

FUNDRAISING BY MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY CANDIDATES IN THE 1998 ELECTIONS

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Executive Summary

Candidates raised almost \$16.7 million to run for the Maryland General Assembly during the 1998 elections. They spent most of these funds on mass mailings, literature, radio, newspaper advertisements, events, and voter mobilization. An analysis of campaign finance data for Maryland shows that the following factors were important in determining the distribution of campaign funds: incumbency, competition, and election outcomes.

Major Findings:

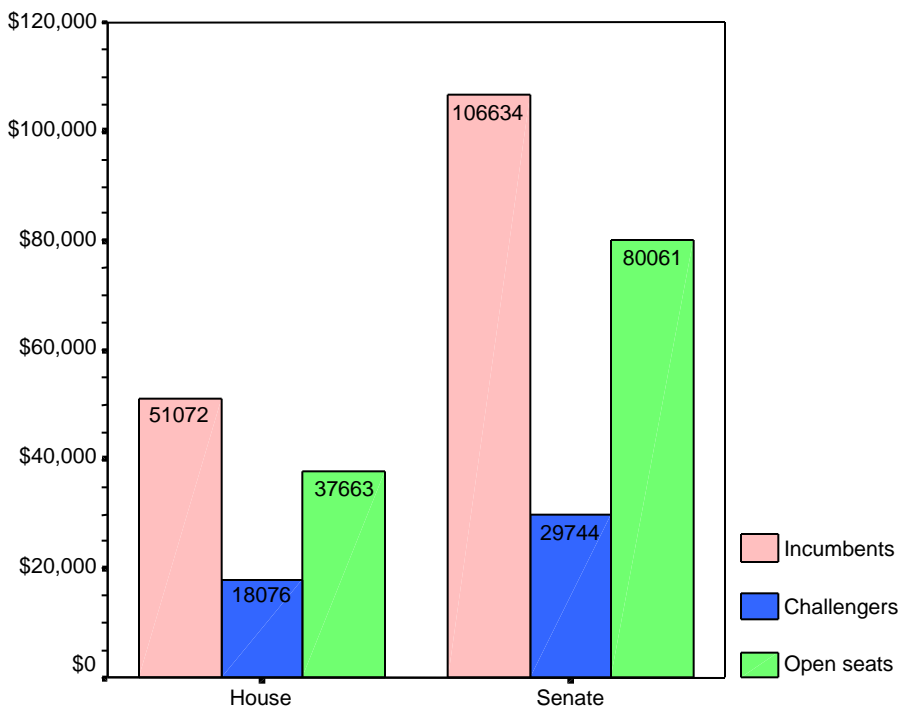
- House and Senate incumbents raised approximately three times as much as did challengers.
- The leaders of the House of Delegates raised about twice as much as did other incumbents.
- House incumbents raised over \$6 million before the election year began and before most challengers had even declared their candidacies.
- Democratic candidates for the House raised about twice as much as did Republicans.
- House general election winners raised more than twice as much as did general election losers.
- Senate candidates in uncontested races raised an average of \$88,229, about \$4,000 more than the average raised by candidates in competitive races.
- Senate general election winners raised nearly three times more than did general election losers.

I. Incumbents' Fundraising Advantages

Incumbents enjoy a number of advantages when it comes to fundraising. Incumbents are in a position to influence public policy, they have a base of contributors from previous campaigns, and they are much more likely to win than other candidates. Challengers, on the other hand, suffer serious fundraising disadvantages. They have little-to-no influence over policy making, typically do not have an established base of supporters, and have slim prospects of winning. Moreover, most challengers do not declare their candidacies or begin fundraising until the year of the election. Open-seat candidates have much better fundraising prospects than do challengers. Their races tend to be competitive, and they usually benefit from the financial support of political parties and ideological groups who see their elections as a prime opportunity to influence the composition of the legislature.

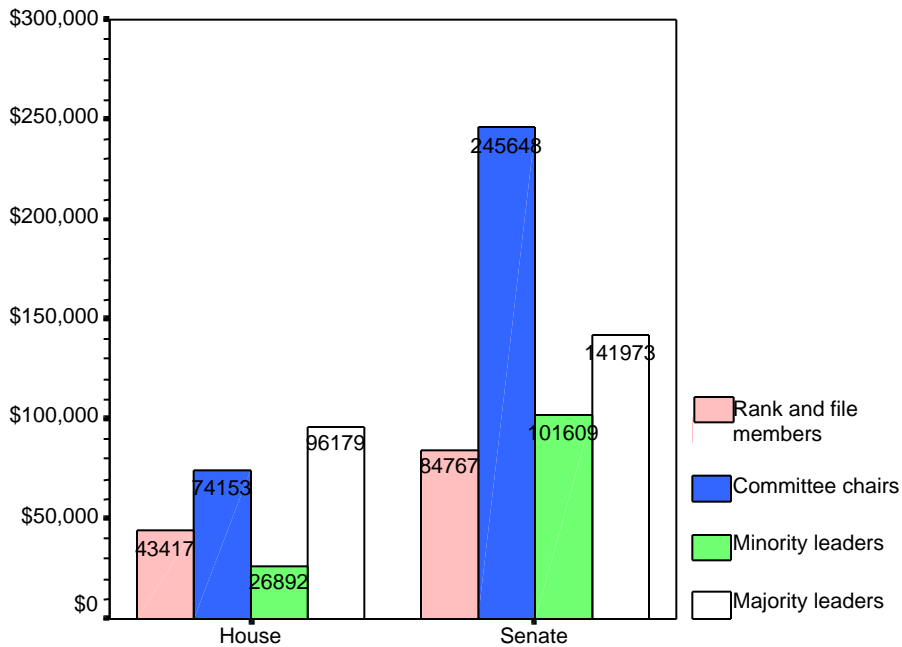
House incumbents raised an average of \$51,072, nearly three times as much as House challengers (see Figure 1). Senate incumbents raised an average of \$106,634, more than three and one-half times as much as challengers. These incumbent advantages are not unusual for elections to the state legislature or Congress. Open-seat candidates for the House of Delegates and state Senate raised an average of \$37,663 and \$80,061, respectively.

