

SLATES AND THE 2006 MARYLAND STATE ELECTIONS

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A report by

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Executive Summary

Slate committees raised and spent more than \$12 million during the 2006 election cycle. This report examines what slates are, who joins them, and how they raise and spend political dollars in Maryland. In general, this report finds that slates function as financial centers through which established politicians who fundraise well can pool money and redistribute it or spend it to aid themselves or their political allies.

Major Findings:

- Almost one-third of all Maryland candidates were members of at least one of the 118 active slates during the 2006 election cycle.
- Most slates were small with five members or less, but there were several larger slates with as many as 51 members.
- Incumbents, Democrats, candidates for the State Senate, candidates with longer tenures in office, candidates who were more electorally successful, and candidates who raised more money were the most common slate members.
- Roughly 50% of all slate funds came in the form of direct transfers from candidates.
- Only a small set of established politicians, primarily incumbents and candidates who had previously held elected office in Maryland, gave large sums of money to slates—over \$34,000 each, on average.
- Most slates spent less than \$50,000 during the 2006 election cycle, but a small proportion, roughly 13%, spent over \$200,000.
- Slates spent about two-thirds of their funds on campaigning costs, but also contributed about 15% directly to candidates.
- Only about 8% of all candidates received money directly from slates. Those that did were more often Democrats, incumbents, and electorally successful.

Introduction

The Maryland State Board of Elections defines slates as “political committee[s] of two or more candidates that join together to conduct and pay for joint campaign activities.” These slate committees, which must have at least two candidates running for elected office as members to remain valid, serve as additional campaign organizations for candidates, allowing them more flexibility with which to raise and spend campaign funds. Any registered candidate can join a slate, provided the slate approves of his or her entry, and candidates can disassociate with a slate at any time.

For the most part slates function like other campaign committees in Maryland: they are required to appoint a treasurer; they must file campaign finance reports detailing their fundraising and spending activities; and they must designate the election year in which they will participate. The key difference between slates and other campaign committees is that monetary transfers between slates and their members’ committees are unlimited. This allows Maryland candidates to pool together and spend campaign cash strategically.

Candidates running for all types of Maryland state offices use slates, including General Assembly candidates, judicial candidates, county council candidates, and gubernatorial candidates. Often slates group together a variety of candidates. Some are formed among candidates of a single General Assembly district, such as the District 34 Leadership Team Slate, or among candidates from a particular county, such as the Progressive Prince George's Slate. Others are formed on the basis of partisanship, such as The Republican Senatorial Slate Committee or the Maryland House Democratic Committee Slate. And still others still are formed by candidates running for a variety of offices, such as the Committee to Re-Elect Twenty Seventh District Legislative Slate, which had candidates running for several offices, including the House of Delegates, the State Senate, Comptroller, and County Executive.

What Did Slates Look Like in 2006?

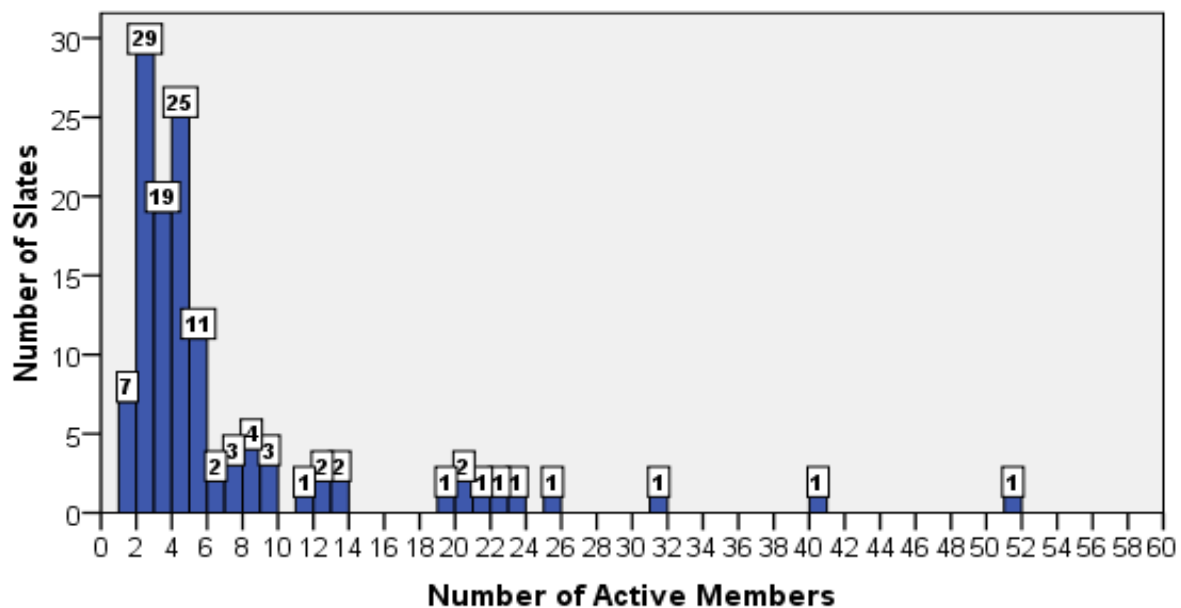
During the 2006 election cycle there were 118 active slates; i.e. slates that raised or spent money. Each of these slates had at least one active member. Here, active members are defined as those who were involved in a financial transaction with the slate during the 2006 election cycle. While slates are required to have two members to exist, both are not required to have been involved in the slate financially. Table 1 details the ten largest slates in terms of active membership in 2006. The Maryland House Democratic Committee Slate topped the list with 51 active members.

Table 1. Ten Largest Slates in Terms of Active Membership, 2006

Slate	Number of Members
Maryland House Democratic Committee Slate	51
Maryland Democratic Senatorial Committee Slate	40
Twenty Third District Team Slate	31
Republican House Slate Committee	25
Democratic Leadership Team 2006	23
Twenty First District Democrats Slate	22
Baltimore County Victory Slate	21
The Republican Senatorial Slate Committee	20
The Lawlah Team Slate	20
Comm. To Re-Elect The Twenty Seventh Dist. Leg. Slate	19

Despite the existence of these larger slates, the typical slate during the 2006 election cycle had just a few active members (see Figure 1). Altogether, 80 of the 118 active slates, or about 68%, had 5 or fewer active members. In general, large slates were relatively uncommon with just 13% of all active slates having more than 10 active members.

Figure 1. Distribution of Active Slate Membership, 2006



Slate Membership in 2006

Maryland slate membership in 2006 included candidates for a variety of state offices such as the Governor's office, the State Senate, the House of Delegates, Comptroller, county councils, city councils, judicial seats, and other offices. While slate membership was widely dispersed, an overwhelming majority of candidates did not join a slate during the 2006 election cycle. In fact of the 1,488 candidates who filed for candidacy for a state or local office, 69% of them were not a member of any slate (see Figure 2). Another 20% of candidates were members of just one slate. Only 11% of candidates were members of multiple slates. Altogether, 465 candidates for Maryland offices were part of at least one slate during the 2006 elections.

Figure 2. Candidates by Number of Slate Memberships, 2006



Of course, slate membership was more common among some types of candidates than others. Specifically, candidates for the State Senate were more likely to have joined a slate than candidates for any other Maryland office (see Table 2). Less than half of all Senate candidates were not part of at least one slate. Furthermore, Senate candidates were very likely to have been members of multiple slates. Roughly 37% of all Senate candidates had memberships in more than one slate. By contrast, judicial candidates were less likely than their fellow candidates to be part of a slate. Almost 90% of judicial candidates were not active slate members during the 2006 cycle.

