. The drawing of districts should promote vigorous democracy rather than incumbency or party affiliation.
- **Voter participation**—Technical and procedural innovations such as vote-by-mail, election-day registration and universal registration should be developed to maximize voting and improve voting systems.
- **Civic engagement**—Volunteer service opportunities should be expanded for older Americans so they can help address the nation's challenges and enjoy greater engagement in civic life.

## **Background:**

Voting participation is highest among the 50+ population, accounting for roughly 65% of all votes cast in Idaho in 2010, and making up the majority of all votes in every state legislative district. This population is vitally interested in making certain that their votes and views are given appropriate consideration in the deliberations of government.

Trust in government is extremely low as state government officials and processes are often viewed as more responsive to the concerns of moneyed special interests than those of the general public. In addition, there is growing frustration with the inability of the political system and government processes to address seriously urgent societal problems.

Many of the issues Idaho's 50+ are concerned about are not being addressed, from tackling the state budget shortfall to protecting legal end-of-life rights. AARP members want their elected officials to fix the state's conscience law to protect their legal end-of-life rights, yet legislation to do so failed to advance. AARP found that over 61% of the state's 50+ population support closing business loopholes as opposed to making cuts to balance the state budget (60% support increasing the tax on liquor, beer and wine; 58% higher income tax for household incomes over \$250,000 and 58% increase the cigarette tax). Yet new revenues are ignored in favor of reductions.

Too often, the largest voting population in Idaho, those residents age 50 and older, feels that their voice and interests are not heard by those they elect. The common perception as to why: The flow of large campaign donations from corporations, businesses and PACs into state politics.

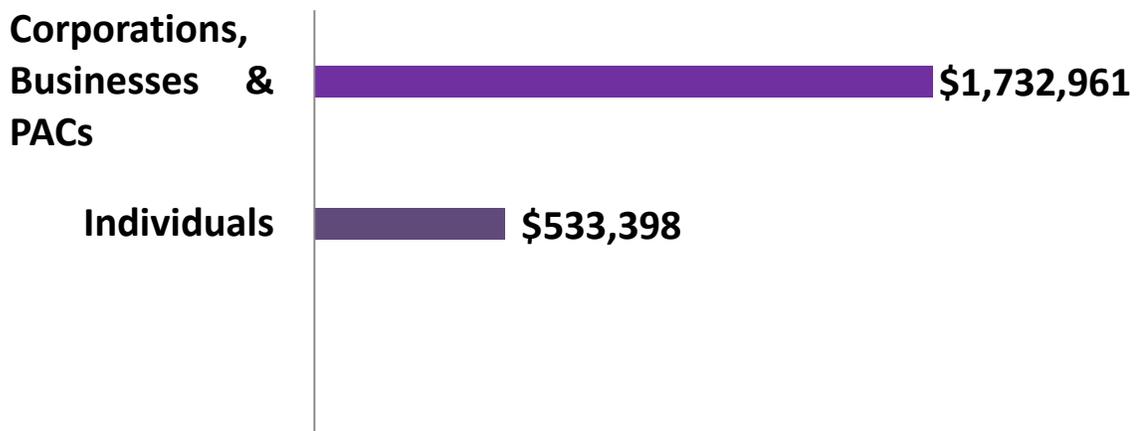
This AARP public education report analyzes campaign data from the Idaho Secretary of State's Office to follow the flow of campaign money to Idaho candidates.

The report was compiled by some of those Idahoans most concerned about large campaign donations drowning out the voice of the largest voting group in the state (voters age 50+) AARP members.

## Key findings:

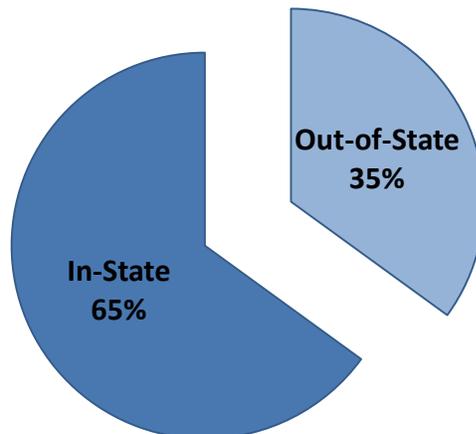
- Corporations, businesses and PACs contributed over \$1.7 million to Idaho state legislative candidates winning their 2010 elections, if the statewide races for Governor and Lt. Governor are included, that number soars to over \$2.7 million.

