

Information on the Gubernatorial Campaign Expenditures Database **Compiled by Thad Beyle and Jennifer M. Jensen**

*Tracking the expenditures of all reported candidates who have run for governor
in the American states since 1977.*

This means covering not only the major party candidates but all candidates listed in state reports – minor party candidates as well as unaffiliated (independent) candidates and write-ins. More people run for governor than you might think. In the 2003 California gubernatorial recall election alone, 135 candidates ran for governor.

For each candidate, we provide spending in the primary and general elections separately if the states provided it that way; otherwise, it is lumped as total spending. We provide the percent of the vote that each candidate received in primary and general elections. We also provide party affiliation and occupation. Finally, for each year, we provide a separate file with some basic aggregate information: the number of voters in each state's general election, as well as the cost per vote -- the total spent in that state's gubernatorial election cycle by all candidates, divided by the number of voters in the general election.

We don't limit the data to major party candidates; we have significant minor parties (e.g., the Communist Party) and really minor parties (e.g., the Owl Party, which was on the ballot in Washington in 1976). With expenditure information for all candidates in all states for 40 years, the database provides by far the largest source of state-level time series campaign spending data.

Since procedures for gubernatorial elections vary by state, compiling the data into uniform data sets is challenging. In addition, states have different reporting and collection procedures for campaign finance materials, and we must account for these variations in our dataset. Our codebook contains considerable information about special circumstances in specific gubernatorial elections. We *strongly* urge you to examine the codebook for the years you are using. It is long, so we don't recommend printing the entire document.

Data for the earlier years were collected from a number of sources, such as *CQ Weekly Reports*. More recently, data are collected directly from the state office that oversees elections reports. Sources for each year's data are listed in the codebook or in the data files.

Here are some peer-reviewed articles that use data from the Gubernatorial Campaign Expenditures Database, by date of publication:

- Gross, Donald A., and Robert K. Goidel. "[The Impact of State Campaign Finance Laws.](#)" *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (2001): 180-95.
- Partin, Randall W. "[Assessing the Impact of Campaign Spending in Governors' Races.](#)" *Political Research Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2002): 213-33.
- Bardwell, Kedron. "[Money and Challenger Emergence in Gubernatorial Primaries.](#)" *Political Research Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2002): 653-67.
- Jackson, Robert A. "[Gubernatorial and Senatorial Campaign Mobilization of Voters.](#)" *Political Research Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (2002): 825-44.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. De Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder. "[Why Is There so Little Money in U.S. Politics?](#)" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 105-30.
- Provost, Colin. "[State Attorneys General, Entrepreneurship, and Consumer Protection in the New Federalism.](#)" *Publius* 33, no. 2 (2003): 37-53. (Uses candidate occupation data.)
- Bardwell, Kedron. "[Reevaluating Spending in Gubernatorial Races: Job Approval as a Baseline for Spending Effects.](#)" *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2005): 97-105.
- Witko, Christopher. "[Measuring the Stringency of State Campaign Finance Regulation.](#)" *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (2005): 295-310.
- Steve B. Lem, and Conor M. Dowling. "[Picking Their Spots: Minor Party Candidates in Gubernatorial Elections.](#)" *Political Research Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2006): 471-80.
- Percival, Garrick L., Mary Currin-Percival, Shaun Bowler, and Henk Van Der Kolk. "[Taxing, Spending, and Voting: Voter Turnout Rates in Statewide Elections in Comparative Perspective.](#)" *State & Local Government Review* 39, no. 3 (2007): 131-43.
- Dowling, Conor M., and Steve B. Lem. "[Explaining Major and Third Party Candidate Entry in U. S. Gubernatorial Elections, 1980-2005.](#)" *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (2009): 1-23.
- Benjamin, Daniel J., and Jesse M. Shapiro. "[Thin-Slice Forecasts of Gubernatorial Elections.](#)" *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 91, no. 3 (2009): 523-36.
- Windett, Jason Harold. "[State Effects and the Emergence and Success of Female Gubernatorial Candidates.](#)" *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (2011): 460-82.