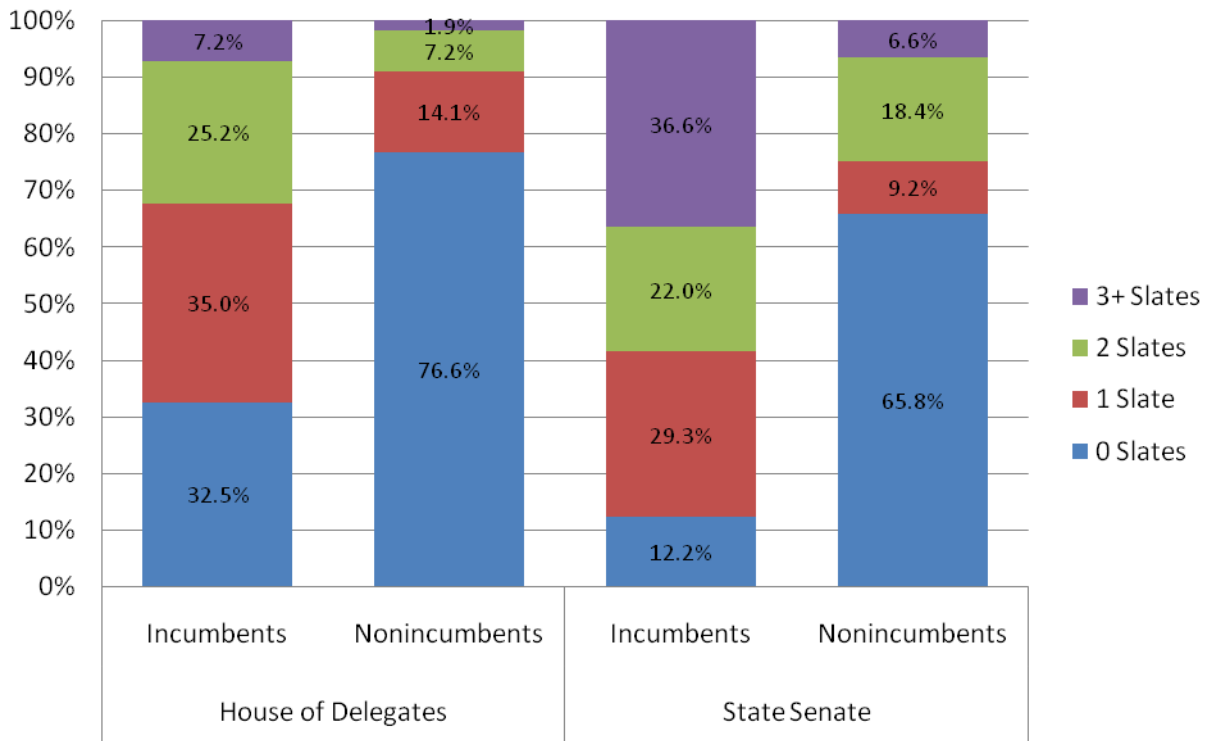
Table 2. Number of Slate Memberships by Office Sought, 2006

	House of Delegates	State Senate	Executive Office	Judgeship	Other*
0	63.6%	47.0%	63.0%	88.6%	73.3%
1	20.1%	16.2%	18.5%	11.4%	21.3%
2	12.4%	19.7%	14.8%	0.0%	3.0%
3+	3.5%	17.1%	3.7%	0.0%	2.4%
N =	427	117	27	44	872

* Other includes candidates for county and local offices as well as candidates who created a campaign finance committee but never ran for an identifiable office.

Slate membership was related to other factors as well. Specifically, incumbent candidates were much more likely to be members of at least one slate during the 2006 election cycle. House and Senate incumbents, for example, were more than twice as likely as nonincumbent candidates to have been a member of a slate (see Figure 3). Fully 77% of House nonincumbents and 66% of Senate nonincumbents were not part of any slates in 2006, compared to just 33% of House incumbents and 12% of Senate incumbents. Senate incumbents, strikingly, were actually more likely to have been associated with 3 or more slates than to have not been a member of any.

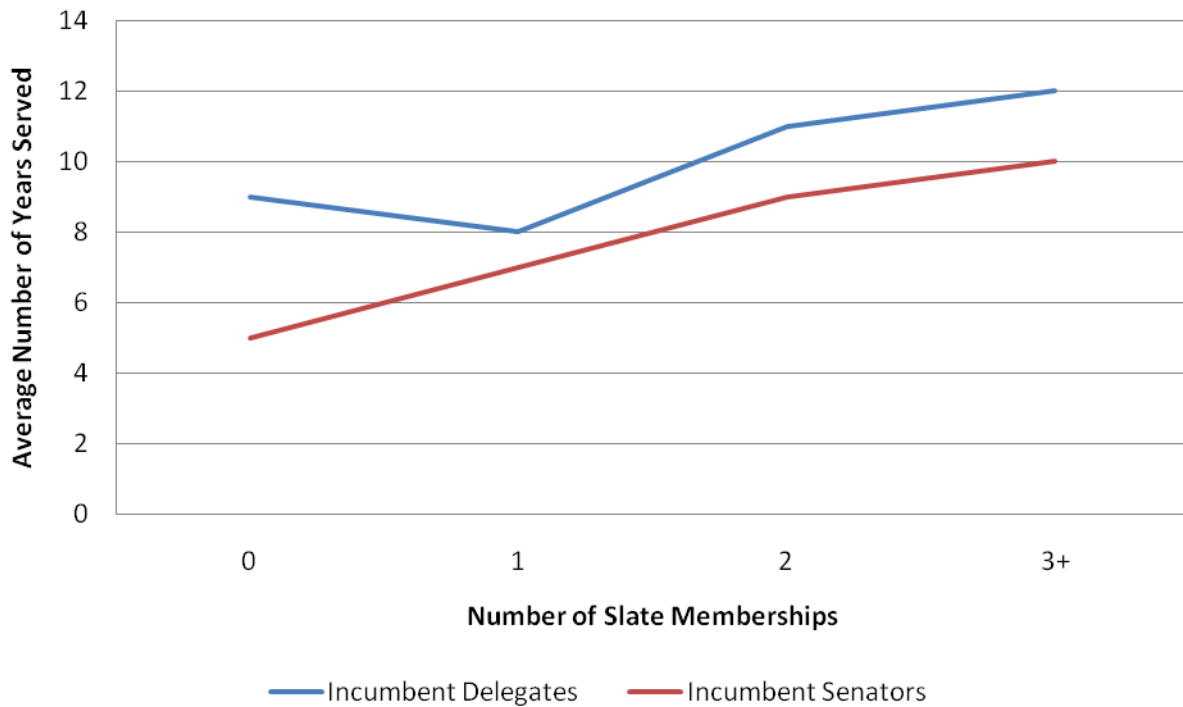
Figure 3. Incumbency and Number of Slate Memberships, 2006



Note: Figure includes information on all primary and general election candidates for the General Assembly during the 2006 election cycle.

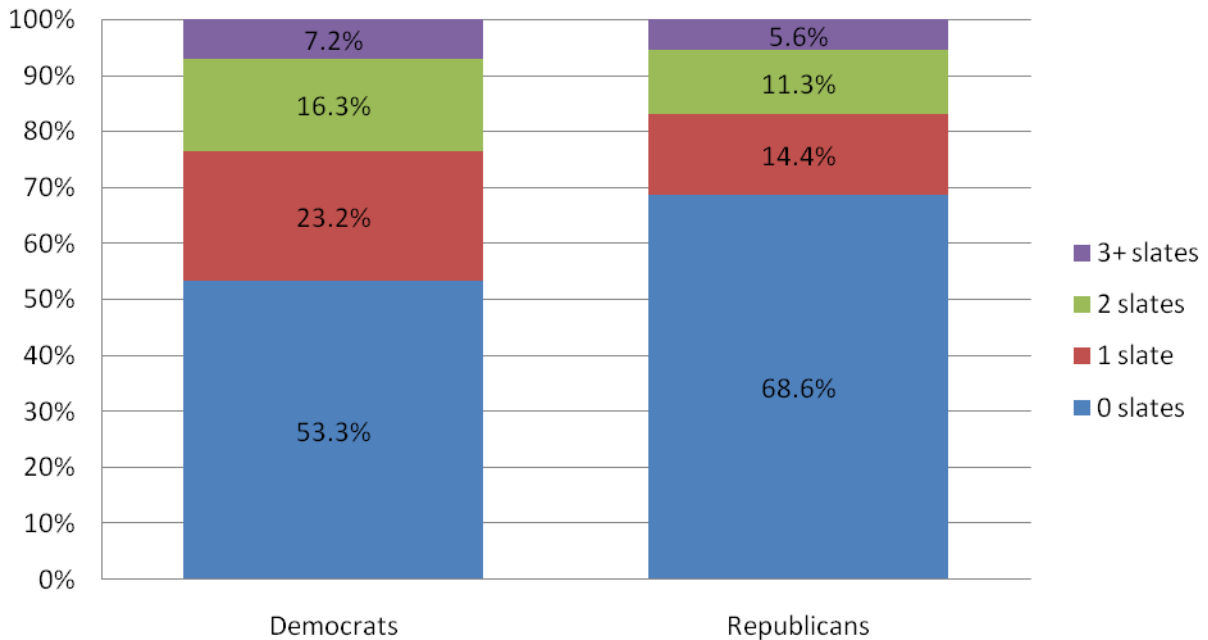
Among incumbent legislators, experience was also correlated with slate membership. Among both delegates and senators running for reelection, those who had served more years in the chamber were likely to have held more slate memberships (see Figure 4). Among incumbent delegates, those with no slate memberships had served an average of 9 years in the chamber, but among those with 3 or more slate memberships, that average tenure was roughly 12 years. Among senate incumbents the relationship was more dramatic. Incumbent senators with no slate memberships had served an average of just 5 years compared to their colleagues with 3 or more slate memberships who had served an average of 10 years in the chamber.

