

Breaking the Bank

Primary Campaign Spending for Governor since 1978



California Fair Political Practices Commission • September 2010

Breaking the Bank



a report by the
California Fair Political Practices Commission
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California Fair Political Practices Commission
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As candidates prepare for the traditional general election campaign kickoff, it is clear that the 2010 campaign will shatter all previous records for political spending. While it is not possible to predict how much money will be spent between now and November 2, it may be useful to compare the levels of spending in this year’s primary campaign with that of previous election cycles. In this report, “Breaking the Bank,” staff of the Fair Political Practices Commission determined the spending of each candidate in every California gubernatorial primary since 1978 and calculated the actual spending per vote cast—in 2010 dollars—as candidates sought their party’s nomination. The conclusion: over time, gubernatorial primary elections have become more costly and fewer people turnout at the polls. But that only scratches the surface of what has happened since 1978¹. Other highlights of the report include:

Since 1998, the rise of the self-funded candidate has dramatically increased the cost of running for governor in California. Those self-funded candidates who spent the most per vote (based on 2010 dollars) include:

- Al Checchi \$70.21 (1998 Democratic gubernatorial primary)
- Meg Whitman \$65.29 (2010 Republican gubernatorial primary)
- Steve Westly \$45.29 (2006 Democratic gubernatorial primary)
- Steve Poizner \$43.64 (2010 Republican gubernatorial primary)
- Jane Harman \$29.59 (1998 Democratic gubernatorial primary)
- Bill Simon \$17.31 (2002 Republican gubernatorial primary)

¹ The 1978 gubernatorial election was the first year a statewide election was conducted under the newly enacted Political Reform Act, which was approved by voters in 1974. This law requires full disclosure of the role of money in California politics, including all contributions and expenditures in connection with political campaigns, thereby making it easier for the public to follow the money trail.

(Interestingly, there are currently a number of self-funded candidates in other parts of the country, who have run for public office this year. Two examples occurred in the recent primaries in Florida, where, according to recent media reports and government filings, gubernatorial candidates Rick Scott spent \$38 million of personal money in his campaign, or \$63.71 per vote, to win the Republican nomination for governor, while U.S. Democratic senatorial candidate Jeff Greene spent more than \$20 million, or \$70.64 per vote, of his own money on his losing effort.)

- ✓ In the 2010 gubernatorial primary election, more than \$128 million was spent by the three major party candidates running for governor, including two who largely self-financed their campaigns. Jerry Brown did not face any major opposition, while there was a heavily contested Republican primary between Meg Whitman and Steve Poizner.
- ✓ In the 1978 California gubernatorial primary election, the five major candidates spent a total of \$6,829,437 (\$22,853,265 in 2010 dollars). Governor Jerry Brown was running for re-election and faced no major opposition in the primary, while there were four candidates in a hotly contested Republican primary.
- ✓ In the 1978 Republican primary, Evelle Younger spent \$1.12 per vote (\$3.75 in 2010 dollars) to win his party's nomination for Governor. In 2010, Meg Whitman spent \$65.29 per vote to win the Republican nomination for Governor. Younger ran in a heavily contested primary, as did Whitman. The increase in cost-per-vote from 1978 to 2010 in current dollars was 1,641%.
- ✓ In 1978, Democrat Jerry Brown spent \$0.53 per vote (\$1.77 in 2010 dollars) to win his party's nomination for Governor in an uncontested primary. This year, Brown spent about one-fifth as much in 2010 dollars spending \$0.38 per vote to win the Democratic nomination for Governor in an uncontested primary.
- ✓ In 2010 dollars, Jerry Brown actually spent less per vote this year than his father, Pat Brown, did in 1958 when he ran in an uncontested seat for the gubernatorial Democratic nomination. Pat Brown spent \$0.18 per vote in 1958, which equals \$1.36 in 2010 dollars.
- ✓ There were a total of 6,843,001 votes cast in the 1978 gubernatorial primary, compared to 5,654,813 in 2010.