### How much campaign money is contributed to Idaho State Lawmakers and by who?



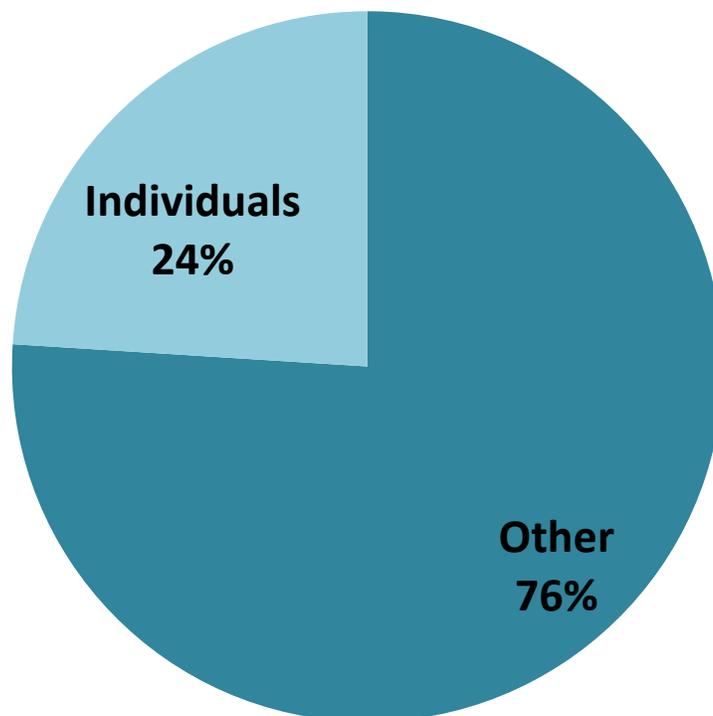
- Many of the campaign contributions from Corporations, Businesses and PACs to Idaho candidates elected to office comes from outside of Idaho.

### Corporate, Business & PAC Campaign Contributions to Elected Idaho Lawmakers: In-State vs Out-of-State Donors



- 76% of all campaign contributions to elected Idaho state legislators during the 2010 elections came from groups other than individual donors.

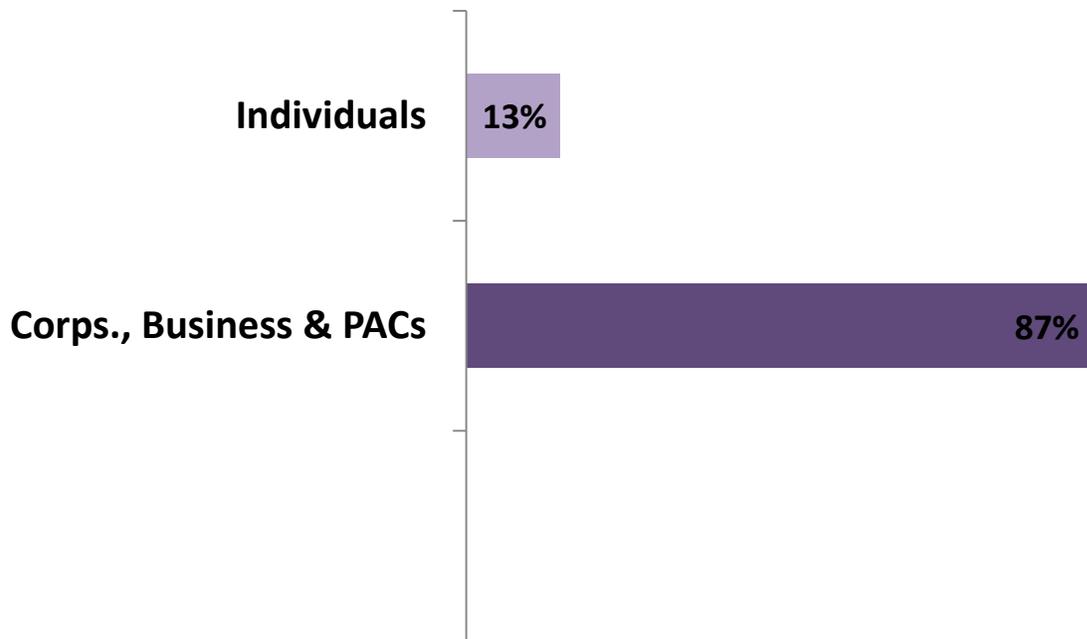
**Where do Idaho State elected lawmakers get their campaign cash?**



- 34 Idaho Legislators received 90% or more of their campaign contributions from corporations, businesses and PACs this past election year, with 7 receiving 100% of their campaign contributions from the groups.

- Only 14 of Idaho's 107 state lawmakers (including Governor, Lt. Governor and State Legislators) received the majority of their campaign contributions from individual donors vs. contributions from corporations, businesses or PACs.

**Idaho State Lawmakers receiving the majority of campaign funds from:**



**AARP Policy Recommendations** to help restore public confidence in state lawmakers in Idaho politics:

- **Candidates for public office in Idaho should be required to raise a majority of their campaign funds from individual contributors who reside within their district.** *The majority of Idaho state legislators raise most of their campaign funds from corporations, businesses and PACs outside of their district and in many cases outside of the state.*
- **Establish and strictly enforce limits on contributions to and by political action committees (PACS).** *Idaho currently has no limits on how much money can be given to PACs by individuals, corporations or political parties and no limits on PAC to PAC transfers – leaving the committees open to backdoor, limitless contributions from interests other than individuals.*
- **Establish limits on how much money can be given to state political parties.** *Currently in Idaho, no limits exist for how much money can be given directly to state parties, leaving room for greater influence of moneyed interest groups.*