Figure 4. Slate Membership and the Number of Years Served in the Chamber, 2006



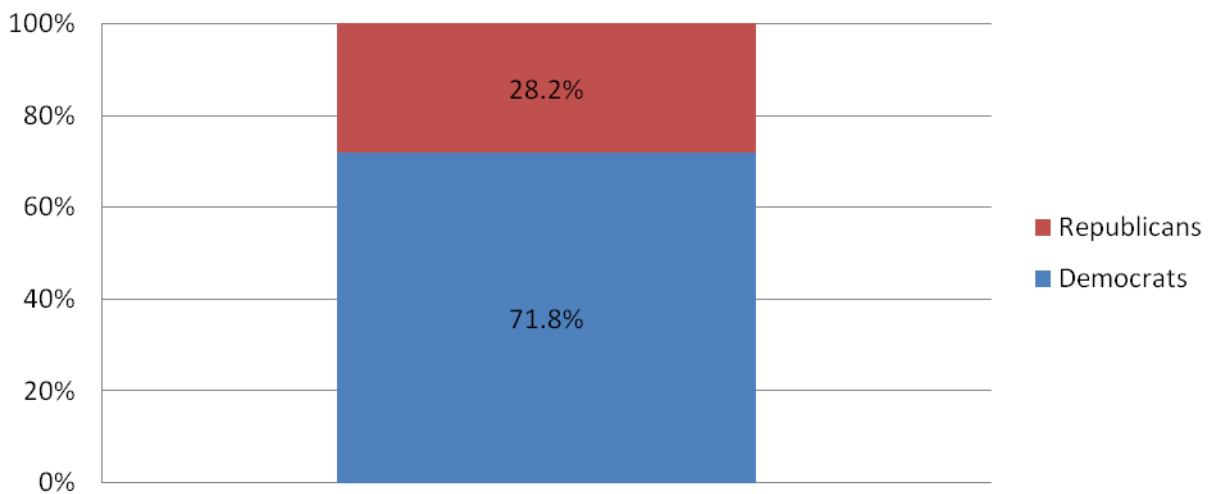
Partisanship was a factor in slate membership as well. Democratic candidates were slightly more likely than their Republican colleagues to be a member of at least one slate. Among General Assembly candidates, about 47% of Democratic candidates were part of at least one slate compared to just 31% of Republican candidates (see Figure 5). Democrats were particularly more likely to be part of exactly one slate with 23.2% of all Democrats candidates for the General Assembly holding one slate membership compared to 14.4% of Republicans. Democrats were only slightly more likely than Republicans to have been part of multiple slates.

Figure 5. Partisanship and Slate Membership Among General Assembly Candidates, 2006



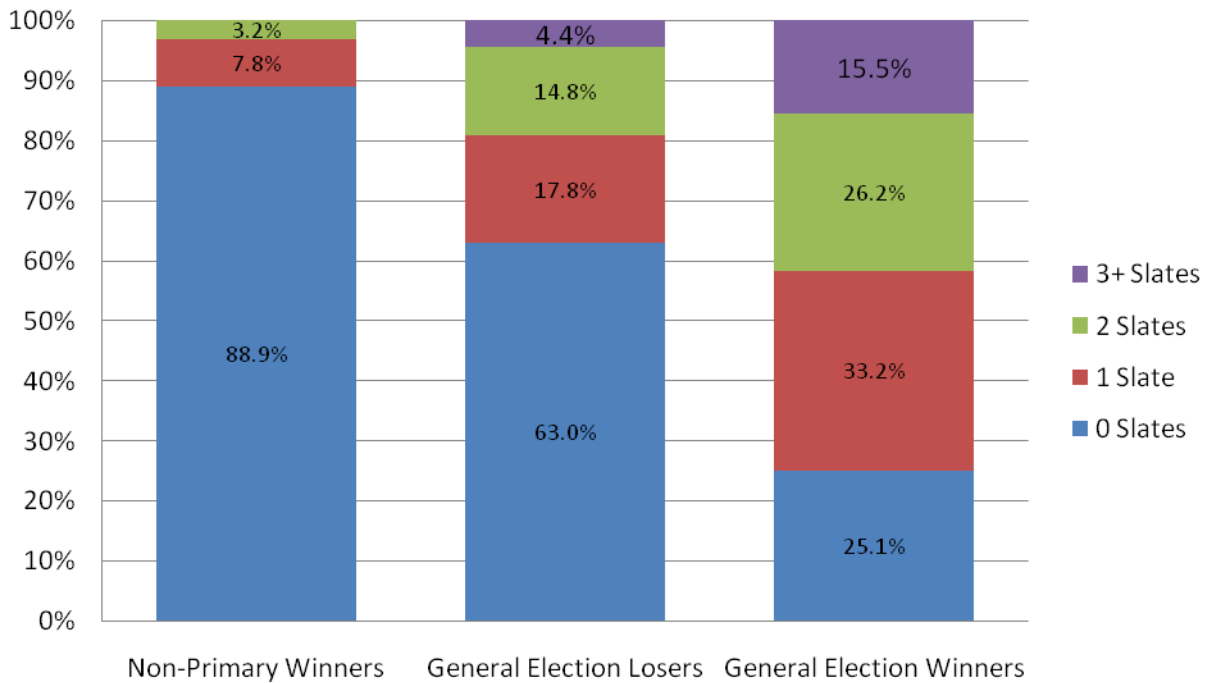
Of the 216 General Assembly candidates that were members of at least one slate in 2006, roughly 72% were Democrats (see Figure 6). This is in part a function of there having been more Democratic candidates for the Assembly in 2006 (60.8% of all General Assembly candidates were Democrats). However, regardless of the number of candidates from each party, Democrats were still more likely to have been slate members than their Republican counterparts.

Figure 6. General Assembly Slate Membership by Party, 2006



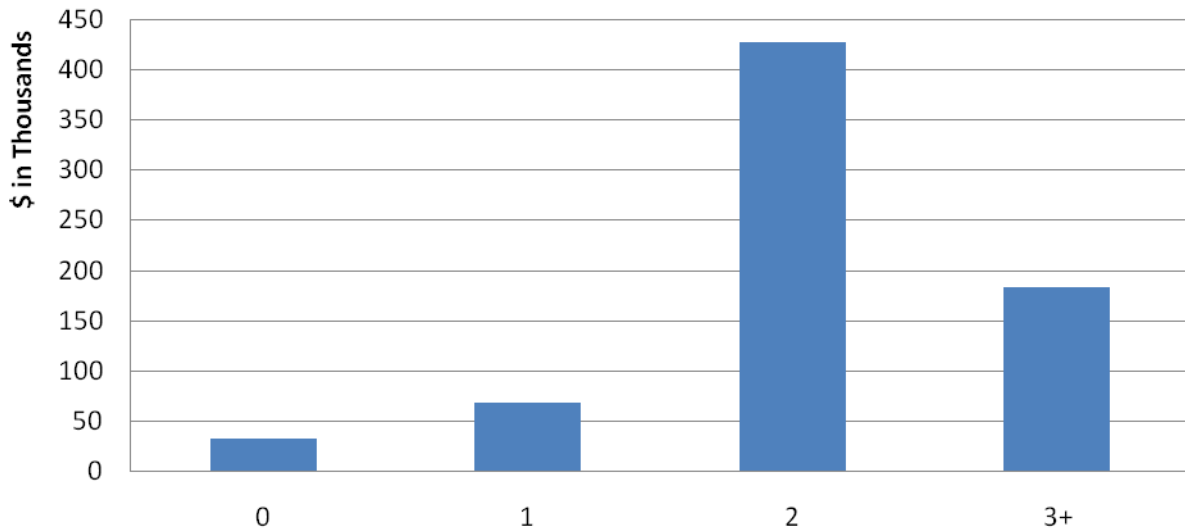
Electoral success was also strongly related to slate membership. General Assembly candidates who won their general election contest were much more likely than either those who lost the general election or those who never advanced past the primaries to have had been a member of at least one slate (see Figure 7). Specifically, 75% of general election winners were slate members compared to 37% of general election losers and just 11% of non-primary winners.

Figure 7. Electoral Success and Slate Membership Among General Assembly Candidates, 2006



Slate membership was related to the total amount of money a candidate had raised during the 2006 election cycle, as well. Generally speaking, candidates who raised more money also had more slate memberships. Among candidates who were not a member of any slate, the average amount of money raised was just over \$30,000 (see Figure 8). Among those who had one slate membership, the average amount raised was roughly \$68,000. Among those with two slate memberships, the fundraising average skyrocketed to over \$427,000. The average drops among candidates with three of more slate memberships; however, it remained a large amount at roughly \$183,000.

Figure 8. Average Amount Raised by Number of Slate Memberships, 2006



In sum, while slate membership included many different types of candidates in 2006, certain candidates were more likely to be slate members than others. Specifically, candidates seeking seats in the State Senate, incumbent candidates—especially those with more experience in the chamber, Democrats, candidates who were electorally successful, and candidates that raised larger sums of money were likely to be members of at least one slate. These results suggest that slates are generally the tools of more established candidates rather than of political novices. Candidates that are in need of assistance and could benefit the most from slate membership—typically novices with little political experience—are the least likely to be part of a slate. Ironically, slates appear to be made up primarily of candidates that can bring a lot of money to the table and candidates that already had a strong chance of electoral success.