Information for this report was obtained from records filed with the Secretary of State's office, both at Archives and online, and from Fair Political Practices Commission reports from 1978, 1982, 1986 and 1990. "Breaking the Bank" was prepared and researched by Susie Swatt, FPPC Communications Director. Additional research was provided by Trish Mayer and Barbara Smith. Special thanks goes to Ivy Sevilla.

INTRODUCTION

This year celebrates the 100th anniversary of California’s direct primary election, in which voters decide who will be their party’s nominee. According to the 2000 California Blue Book, prior to the direct primary, “ ... railroad-dominated politicians hand picked candidates for public office at proverbial ‘smoke-filled-room’ conventions.”²

Since the advent of direct primary elections, the cost of campaigning has risen steadily—at a much quicker pace than the cost of living. In 1958, less than \$1 million was spent by all candidates in the primary campaign for governor.³ Two decades later, the primary price tag was nearly \$8 million. Since that time, more than \$400 million has been spent in California’s gubernatorial primary elections.

This report provides a comparison of campaign spending from 1978 to 2010 and breaks down that spending on a cost-per-vote basis. The following primary elections are included:

- 1978— Incumbent Re-election (Contested Republican primary)
- 1982— Open Seat (Contested Democratic and Republican primaries)
- 1986— Incumbent Re-election (No contested primaries)
- 1990— Open Seat (Contested Democratic primary)
- 1994— Incumbent Re-election (Contested Democratic and Republican Primaries)
- 1998— Open Seat (Contested Democratic primary)

2 Office of the Secretary of the State. [California Blue Book 2000](#). Office of State Printing, 2000.

3 California Fair Political Practices Commission. [Campaign Costs: How Much Have They Increased and Why?](#) 1980.

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- 2002—Incumbent Re-election (Contested Republican primary)
 - 2006—Incumbent Re-election (Contested Democratic primary)
 - 2010—Open Seat (Contested Republican primary)

For the purpose of calculating the total expenditures made, the primary election cycle covers the time period of January 1 of the odd year prior to the election through June 30 of the even year in which the election takes place.

In 1978, the five major candidates spent a total of \$6,829,437 (\$22,853,265 in 2010 dollars) running for Governor. In 2010, more than \$128 million was spent by the three major candidates running for Governor, including the two major candidates in the contested Republican primary.

A key reason for this tremendous increase in gubernatorial campaign spending is the increasing number of self-funded candidates seeking election. In order to keep pace, candidates without the ability to self-fund have been forced to spend more and more time raising money. The impact of wealthy candidates was first felt in 1998 when Al Checchi and Jane Harman spent more than \$55 million of personal funds seeking the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. That trend has continued in 2010 with Meg Whitman and Steve Poizner spending more than \$127 million of their combined personal funds in seeking the Republican gubernatorial nomination.

“Receipts and expenditures in election campaigns should be fully and truthfully disclosed in order that the voters may be fully informed and improper practices may be inhibited.”

—Political Reform Act

Despite the fact that contribution limits have been in effect in California since late 2002 for gubernatorial candidates, there are no limits on what candidates can contribute to their own campaigns. The courts have ruled that limits can be imposed on what contributors may give to candidates in an effort to avoid the appearance of corruption, however; limits cannot be imposed on what a candidate can give to their own campaign, based on the theory that candidates cannot corrupt themselves. (*Buckley v. Valeo* 424 U.S. 1 1976)

As campaign costs skyrocketed, the tracking of campaign contributions and expenditures took on greater importance. The passage of the Political Reform Act (Proposition 9) in June 1974 provided a major change in the way campaign contributions and expenditures are reported making it easier to follow the money trail. The establishment of online filing for campaign reports, which began in 2000, has furthered the process of providing more disclosure to the public. All candidate campaign committees that have raised or spent \$50,000 since January 1, 2000 must file electronically, making contribution and expenditure information readily accessible on the Secretary of State's website. Beginning January 1, 2011, this disclosure threshold will decrease to \$25,000.

