

Government Accountability Board

State of Wisconsin

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Independent Groups Spent Nearly \$10 million on Elections

MADISON, WI – Independent campaign spending reported to the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board totaled \$9.96 million in 2010.

The G.A.B. released a summary and a spreadsheet today detailing independent expenditures by groups including labor union and corporation political action committees.

Of the total spent in 2010, more than 99 percent went to the Fall General Election:

Committee/Organization Type	Amount Spent in Fall General Election
1.91 Organizations - (Corporations and other organizations Registered to Make Independent Expenditures Only)	\$2,499,494
Labor Union PACs	\$1,688,880
Corporation PACs	\$1,950,524
Other Committee Types (not Corp or Labor)	\$3,791,573
Total Independent Expenditures for the 2010 Fall Elections	\$9,930,472

“This is the first time corporations and organizations other than PACs have been required to report spending on political campaigns,” said Kevin Kennedy, director and general counsel of the G.A.B. “This shows the importance of disclosure of political activity. And yet, so much more campaign spending was not required to be disclosed.”

Jonathan Becker, Ethics & Accountability Division administrator, said that disclosure was not required for spending by groups on so-called “issue ads” which may praise and criticize a candidate without explicitly supporting or opposing the candidate. “The Board rule requiring groups to reveal who gave them money and how they spent it has been held up in the courts,” Becker said.

After the United States Supreme Court ruled in the *Citizens United* case earlier this year that the government could not ban independent spending by corporations, the G.A.B. adopted Rule 1.91, which sets out the procedures for corporations and other organizations to report political spending.

For the Fall General Election, the top-three spenders among 1.91 organizations were the Republican State Leadership Committee Inc., \$935,726; Greater Wisconsin Political Fund, \$636,007; and Advancing Wisconsin Inc., \$552,087.

The top-three spenders among labor union PACs were WEAC PAC, \$1,599,094; WI Professional Police Assn. PAC, \$65,141; and Dane Co Deputy Sheriff Assn., \$22,281.

The top-three spenders among corporation PACs were Greater Wisconsin Committee Political Action Committee, \$1,734,540, Volunteers for Agriculture VFA, \$132,120; and Citizens for a Progressive Wisconsin PAC, \$48,835.

The top-three spenders among other committee types were RGA Wisconsin 2010 PAC, \$3,479,008; NRA Political Victory Fund, \$149,539; and WI League/Conservation Voters, \$68,439.

Data on independent expenditures is available to the public in Wisconsin's Campaign Finance Information System (<http://cfis.wi.gov>), an online database of political contributions and spending. A spreadsheet containing data for this summary is available at the G.A.B. website: <http://gab.wi.gov/node/1442>.

The figures in this news release are based on special reports of late contributions and expenditures filed with the Board through November 4, 2010. Some independent expenditures may not be reported until later. A fuller picture of all spending on the Fall 2010 General Election will not be available until January 31, 2011, the deadline for political committees to file reports for the second half of 2010. This report will include contributions and spending for the last two weeks of the campaign and the balance of the year.

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The Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) is responsible for administration and enforcement of campaign finance, elections, ethics and lobbying laws in Wisconsin. The G.A.B. is made up of six non-partisan, former judges and is supported by an agency of non-partisan staff members.