Slates and Campaign Fundraising

Total and Average Fundraising

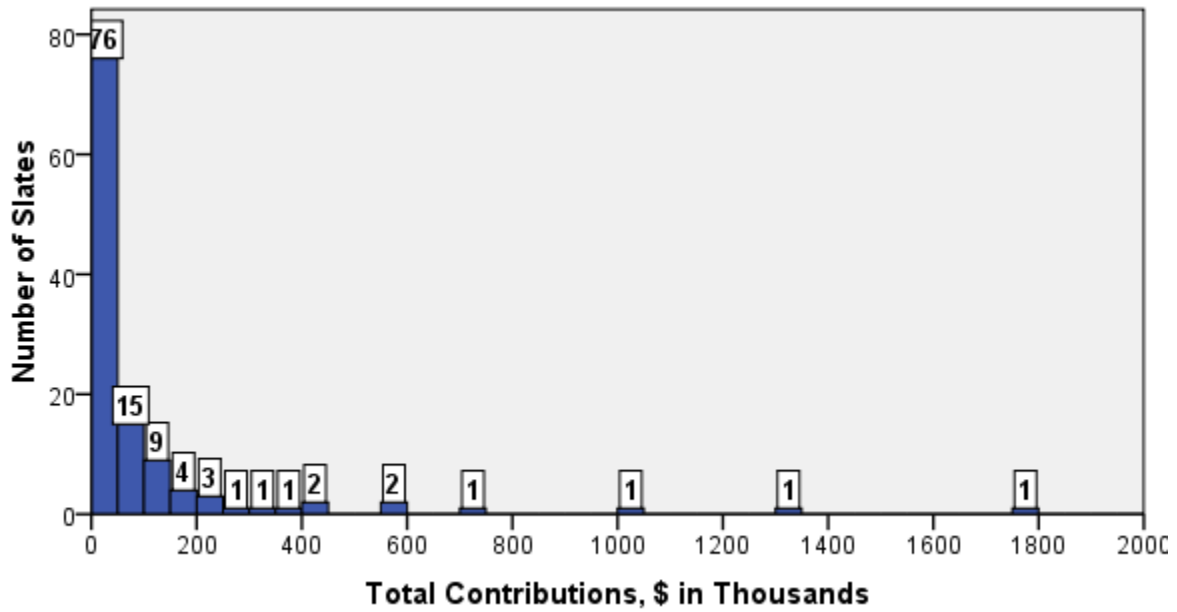
In 2006 Maryland slates raised a total of \$12.4 million, with the average slate raising roughly \$105,000. The biggest fundraising slates, however, raised well above this average. Table 3 presents the ten biggest fundraising slates during the 2006 election cycle. The O'Malley Brown Committee Slate topped the list raising almost \$1.8 million, most of which was transferred from the campaign account of lieutenant gubernatorial candidate Anthony Brown. Second on the list was the Vision for 2006 Slate which was made up of three politicians from Prince George's County—retiring State Senator Obie Patterson, County Councilwoman Marilyn M. Bland, and County Executive Jack B. Johnson. Also on the list were the Democratic and Republican Slates for each chamber of the General Assembly, the Community Coalition Advocacy Slate—composed of Prince George's County Democrats, the Baltimore County Victory Slate—a large slate composed of almost two dozen Democratic candidates from the Baltimore area (including Governor Martin O'Malley), and two slates supporting judicial candidates.

Table 3. Top Fundraising Slates, 2006

Slate	Amount
O'Malley Brown Committee Slate	\$1,778,800
Vision For 2006 Slate	\$1,305,659
Maryland Democratic Senatorial Committee Slate	\$1,031,238
Maryland House Democratic Committee Slate	\$725,740
Community Coalition Advocacy Slate	\$593,007
Baltimore County Victory Slate	\$592,500
Republican House Slate Committee	\$418,171
The Republican Senatorial Slate Committee	\$405,091
Judges Baltimore County Sitting Slate	\$390,420
Judges The Sitting Slate	\$316,772

While some slates raised considerable sums, the typical slate raised a much smaller amount. Of the 118 active slates in 2006, 76 (roughly 64%) of them raised \$50,000 or less during the 2006 election cycle and 91 (roughly 77%) raised \$100,000 or less (See Figure 9). Altogether, just 14 slates (roughly 12%) raised more than \$200,000.

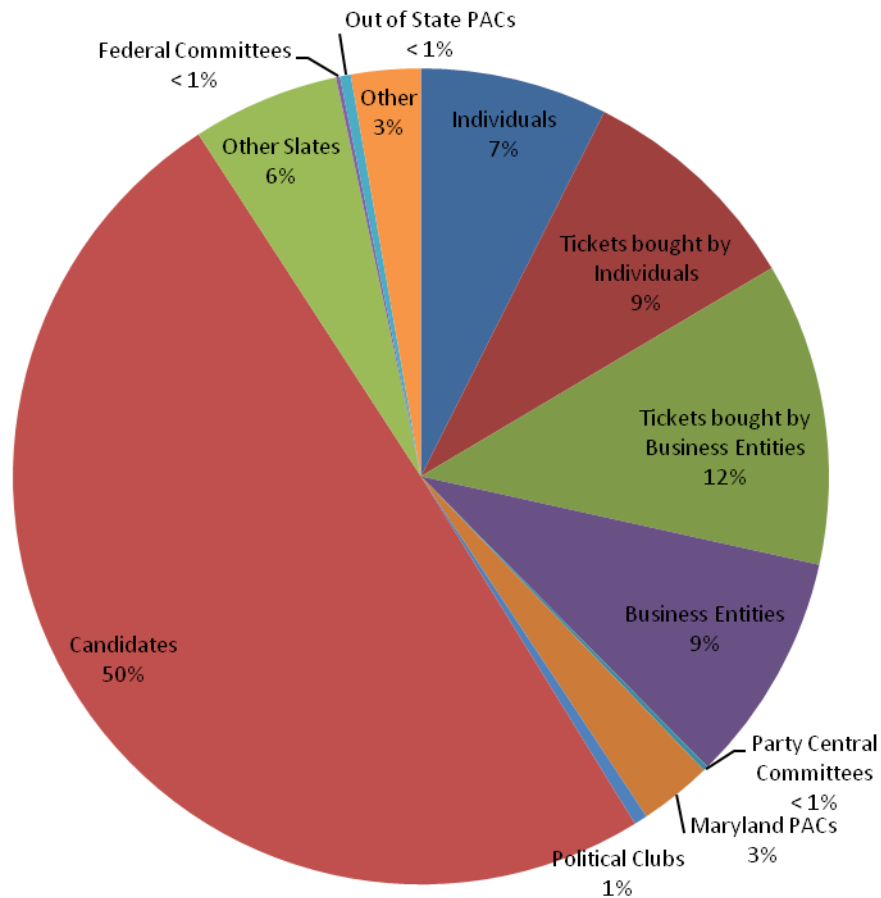
Figure 9. Distribution of Slate Fundraising, 2006



Where the Money Came From

Slates raise campaign money just like any other Maryland campaign finance committee with one difference: slates can receive unlimited transfers of funds from their members' campaign finance committees. This factor structures how slates, in practice, pool their money. In 2006, roughly 50% of all money raised by slates, or about \$6.1 million, came from candidate accounts (see Figure 10). Most of the remaining money came in the form of direct contributions given, and tickets to fundraising events purchased, by individuals and business entities.

Figure 10. Sources of Funds Raised by Maryland Slates, 2006



The average candidate in Maryland gave \$3,934 to slates during the 2006 election cycle. Of course, not all candidates gave to slates equally. Only 227 candidates (roughly 15% of all candidates) gave money to slates in 2006. Of these candidates, 194 of them (roughly 85%) gave \$25,000 or less to slate committees and 210 (roughly 93%) gave \$50,000 or less (see Figure 11). Altogether, the vast majority of candidates contributed little or no money to slates leaving just a small number of candidates to contribute large sums of money to slate committees.