The Fair Political Practices Commission has also adopted regulations designed to make it easier for the public to track campaign information.

- Regulation 18402 requires that candidate election committees must include, in addition to the candidate's name, the office sought and the year of the election. Since candidates can control multiple committees, providing key information in the committee name allows the public to track the committee in which they are interested.
- Regulation 18521.5 requires candidates that control ballot measure committees to include their names and the words "ballot measure committee" in committee's name and to describe the ballot measure committee they are supporting or opposing in the committee's statement of organization.
- Regulation 18405 requires that candidates who control multiple committees, such as legal defense funds, officeholder accounts, ballot measure committees and other election committees for another office, must file all campaign statements on the dates the candidate or elected officer is required to file pre-election statements in connection with their election to office.

The Fair Political Practices Commission is dedicated to continuing to provide the highest level of transparency and disclosure of campaign spending allowed by law.

COST-PER-VOTE

<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Primary Election Spending</i>	<i>Total Vote</i>	<i>Cost-per-Vote</i>	<i>Cost-per-Vote 2010 Dollars</i>
1978 Primary Election				
Governor Jerry Brown (Dem)	\$1,351,240	2,567,067	\$0.53	\$1.77
Attorney General Evelle Younger (Rep)	\$1,134,068	1,008,087	\$1.12	\$3.75
L. A. Police Chief Ed Davis (Rep)	\$1,846,843	738,741	\$2.50	\$8.37
State Assemblyman Ken Maddy (Rep)	\$1,522,200	484,583	\$3.14	\$10.51
San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson (Rep)	\$975,086	230,146	\$4.24	\$14.19
1982 Primary Election				
State Assemblyman John Garamendi (Dem)	\$1,089,068	712,161	\$1.53	\$3.46
L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley (Dem)	\$2,674,832	1,726,985	\$1.55	\$3.50
Attorney General George Deukmejian (Rep)	\$4,083,049	1,165,266	\$3.50	\$7.91
Lt. Governor Mike Curb (Rep)	\$5,297,166	1,020,935	\$5.19	\$11.73
1986 Primary Election				
L. A. Mayor Tom Bradley (Dem)	\$2,596,407	1,768,044	\$1.47	\$2.93
Governor George Deukmejian (Rep)	\$4,149,108	1,927,290	\$2.15	\$4.28
1990 Primary Election				
Former S.F. Mayor Dianne Feinstein (Dem)	\$6,542,132	1,361,360	\$4.81	\$8.03
Attorney General John Van de Kamp (Dem)	\$6,977,292	1,067,899	\$6.53	\$10.90
U. S. Senator Pete Wilson (Rep)	\$9,163,612	1,856,614	\$4.94	\$8.25

COST-PER-VOTE

<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Primary Election Spending</i>	<i>Total Vote</i>	<i>Cost-per-Vote</i>	<i>Cost-per-Vote 2010 Dollars</i>
1994 Primary Election				
State Senator Tom Hayden (Dem)	\$389,013	318,777	\$1.22	\$1.80
Insurance Comm. John Garamendi (Dem)	\$3,983,782	755,876	\$5.27	\$7.76
Treasurer Kathleen Brown (Dem)	\$9,797,035	1,110,372	\$8.82	\$12.98
Businessman Ron Unz (Rep)	\$2,322,735	707,431	\$3.28	\$4.83
Governor Pete Wilson (Rep)	\$9,681,422	1,266,832	\$7.64	\$11.25
1998 Primary Election				
Lt. Governor Gray Davis (Dem)	\$9,199,088	2,083,396	\$4.42	\$5.92
Congresswoman Jane Harman (Dem)	\$16,380,580	741,251	\$22.10	\$29.59
Airline Executive Al Checchi (Dem)	\$39,277,783	748,828	\$52.45	\$70.21
Attorney General Dan Lungren (Rep)	\$7,965,254	2,023,618	\$3.94	\$5.27
2002 Primary Election				
Governor Gray Davis (Dem)	\$25,479,964	1,755,276	\$14.52	\$17.61
Secretary of State Bill Jones (Rep)	\$3,902,200	387,237	\$10.08	\$12.22
Businessman Bill Simon (Rep)	\$16,119,128	1,129,973	\$14.27	\$17.31
L. A. Mayor Richard Riordan (Rep)	\$12,127,438	715,768	\$16.94	\$20.54
2006 Primary Election				
Treasurer Phil Angelides (Dem)	\$33,526,932	1,202,884	\$27.87	\$30.16
Controller Steve Westly (Dem)	\$45,283,465	1,081,971	\$41.85	\$45.29
Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (Rep)	\$18,912,979	1,724,296	\$10.97	\$11.87
2010 Primary Election				
Attorney General Jerry Brown (Dem)	\$774,476	2,021,189	\$0.38	
Insurance Comm. Steve Poizner (Rep)	\$27,621,775	632,940	\$43.64	
Business Executive Meg Whitman (Rep)	\$99,866,607	1,529,534	\$65.29	

