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## Duncan Lags Behind Rivals In Campaign Fundraising

Ehrlich Outpacing Other Governor Hopefuls With More Than \$10 Million

By Matthew Mosk and John Wagner  
Washington Post Staff Writers  
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Maryland gubernatorial contender Douglas M. Duncan will trail well behind both his Democratic rival and Republican Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. when he submits his annual campaign finance report to state officials today.

The Montgomery county executive will show \$1.36 million on hand, compared with \$4.19 million banked by Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley (D) and Ehrlich's anticipated report showing more than \$10 million, campaign aides said yesterday.

Duncan aides said they were satisfied with the amount, describing their campaign as an "insurgency" bid that would be expected to run lean on cash.

"We have always expected our opponents to raise more money than us, so it's no surprise that they did," said campaign manager Scott Arceneaux. "However, this race is not about money; it's about promises made and promises kept. It's about the future of Maryland and the records of the candidates."

But several supporters said Duncan needs to pick up the pace. "There's a long way to go," said Sen. P.J. Hogan (D-Montgomery), who has endorsed Duncan. "But clearly Doug needs to start raising a lot more money."

U.S. Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) agreed, saying Duncan would "have to step it up." But he also said there is a danger in making too much of a report filed nine months before the primary. In 2002, he said, he was out-raised by his opponents nearly 2 to 1. "This is still January," he said.

Today's filings will mark the first opportunity in a year to assess the status of not only the 2006 governor's race but all campaigns for state office.

Reports for the attorney general's race, for instance, show that Montgomery County State's Attorney Douglas F. Gansler (D) has more than \$1.4 million on hand for a possible bid, while incumbent J. Joseph Curran Jr. (D) has not raised any money in the past year. He said he has \$26,175 on hand. Montgomery County Council member Tom Perez (D-Silver Spring), who has said he will run only if Curran does not, said he will report having raised \$210,000.

The numbers suggest that after 19 years in the job, Curran is not planning to run again, said Stanton Gildenhorn, a former Democratic Party chief in Montgomery.

In an interview yesterday, Curran said he has always waited until late in the campaign to raise money and is keeping his options open.

In the race for comptroller, incumbent William Donald Schaefer (D) has nearly \$500,000 on hand, while his

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Democratic challenger, Del. Peter Franchot (Montgomery), has about \$250,000, aides say.

But it is the disparity in money raised for the governor's race that drew the most attention in Annapolis yesterday.

"Doug Duncan has an uphill battle. He knows it," said Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Calvert). Miller added that he believes it would be best for the party if one of the two candidates would step aside by July to avoid a bruising primary, saying he hopes either O'Malley or Duncan "will read the tea leaves."

O'Malley's campaign manager said the fundraising numbers "speak for themselves."

"This also adds to our growing momentum of consistent leads in the polls, the quality of a lieutenant governor candidate we were able to attract, the flurry of early endorsements and the grass-roots organization we have assembled across the state," said Jonathan Epstein.

Sandy Brantley, a legal counsel to then-Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D) and an early Duncan supporter, agreed that O'Malley's fundraising advantage probably would create momentum but added: "Is it enough to knock Doug out? I don't think so, because his message is just starting to get out there."

Although most political candidates express a distaste for fundraising, political scientists say the campaign accounts represent a critical first stage of any campaign, helping signal a candidate's potential. University of Maryland professor Paul S. Herrnson said that is especially true this year for Democrats, who must look beyond the September primary to a general election race against Ehrlich. "Without that sign of early support, you can't run a campaign, so it doesn't bode well for Duncan," Herrnson said. "But there's still time."

Ehrlich campaign manager Bo Harmon said he would release the governor's numbers today. Two sources close to the campaign have said they expected the report to show more than \$10 million.

Duncan spent nearly \$1.4 million in the past year, more than the nearly \$1.3 million that he raised, according to a cover sheet released by the campaign. His campaign has bulked up on staff in recent months, and Duncan conducted a 24-jurisdiction tour during the summer, followed by a statewide bus tour in the fall.

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