Figure 11. Distribution of Candidate Transfers to Slates, 2006



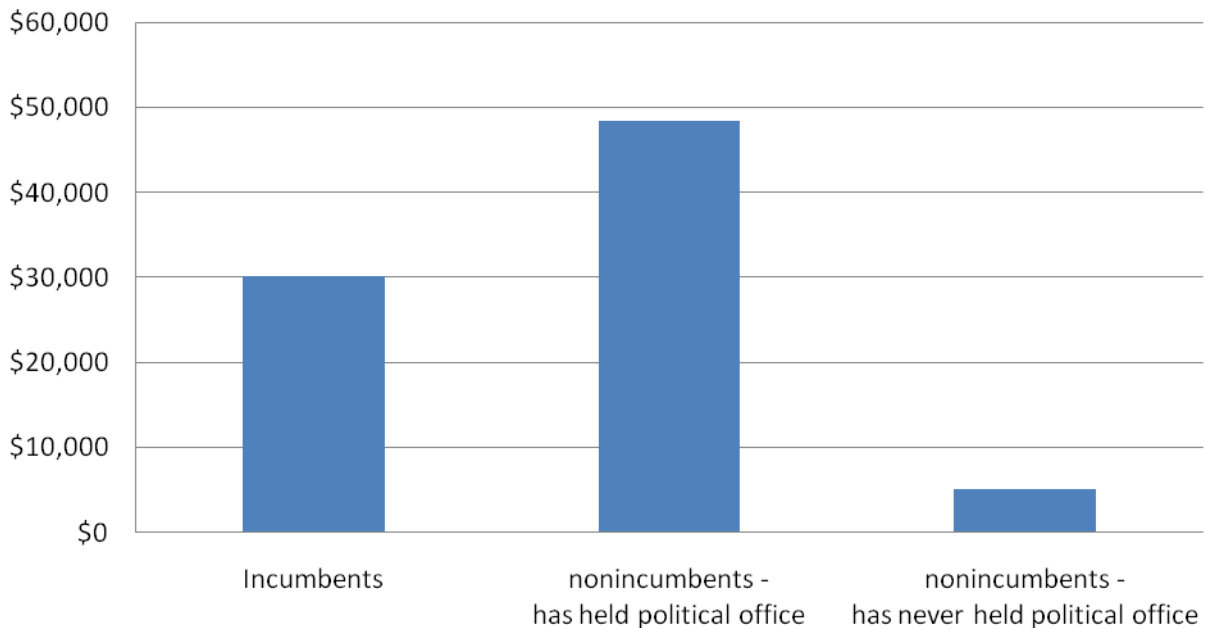
Most of the candidates that financed slates held or were running for major offices within the State of Maryland. Anthony Brown, the Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor and leading slate contributor, gave over \$1.5 million to slates in 2006—\$900,000 more than the next biggest contributor (see Table 4). Brown, however, contributed all of this money to the joint slate he formed with his gubernatorial running mate, Martin O’Malley. The next biggest contributor was Senate President Thomas V. “Mike” Miller, who gave more than \$600,000 to slates. Miller contributed most of this money to the Maryland Democratic Senatorial Committee Slate, the membership of which included 40 Democratic senatorial candidates. The biggest contributor to slates among Republicans was then-Governor Robert L. Ehrlich. Ehrlich contributed \$223,000 to the Republican Senatorial Slate Committee and the Republican House Slate Committee to aid his colleagues running for seats in the General Assembly. Also on the list of top donors was the Speaker of the House of Delegates Michael E. Busch, House Majority Leader Kumar P. Barve, chair of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, Ulysses Currie, and chair of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, Brian E. Frosh.

Table 4. Top Candidate Contributors to Slates, 2006

Candidate	Office Sought	Amount
Anthony G. Brown (D)	Lieutenant Governor	\$1,538,000
Thomas V. "Mike" Miller (D)	State Senate	\$610,000
James T. "Jim" Smith (D)	Baltimore County Executive	\$585,000
Robert L. Ehrlich (R)	Governor	\$223,900
Andrew P. Harris (R)	State Senate	\$206,000
Michael E. Busch (D)	House of Delegates	\$201,000
Mickey Joseph Norman	Judge of the Circuit Court	\$129,300
Kumar P. Barve (D)	House of Delegates	\$122,295
Brian E. Frosh (D)	State Senate	\$113,825
Ulysses Currie (D)	State Senate	\$95,000

In fact, the overwhelming majority of contributors to slates were established politicians in the State of Maryland. Roughly 65% of the money candidates contributed to slates came from incumbents. Another 31% came from politically experienced nonincumbents—candidates who held elected office in the state but were running for another one, had held appointed positions in the executive branch, or were retiring from public office. Consequently, less than 5% of all candidate contributions to slates came from nonincumbent candidates that had never held a political office. Incumbents and experienced nonincumbents also contributed larger sums, on average. Specifically, incumbents donated roughly \$30,000, on average, to slates while established nonincumbents contributed over \$48,000, on average. By contrast, inexperienced nonincumbents gave just over \$5,000, on average, to slates.

Figure 12. Political Experience and Transfers to Slates, 2006



Altogether, it is clear that funding for slates came primarily from a small set of well established politicians in the State of Maryland. These candidates generally raised large sums of money and were able to dispense some of that money into slate committees to attempt to ‘spread the wealth’ and aid the election prospects of their colleagues. By contributing large sums to aid their allies, these politicians increase their standing among their colleagues and their power. They make debtors of friends who in the future may be called upon to return the favor or to support them in some other political endeavor.

Slates and Campaign Spending

Total and Average Spending

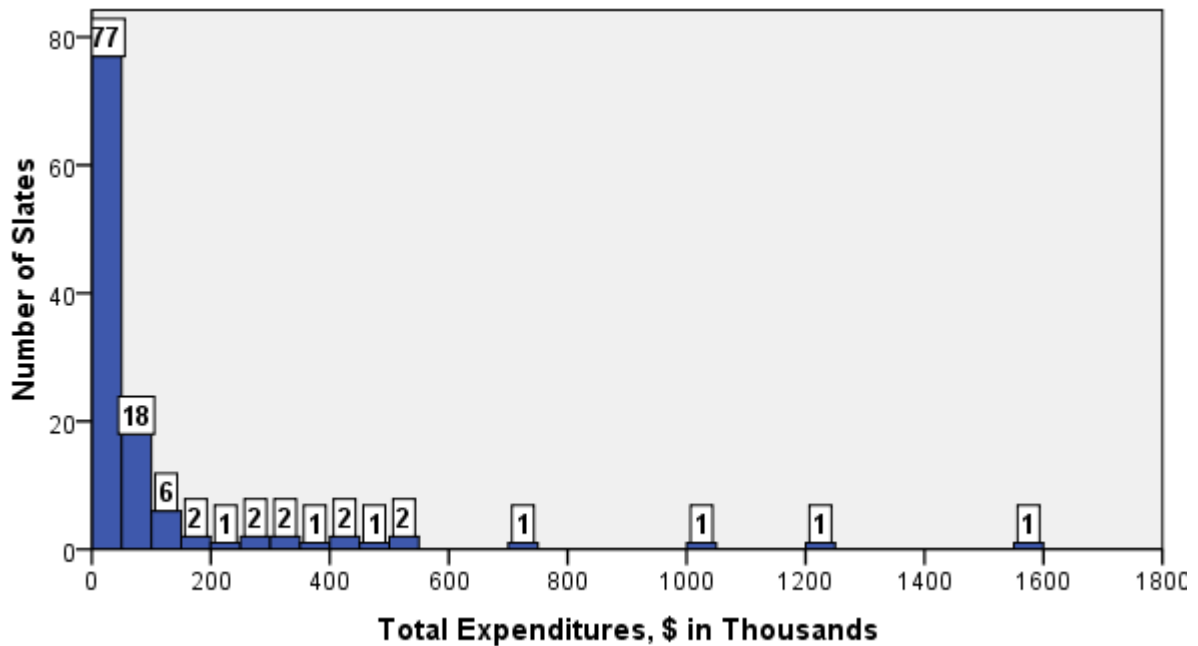
Maryland slates spent a total of over \$12.3 million in support of candidates during the 2006 election cycle, with the average slate spending roughly \$105,000. Table 4 lists the 10 highest spending slates. The top three slates on the list were also the top fundraising slates (see Table 3). In fact the only new slate on this list is the Twenty Third District Team Slate.

Table 5. Top 10 Spending Slates, 2006

Slate	Amount
O'Malley Brown Committee Slate	\$1,580,849
Vision For 2006 Slate	\$1,205,865
Maryland Democratic Senatorial Committee Slate	\$1,032,451
Maryland House Democratic Committee Slate	\$725,740
Baltimore County Victory Slate	\$535,561
Judges The Sitting Slate	\$531,772
The Republican Senatorial Slate Committee	\$450,418
Republican House Slate Committee	\$444,378
Twenty Third District Team Slate	\$406,892
Judges Baltimore County Sitting Slate	\$353,957

While some slates spent a great deal, the typical slate spent much less. Roughly 65% of active slates spent \$50,000 or less during the 2006 election cycle (see Figure 13). Only about 13% spent \$200,000 or more in support of Maryland candidates.