**PRIMARY ELECTION
COMPARISONS**

Gubernatorial Primary Election Costs Since 1978		
	Total Spending for Major Democratic and Republican Gubernatorial Candidates	Cost in 2010 Dollars
1978 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$6,829,437	\$22,853,265
1982 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$13,144,115	\$29,717,686
1986 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$6,745,515	\$13,428,129
1990 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$22,683,036	\$37,864,878
1994 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$26,173,987	\$38,532,983
1998 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$72,822,705	\$86,812,653
2002 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$57,628,730	\$69,891,825
2006 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$97,723,376	\$105,759,379
2010 Gubernatorial Primary Election	\$128,262,858	\$128,262,858
TOTALS	\$432,013,759	\$533,123,656

1978 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Incumbent Democratic Governor Jerry Brown ran for re-election
- There was a hotly contested primary election between Attorney General Evelle Younger, Los Angeles Police Chief Ed Davis, State Assemblyman Ken Maddy and San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson
- A total of 6,843,001 votes were cast in the election, which is the highest number of votes ever cast at a gubernatorial primary election—a record that still stands today
- Proposition 13, which limited property tax rates in California, appeared on the 1978 primary election ballot and probably was one of the key reasons for the huge voter response. The measure was overwhelmingly approved by 64.8% to 35.2%
- Voter turnout was 68.88%

Overview

The primary election took place on June 6, 1978. While Jerry Brown, the incumbent Democratic Governor, had no major opposition in the primary, four major Republican candidates ran in a hotly contested primary. Those four candidates spent \$5,478,197, which represents more than the combined total spending for all the Republican and Democratic candidates in the 1962, 1966 and 1970 gubernatorial primary elections.⁴

This was the first gubernatorial primary election conducted under the Political Reform Act (Proposition 9), which was approved by voters in 1974. With the enactment of the PRA, creating the Fair Political Practices Commission, it became easier to track contributions and expenditures for candidates running for office in California.

⁴ California Fair Political Practices Commission. [Campaign Costs: How Much Have They Increased and Why? 1980.](#)

Cost-per-Vote Breakdown

- **Jerry Brown spent \$1,351,240 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 2,567,067 votes, which represents a cost of \$0.53 per vote or \$1.77 in 2010 dollars.**
- **Ed Davis spent \$1,846,843 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 738,741 votes, which represents a cost of \$2.50 per vote or \$8.37 in 2010 dollars.**
- **Ken Maddy spent \$1,522,200 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 484,583 votes, which represents a cost of \$3.14 per vote or \$10.51 in 2010 dollars.**
- **Pete Wilson spent \$975,086 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 230,146 votes, which represents a cost of \$4.24 per vote or \$14.19 in 2010 dollars.**
- **Evelle Younger spent \$1,134,068 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 1,008,087 votes, which represents a cost of \$1.12 per vote or \$3.75 in 2010 dollars.**

In the 1978 general election, Jerry Brown defeated Evelle Younger 56% to 36.5%.

