

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

All state-level campaign and lobbying spending data comes from Cal-Access, operated by the California Secretary of State: <https://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/>.

Local-level campaign and lobbying spending data was acquired from each individual city or county.

Information on pieces of legislation was collected from the California Legislative Information website: <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/home.xhtml>.

Information on state ballot measures and legislators was gathered from Ballotpedia: <https://ballotpedia.org>.

All monetary data were adjusted for inflation and presented in 2025 dollars using the *California Consumer Price Index (1955-2026)* from the State of California's Department of Industrial Relations: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/OPRL/CPI/EntireCCPI.PDF> (as of 8/11/25).

Data Notes

- While all efforts were made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented, some of the available data was limited in its specificity and consistency. For example, corporations and organizations often used numerous variants of their own names in reporting their spending, and even misspelled their own names on occasion. Plus, when there were naming inconsistencies or duplicates, there were not always additional categories of filing data that allowed for attribution with complete certainty. In general, we used a conservative approach and only included spending that could be reasonably assumed to be attributable to a particular organization or person. However, because of the limitations of the data, and the reality that both people and organizations can have identical names, the presence of errors is possible. If users locate such mistakes, we would be grateful if you would notify us so that we can correct them.
- It is important to note that our research does not include all political spending. There is likely a substantial amount of “dark money” – political spending for which the source is undisclosed – that is not included. Thus, the actual political spending by many of the organizations featured in the dashboard is likely far higher than what is included here.
- The overwhelming majority of campaign spending decisions reflected within the database were made by the corporations themselves. However, campaign spending from employees of those corporations was also included because of the frequency with which large percentages of the individual spending were attributable to top executives of the corporations, the frequent presence of institutional pressure for individual employees to align their spending with corporate priorities, and thus the often-significant correlations between corporate and employee spending.
- Individuals who identified themselves as being retired employees were excluded from consideration.
- Corporate affiliates were included when the parent company was identified in reporting.

- To avoid double-counting of spending, contributions from allied committees were excluded from total spending amounts. However, there are instances in which excluded amounts are still reflected in the “Spending Receipts” section of the dashboard in order to most accurately portray each organization’s spending priorities.
- There were some very limited examples of individuals who identified as employees of two organizations included within the dashboard. To ensure a full accounting for each individual organization, they were included within each organization’s totals.
- In the “Spending Receipts” section of the dashboard, independent expenditures are labeled as “(IE).”
- Some independent expenditure PACs list sponsors as part of their official names (and are labeled within the “Spending Receipts” section as “(Sponsored IE)”). These PACs are usually operated by those named sponsors, and typically the vast majority or even the entirety of those PACs’ resources are contributed by those named sponsors. Thus, in order to provide the best estimate of these sponsors’ political activities and agenda, these PACs’ spending was attributed to the named sponsors.
- While most organizations sponsor PACs around particular political campaigns to advance specific priorities, there are a few included within the dashboard that are longstanding entities designed to advance overall organizational priorities. Functionally they are far more analogous to direct campaign spending than they are to typical sponsored-PAC spending and are thus treated as such within this dashboard.
- For state-level data tying organizations and individuals to particular social justice and racial justice issues, spending on Democratic or Republican political organizations was not used, even though this spending undoubtedly contributed to the existence and persistence of these injustices. Because nearly every organization and individual included in the dashboard funded those organizations heavily, we only included evidence that went beyond that political spending, particularly specific spending or lobbying activities related to those issues that or significant connections to organizations whose political agenda is closely related to those issues.
- For local-level data, overall spending attributable via employee/employer relationships to municipalities (such as Alameda County or the City of Oakland) was excluded because either: (a) it included individuals from numerous municipal departments and thus did not indicate organized political influence; or (b) it indicated public financing of elections, not the exercise of political influence.
- For local-level data, the location listed was chosen by what was listed in the filings. If there was more than one location listed, the location with the most spending attributed to it was used. If the available data did not include addresses, then the organizational headquarters was used.