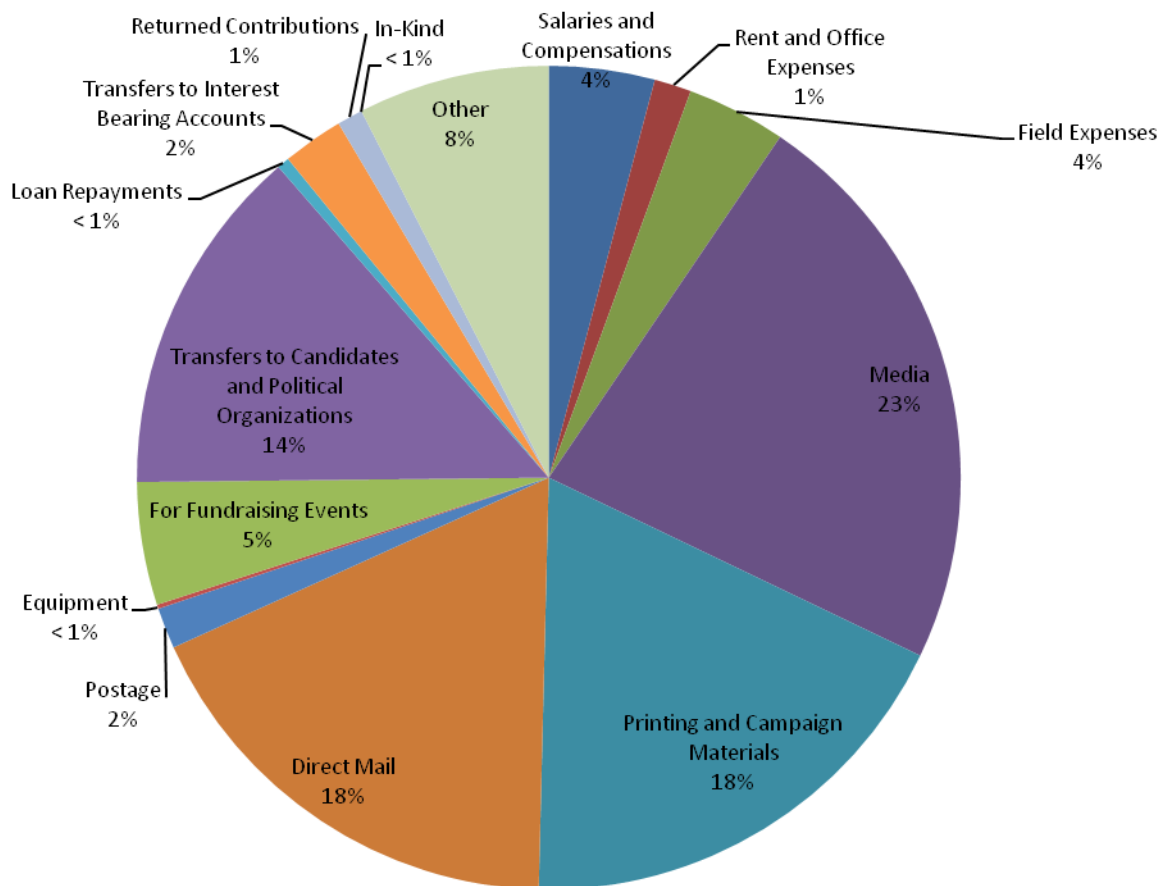
Figure 13. Distribution of Campaign Spending by Slates, 2006



How the Money was Spent

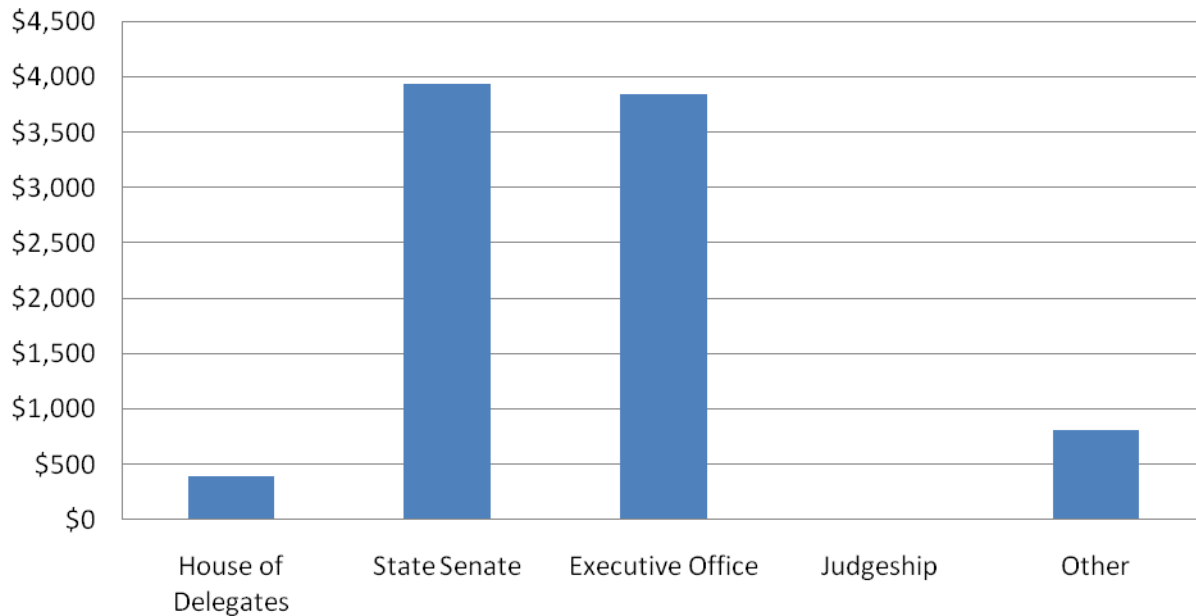
Slates spent their money in a variety of ways, but the majority of spending was focused on campaign communications. During the 2006 election cycle, slates spent roughly 65% of their funds on these activities which include field expenses, media advertising, mailings, and printing and other campaign materials (see Figure 14). Some of these expenditures advocated the election of all of the slates members. This was especially true of slates formed among candidates for the House of Delegates who were running in the same election district. However, some of these expenditures aided just one of the members of a slate. This was the case in the race for Baltimore County State's Attorney in which the Baltimore County Victory Slate spent significant amounts of money supporting Democratic candidate Scott D. Shellenberger. Slates also spent about 14% of their funds on direct transfers to candidates and other political organizations. In general, spending by slates looked very similar to spending by the campaign finance committees of individual candidates. The biggest difference was that slates typically spent less on fundraising events than other types of committees.

Figure 14. Slate Spending by Type, 2006



While transfers to candidates and other political organizations were not the largest expenditures made by slates, they still accounted for almost \$2 million, a sizeable amount. Slates transferred money to candidates running for a variety of offices; however candidates for some offices received more than others. Specifically, candidates running for State Senate seats and candidates running for executive offices tended to receive larger sums of money, nearly \$4,000 on average (see Figure 15). Comparatively, candidates for the House of Delegates received less than \$500 on average, and candidates for other offices (primarily county and local offices) received roughly \$800, on average. No judicial candidates received direct transfers from slates in 2006.

Figure 15. Average Amount Transferred to Maryland Candidates by Office, 2006



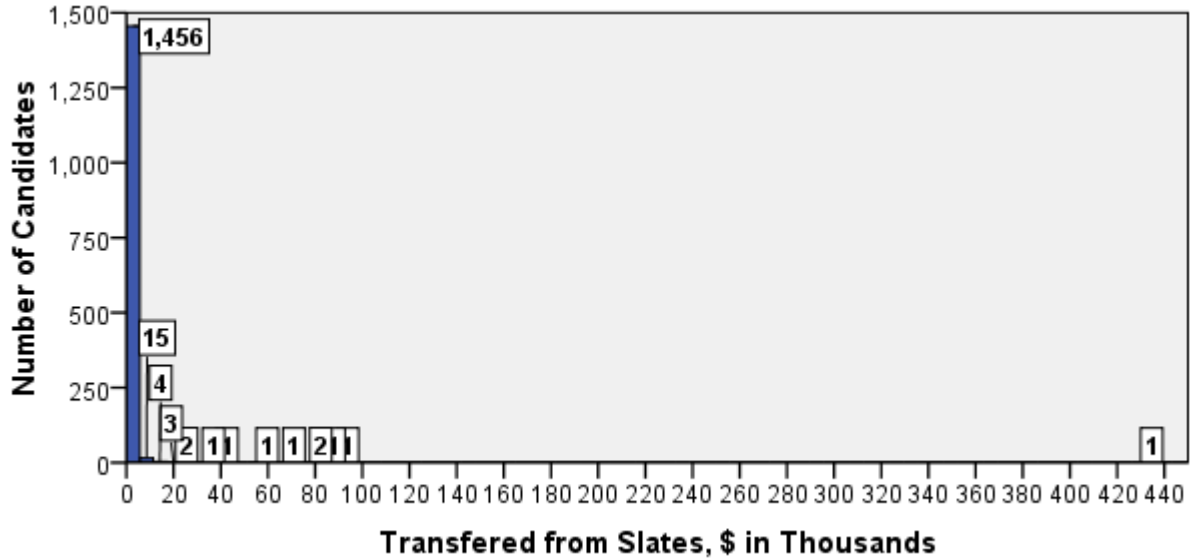
Slates provided some candidates with sums well above these averages. Table 5 presents the top ten recipients of slate transfers during the 2006 election cycle. Baltimore County State's Attorney candidate Scott D. Shellenberger received a sum well above any other candidate, taking in \$435,000 from slates. The remainder of the list included gubernatorial candidates, State Senate candidates, and two candidates for the Prince George's County Council.