1982 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Open seat: Governor Jerry Brown did not run for re-election
- Major candidates in the contested Democratic primary election included Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley and State Senator John Garamendi
- Major candidates in the contested Republican primary included Attorney General George Deukmejian and Lt. Governor Mike Curb
- Voter turnout was 52.73%

Overview

The 1980 legislative elections marked the beginning of the political arms race in California. Candidates began raising large sums of money to campaign for office. This new trend toward large campaign war chests was evident in the 1982 gubernatorial primary election as more than \$13 million was spent by all the Republican and Democratic candidates running for their party's nomination for governor. That was more money than all candidates spent in both the primary and general elections for governor in 1974 (\$10,563,509).⁵

Cost-per-Vote Breakdown

- Tom Bradley spent \$2,674,832 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 1,726,985 votes, which represents a cost of \$1.55 per vote or \$3.50 in 2010 dollars.

5 California Fair Political Practices Commission. [Campaign Costs: How Much Have They Increased and Why?](#) 1980.

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- **John Garamendi spent \$1,089,068 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 712,161 votes, which represents a cost of \$1.53 per vote or \$3.46 in 2010 dollars.**
 - **Mike Curb spent a total of \$5,297,166 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 1,020,935 votes, which represents a cost of \$5.19 per vote or \$11.73 in 2010 dollars.**
 - **George Deukmejian spent \$4,083,049 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 1,165,266 votes, which represents a cost of \$3.50 per vote or \$7.91 in 2010 dollars.**

In the 1982 general election, George Deukmejian defeated Tom Bradley 49.3% to 48.1%.

1986 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Incumbent Republican Governor George Deukmejian ran for re-election
- The only major Democratic candidate was Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley
- Voter turnout was 40.45%

Overview

The primary election took place on June 3, 1986. With no major opposition for either candidate, both Deukmejian and Bradley were assured of their party's nominations. A quiet gubernatorial primary election coupled with no hotly contested ballot propositions resulted in an extremely low voter turnout. The total number of votes cast was 4,937,941, which represents the lowest turnout since the 1962 gubernatorial primary election when 4,479,723 votes were cast.

Cost-per-Vote

- Tom Bradley spent a total of \$2,596,407 in the Democratic primary election. He received 1,768,044 votes, which represents \$1.47 per vote or \$2.93 in 2010 dollars.
- George Deukmejian spent a total of \$4,149,108 in the Republican primary election. He received 1,927,290 votes, which represents \$2.15 per cost or \$4.28 in 2010 dollars.

In the 1986 general election, George Deukmejian defeated Tom Bradley 60.54% to 37.34%.

1990 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Open seat: Governor George Deukmejian did not seek re-election
- Contested Democratic primary between former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein and Attorney General John Van de Kamp
- United States Senator Pete Wilson was the only major candidate in the Republican primary
- First gubernatorial primary election in which there were limits on the size of contributions that candidates could accept
- Voter turnout was 41.49%

Overview

The 1990 gubernatorial primary election was held on June 5, 1990. It was the first state election held since voter approval of Proposition 73 (1988), which imposed contribution limits. The maximum contribution candidates could receive was \$5,000 per contributor, per fiscal year. The vast majority of the proposal was declared unconstitutional by a federal judge in the latter half of 1990.

Cost-per-Vote Breakdown

- Dianne Feinstein spent \$6,542,132 in the Democratic primary. She received a total of 1,361,360 votes, which represents a cost of \$4.81 per vote or \$8.03 in 2010 dollars.
- John Van de Kamp spent \$6,977,292 in the Democratic primary. He received 1,067,899 votes, which represents a cost of \$6.53 per vote or \$10.90 in 2010 dollars.