Table 6. Top Recipients of Slates Transfers, 2006

Candidate	Office Sought	Amount
Scott D. Shellenberger (D)	Baltimore County State's Attorney	\$435,000
Walter J. Shandrowsky (D)	State Senate	\$95,000
Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (D)	--	\$90,091
Martin J. O'Malley (D)	Governor	\$84,861
Douglas J. J. Peters (D)	State Senate	\$80,000
Herbert H. McMillan (R)	State Senate	\$70,000
Samuel H. Dean (D)	Prince George's County Council	\$60,989
Katherine A. Klausmeier (D)	State Senate	\$45,200
Alexander X. Mooney (R)	State Senate	\$36,000
James F. Harley (D)	Prince George's County Council	\$27,873

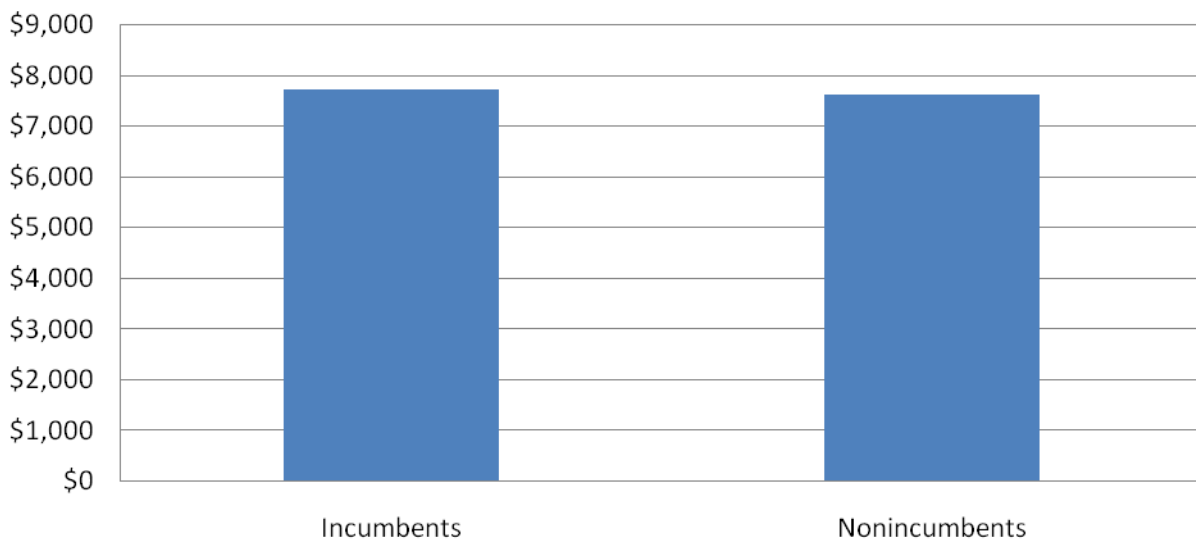
Despite these large sums, most candidates received very little, if anything from slates in 2006 (see Figure 16). Altogether, only 117 of the 1,489 Maryland candidates (roughly 8%) received any money from slates. Among these recipients, 84 of them (roughly 72%) received just \$5,000 or less. It appears slates were fairly selective in their direct transfers.

Figure 16. Distribution of Slate Transfers to Candidates, 2006



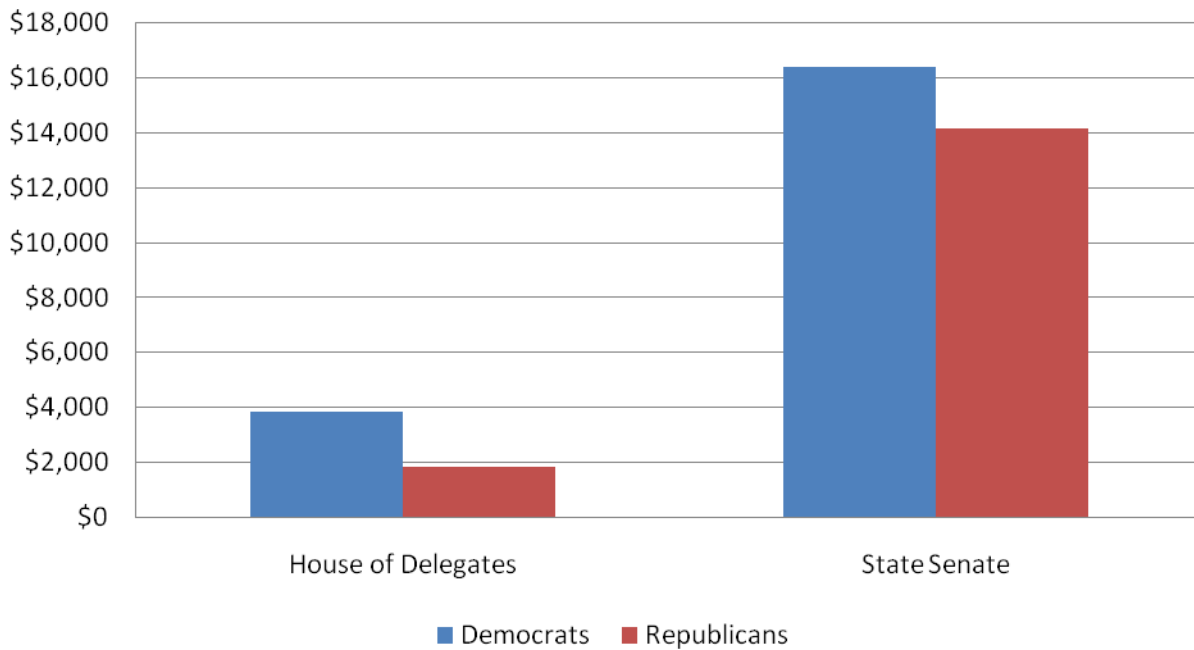
Incumbent candidates were more likely to receive money from slates than non-incumbent candidates. Among General Assembly candidates, 23% of incumbent candidates compared to 11% of nonincumbent candidates received funds from slates. However, incumbency had little influence on the amount received. Incumbent candidates received \$7,700, on average, while nonincumbents received \$7,600, on average (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. Average Transfer to General Assembly Candidates Receiving Money from Slates, 2006



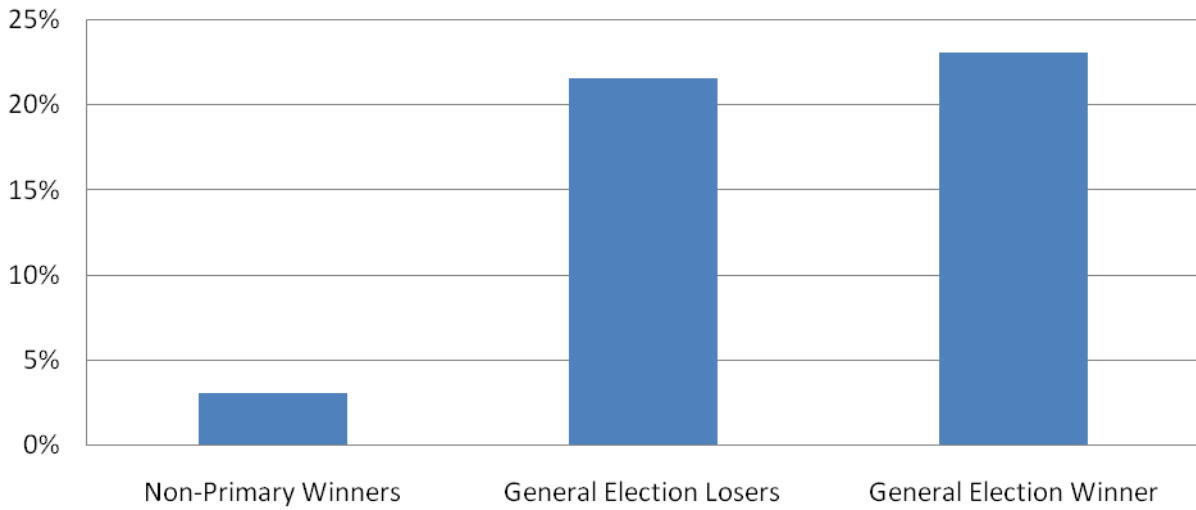
A candidate's party affiliation was related to the amount they received from slates as well. Among all General Assembly candidates, neither Democratic nor Republican candidates were more likely to receive funds from slates with roughly 85% of candidates from both parties receiving no money. However, among those that did receive money, Democrats were likely to receive a larger sum. Democratic candidates for both chamber received \$2,000 more than Republican candidates on average in 2006 (see Figure 18). This difference is most meaningful among candidates for the House of Delegates where Democratic candidates received almost double the amount Republicans did, on average.