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- **Pete Wilson spent \$9,163,612 in the Republican primary. He received 1,856,614 votes, which represents a cost of \$4.94 per vote or \$8.25 in 2010 dollars.**

In the 1990 general election, Pete Wilson defeated Dianne Feinstein 49.25% to 45.79%.

1994 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Incumbent Republican Governor Pete Wilson ran for re-election
- Wilson faced primary opposition from businessman Ron Unz
- Democratic contested primary between Treasurer Kathleen Brown, Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi and State Senator Tom Hayden
- Voter turnout was 35.05%, which was the lowest percentage for any primary election in the 20th century, according to the Secretary of State's office, which began tracking voter turnout in 1916

Overview

The primary election was held on June 7, 1994. Over \$26 million was spent by the five major candidates running for their party's nomination, which is more than the combined spending in both the Democratic and Republican gubernatorial primaries for 1958, 1962, 1966, 1970, 1974 and 1978.⁶ The most significant spending was by Wilson and Brown, who each spent more than \$9 million in their respective primaries. Ron Unz spent a little over \$2 million—\$1,950,000 was his personal money.

Cost-per-Vote

- Kathleen Brown spent \$9,797,035 in the Democratic primary. She received a total of 1,110,372 votes, which represents a cost of \$8.82 per vote or \$12.98 in 2010 dollars.

6 California Fair Political Practices Commission. [Campaign Costs: How Much Have They Increased and Why?](#) 1980.

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- **John Garamendi spent \$3,983,782 in the Democratic primary. He received a total of 755,876 votes, which represents a cost of \$5.27 per vote or \$7.76 in 2010 dollars.**
 - **Tom Hayden spent \$389,013 in the Democratic primary. He received a total of 318,777 votes, which represents a cost of \$1.22 per vote or \$1.80 in 2010 dollars.**
 - **Ron Unz spent \$2,322,735 in the Republican primary. He received a total of 707,431 votes, which represents a cost of \$3.28 per vote or \$4.83 in 2010 dollars.**
 - **Pete Wilson spent \$9,681,422 in the Republican primary. He received a total of 1,266,832 votes, which represents a cost of \$7.64 per vote or \$11.25 in 2010 dollars.**

In the 1994 general election, Pete Wilson defeated Kathleen Brown 55.18% to 40.62%.

1998 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Open seat: Governor Pete Wilson was termed out of office
- Contested Democratic primary election between Lt. Governor Gray Davis, Airline Executive Al Checchi and Congresswoman Jane Harman
- Attorney General Dan Lungren had no major opposition in the Republican primary
- Checchi contributed more than \$38 million in personal funds, while Harman contributed just over \$13 million
- Primary election spending topped \$72 million, setting a new record
- Only gubernatorial primary election to be conducted under the blanket primary
- Voter turnout was 42.49%

Overview

The primary election was held on June 2, 1998. With Governor Pete Wilson termed out of office, there was no incumbent running for re-election. This was the only California gubernatorial primary election held under the blanket primary, which was adopted by the voters in 1996, and found to be unconstitutional in 2000. Under a blanket primary, voters are able to pick candidates without regard to party designations. Democratic voters could vote for a Republican candidate and vice versa. In addition, for the first time, voters not registered with any political party were able to vote for the major political party candidates. Candidates with the highest votes by party for each office advanced to the general election.⁷

In the 1998 primary election, candidates not only tried to get votes from their own party, but from independents and registered voters from other parties. The result was an

⁷ Lubenow, Gerald, Editor. *California Votes—The 1998 Governor's Race*. Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies, Press, 1999.

explosion in campaign spending partly fueled by candidates pouring in tens of millions of dollars of their personal money. Dan Lungren had no major opposition in the Republican primary, but the Democratic primary was a slugfest where the three major candidates for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination spent nearly \$65 million.

Cost-Per-Vote Breakdown

- Al Checchi spent \$39,277,783 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 748,828 votes, which represents a cost of \$52.45 per vote or \$70.21 in 2010 dollars.
- Gray Davis spent \$9,199,088 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 2,083,396 votes, which represents a cost of \$4.42 per vote or \$5.92 in 2010 dollars.
- Jane Harman spent \$16,380,580 in the Democratic primary election. She received a total of 741,251 votes, which represents a cost of \$22.10 per vote or \$29.59 in 2010 dollars.
- Dan Lungren spent \$7,965,254 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 2,023,618 votes, which represents a cost of \$3.94 per vote or \$5.27 in 2010 dollars.

In the 1998 general election, Gray Davis defeated Dan Lungren 57.97% to 38.38%

2002 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Incumbent Democratic Governor Gray Davis ran for re-election
- Contested Republican gubernatorial primary between businessman Bill Simon, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and Secretary of State Bill Jones
- Bill Simon contributed \$5,029,925 in personal funds to his gubernatorial campaign
- First gubernatorial primary election with campaign reports filed online
- Last gubernatorial primary election conducted without Proposition 34 contribution limits
- Only gubernatorial primary election held in March
- Voter turnout was 34.59%

Overview

The primary election was held on March 5, 2002. Gray Davis, the incumbent Democratic Governor, had no major opposition in the primary. However, Davis' popularity had been impacted by state budget shortfalls and reduced electricity supplies, which led to rolling blackouts. Three major Republican candidates entered the gubernatorial primary election for the right to challenge Governor Davis in the fall election.

Davis was most concerned about running against Richard Riordan—a moderate Republican, mayor of the largest city in the state and a wealthy individual who could write large checks for his campaign. Despite having no strong opposition in his re-election bid, Davis spent over \$25 million in the primary, including negative ads against Riordan, to help assure that Riordan was not the Republican nominee.⁸

8 Lubenow, Gerald, Editor. *California Votes—The 2002 Governor's Race & The Recall That Made History*. Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies, Press, 2003.

Cost-per-Vote Breakdown

- **Gray Davis spent \$25,479,964 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 1,755,276 votes, which represents a cost of \$14.52 per vote or \$17.61 in 2010 dollars.**
- **Bill Jones spent \$3,902,200 in the contested Republican primary election. He received a total of 387,237 votes, which represents a cost of \$10.08 per vote or \$12.22 in 2010 dollars.**
- **Richard Riordan spent \$12,127,438 in the contested Republican primary election. He received a total of 715,768 votes, which represents a cost of \$16.94 per vote or \$20.54 in 2010 dollars.**
- **Bill Simon spent \$16,119,128 in the contested Republican primary election. He received a total of 1,129,973 votes, which represents a cost of \$14.27 per vote or \$17.31 in 2010 dollars.**

In the 2002 general election, Governor Gray Davis defeated Bill Simon 47.3% to 42.4%.

2006 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Incumbent Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger ran for re-election, with no major opposition in the Republican primary
- Contested Democratic primary election between State Treasurer Phil Angelides and State Controller Steve Westly
- Primary spending set a new record with nearly \$100 million being spent by the Schwarzenegger, Angelides and Westly campaigns
- Westly contributed more than \$35 million in personal funds
- First gubernatorial primary election held under the Proposition 34 contribution limits
- First gubernatorial primary election where independent expenditures played a major role in a campaign. In 2002, a total of \$273,405 was spent on independent expenditures in the gubernatorial primary. By 2006, that amount had risen to \$10,132,960 – a 3600% increase.
- Voter turnout was 33.63%

Overview

The primary election was held on June 6, 2006. This was the only gubernatorial primary election in which a governor elected in a recall election stood for re-election. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger had no major opposition in the Republican primary election, but still spent almost \$20 million, while Angelides and Westly spent more than \$78 million. Westly contributed more than \$35 million of personal money to his campaign, while there were more than \$10 million in independent expenditures spent supporting Angelides.