Figure 18. Average Slate Transfer to General Assembly Recipient by Party, 2006



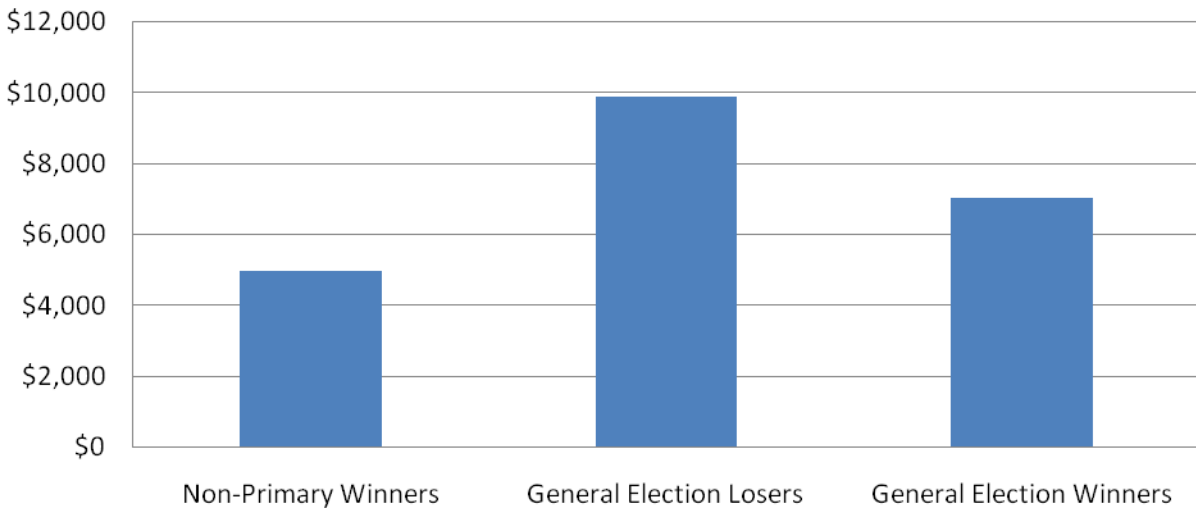
Electoral success was also related to the likelihood that a candidate received funds from a slate. Among General Assembly candidates, specifically, 23% of candidates that won a general election contest and 21.5% of candidates that lost a general election contest received at least some funds from slates (see Figure 19). By comparison, only about 3% of candidates that did not reach the general election received funds. It appears candidates that make it to the general election had an improved likelihood of receiving financial support from slates.

Figure 19. Proportion of General Assembly Candidates Receiving Funds from Slates, 2006



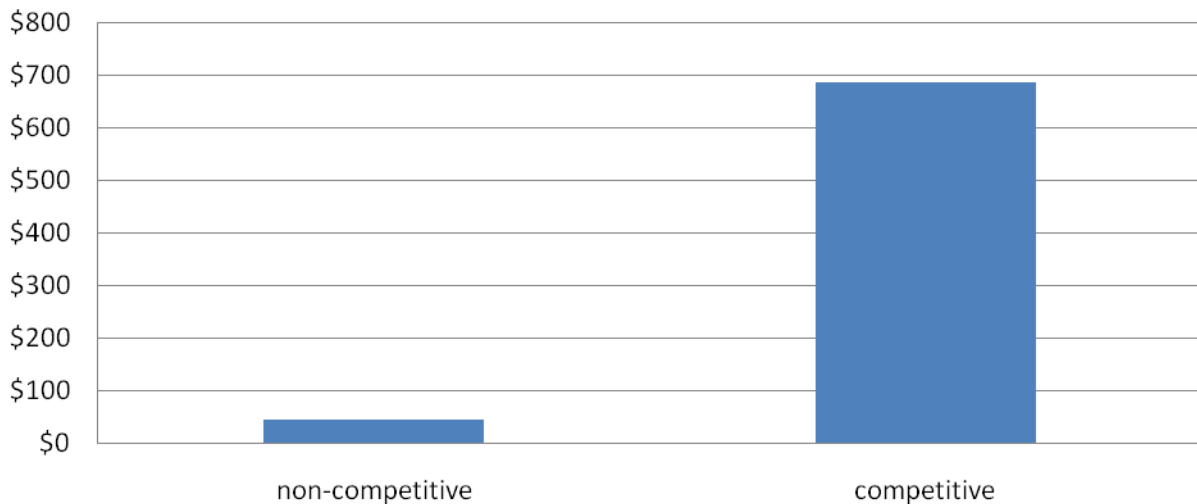
General Assembly candidates that made it to the general election also received more money from slates than candidates that did not. Among candidates receiving funds from slates, general election winners received about \$7,000, on average, from slates and general election losers received even more, almost \$9,900, on average (see Figure 20). Candidates who failed to advance past the primaries, by comparison, received just \$5,000, on average, from slates.

Figure 20. Average Transfer to General Assembly Candidates Receiving Money from Slates, 2006



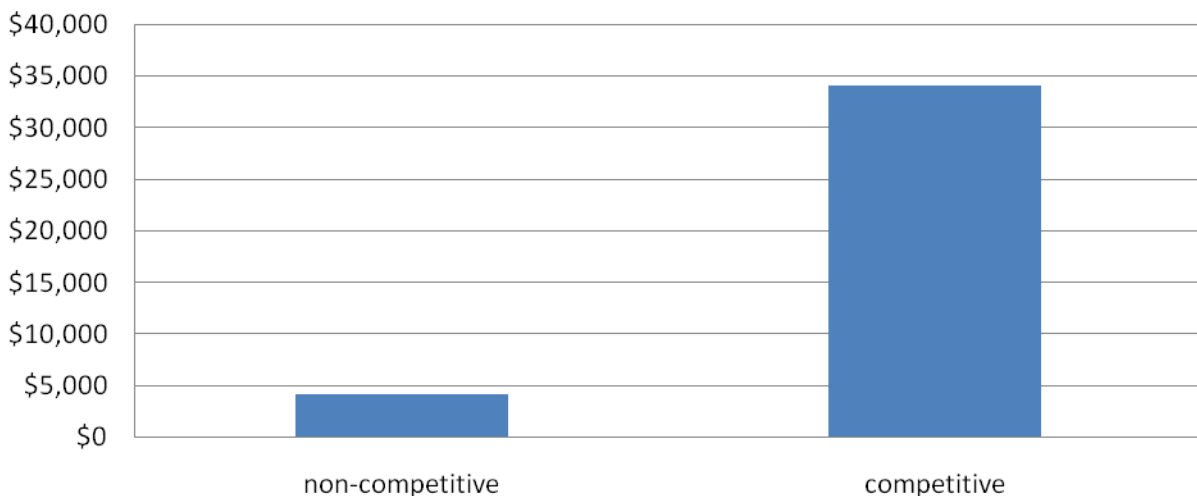
The competitiveness of a candidate's election also had some influence on the spending decision of slates. General Assembly candidates who were involved in the most competitive elections received more money, on average, from slates committees. Among candidates for the House of Delegates, those involved in competitive races (races decided by 5 percentage-points or less) received \$685, on average from slates (see Figure 21). Those involved in non-competitive races received just \$45, on average.

Figure 21. Competitiveness of Races for the House of Delegates and Slate Contributions, 2006



Among candidates for the State Senate, the relationship between competitiveness and transfers from slates was even more stark (see Figure 22). Specifically, Senate candidates in competitive races (races decided by 15 percentage-points or less) received \$34,000, on average, from slates. By contrast, candidates who were involved in non-competitive elections received just \$4,200, on average.

Figure 22. Competitiveness of Races for the State Senate and Slate Contributions, 2006



Slates spent their money much like most other campaign committees in Maryland, focusing their spending on direct campaign activities like media advertising, printing and campaign materials, and mailings. These expenditures sometimes promoted the slate as a whole, but other times advocated a specific member of the slate for election. Slates were selective in who they transferred funds to. Altogether, only about 8% of all Maryland candidates received funds directly from slates. However, at least among General Assembly candidates, incumbent candidates and candidates that made it to the general election were more likely to have received funds from slates than nonincumbents, and candidates that failed to advance past the primaries.

Slates, in general, are a way for groups of candidates to spend campaign cash more strategically. By allowing candidates to pool money together, slates allow candidates with a common interest—whether partisan, ideological, geographical, or otherwise—to reduce the financial disparity among them. Established politicians who fundraise well transfer large sums of money to the slates they are members of, and the slates can use this money to advocate for all members of the slate or to redistribute the wealth to candidates who have raised less or need more. In Maryland, where party committees are unable to raise and spend money to support the candidates the way federal party committees do, slates create a viable alternative for groups of candidates to aid the prospects of their political allies.

Appendix:

The Study

The campaign finance data used in this report were obtained from the Maryland State Board of Elections and cover the full 2006 election cycle, defined as the period between January 1, 2003 and December 31, 2006. The data are compiled from all expenditures made by all campaign accounts belonging to candidates for the General Assembly during the election cycle. Some of the figures in this report may not perfectly match the figures generated by the Maryland Elections Center website because the data on the website are subject to updating and corrections by the Maryland State Board of Elections. The campaign finance data were supplemented with other information collected by the Center for American Politics and Citizenship.

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About the Center for American Politics and Citizenship

The Center for American Politics and Citizenship (CAPC) is a nonpartisan, non-profit research institution within the Department of Government and Politics of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the University of Maryland. CAPC provides citizens and policy-makers with research on critical issues related to the nation's political institutions, processes, and policies. For more information see <http://www.capc.umd.edu> or write the Center for American Politics and Citizenship, University of Maryland, 3102 Morrill Hall, College Park, MD 20742.

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