Angelides and Westly jumped into the Democratic primary believing that Schwarzenegger was vulnerable after the results of the statewide special election in November 2005,

where the Governor backed four initiatives that were overwhelmingly defeated by the voters. While Angelides and Westly vigorously campaigned against one another in the primary, Schwarzenegger worked to reposition himself for November.⁹

Cost-per-Vote Breakdown

- Phil Angelides spent \$33,526,932 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 1,202,884 votes, which represents a cost of \$27.87 per vote or \$30.16 in 2010 dollars.
- Steve Westly spent \$45,283,465 in the Democratic primary election. He contributed \$35,150,000 of his own money to the campaign. Westly received a total of 1,081,971 votes, which represents a cost of \$41.85 per vote or \$45.29 in 2010 dollars.
- Arnold Schwarzenegger spent \$18,912,979 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 1,724,296 votes, which represents a cost of \$10.97 per vote or \$11.87 in 2010 dollars.

In the 2006 general election, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger defeated Phil Angelides 55.9% to 39%.

9 Rarick, Ethan, Editor. *California Votes—The 2006 Governor’s Race*. Berkeley, Berkeley Public Policy Press, 2007.

2010 GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Open seat: Governor Schwarzenegger was termed out of office
- Attorney General Jerry Brown had no major opposition in the Democratic primary election
- Contested Republican primary election between Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner and Business Executive Meg Whitman
- First gubernatorial primary election in which total spending exceeded \$128 million shattering prior records
- Meg Whitman contributed \$91,055,806 of personal money to her gubernatorial campaign in the primary election cycle
- Steve Poizner contributed \$24,403,680 of his personal money to his gubernatorial campaign in the primary election cycle
- Voter turnout was 33.31%

Overview

Spending records were rewritten in this primary election. Meg Whitman and Steve Poizner spent more than \$127 million in the contested Republican primary election; Jerry Brown spent less than \$800,000 in the uncontested Democratic primary. While there are limits on what contributors can give to candidates, the courts have ruled that no limitations can be placed on what candidates give to their own campaigns (*Buckley v. Valeo* 424 U.S. 1 1976).

Cost-per-Vote Breakdown

- Jerry Brown spent \$774,476 in the Democratic primary election. He received a total of 2,021,189 votes, which represents a cost of \$0.38 per vote.

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- **Steve Poizner spent \$27,621,775 in the Republican primary election. He received a total of 632,940 votes, which represents a cost of \$43.64 per vote.**
 - **Meg Whitman spent \$99,866,607 in the Republican primary election. She received a total of 1,529,534 votes, which represents a cost of \$65.29 per vote.**

METHODOLOGY

The time frame for the primary election cycle used in the report was January 1 of the odd year prior to the primary through June 30 of the even year in which the primary was held.

In determining the amount of money spent by a candidate, the “total expenditures made this period column” was used for each of the reporting periods within the primary election cycle.

Some candidate campaign forms (Form 460, previously Form 490) have the “nonmonetary contributions” in the “contributions received” section added as a “nonmonetary adjustment” to the “expenditures made” section. When the amount for the “nonmonetary adjustment” was not included in the expenditures made section of the candidate campaign form, the nonmonetary contributions listed under the “contributions received” section were added to the expenditures to provide consistency for the reporting of gubernatorial expenditures.

Reports filed online, paper filings located in archives at the Secretary of State’s office and Fair Political Practices Commission reports from the primary elections of 1978, 1982, 1986 and 1990 were used in preparing “Breaking the Bank.” All numbers used in the report are based on the accuracy of reports filed with the Secretary of State’s office.

Only candidates who received at least nine percent of the vote in the Democratic or Republican gubernatorial primaries were included in the report.

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator, as of July 2010, was used to convert expenditures to 2010 dollars. (www.bls.gov)

APPENDIX

PROPOSITION 34 CONTRIBUTION LIMITS FOR CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR

- 2009-1010 \$25,900 from a person or small contributor committee.
No limit from a political party.
- 2007-08 \$24,100 from a person or small contributor committee.
No limit from a political party.
- 2005-06 \$22,300 from a person or small contributor committee.
No limit from a political party.