Figure 1. The Impact of Incumbency on Candidate Receipts in the 1998 General Election



Legislative Leadership and Fundraising. Contributors who seek access to legislators in order to influence the policy making process make most of their contributions to committee chairs and party leaders. House committee chairs raised an average of \$74,153, nearly twice as much as nonleaders, and Democratic party leaders received an average of \$96,170, more than twice as much as nonleaders (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The Impact of Legislative Leadership Posts on Candidate Receipts in the 1998 General Election

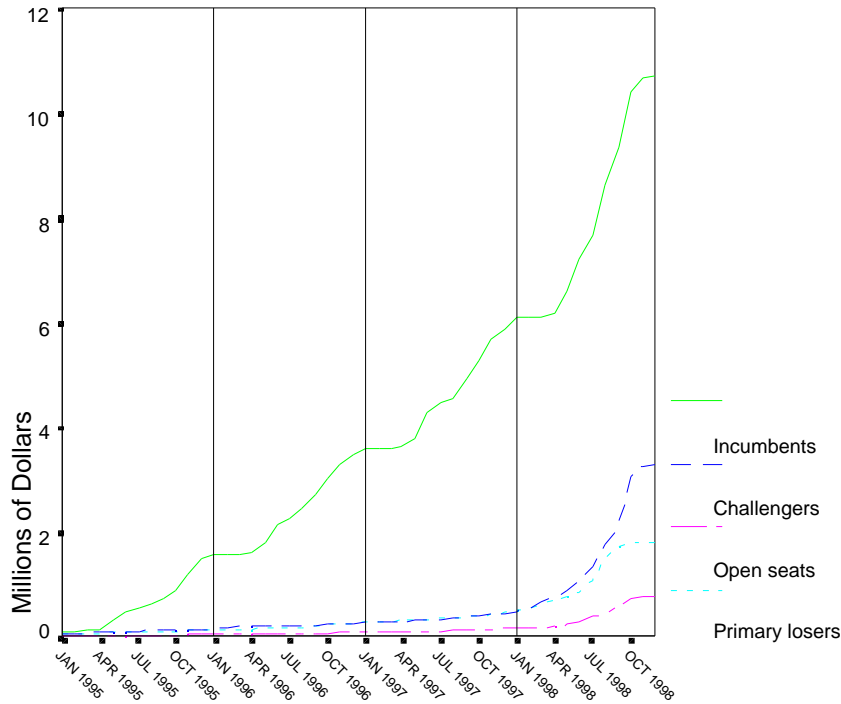


Notes: This graph includes incumbents who lost in the primary election.

Minority leaders raised substantially fewer funds than nonleaders (whose ranks include both Democrats and Republicans). Senate committee chairs raised an average of \$245,748, about three times as much as nonleaders, and Democratic leaders raised an average of \$141,973, about 68 percent more than nonleaders. Minority leaders in the Senate raised slightly more than nonleaders because Republicans leaders can wield political clout when they persuade their members and a few dissenting Democrats to filibuster.

Incumbency and the Timing of Campaign Contributions. One of the reasons that incumbents have greater financial resources than open-seat candidates and challengers is their ability to raise money during the entire four-year election cycle. Although legislators are prohibited from accepting contributions during the legislative session (indicated in Figure 3 by the flattening of the line for incumbents between January and April of each year), they can raise money during the rest of the year.

Figure 3. Incumbency and the Timing of Campaign Contributions in the 1998 Election



Collectively, House incumbents raised approximately 50 percent (\$3,100,585) and Senate incumbents raised 59 percent (\$2,710,955) of their campaign funds prior to January 1, 1998 (see Table 1). Senate open-seat candidates also raised substantial funds—almost one-third of their total receipts—before the start of the election year. Challengers in both chambers did not raise much money before January 1st. In fact, most challengers generally do not create formal campaign committees or begin fundraising prior to the late spring or early summer of the election year.

Table 1. Total Funds Raised by Maryland General Assembly Candidates Prior to January 1, 1998

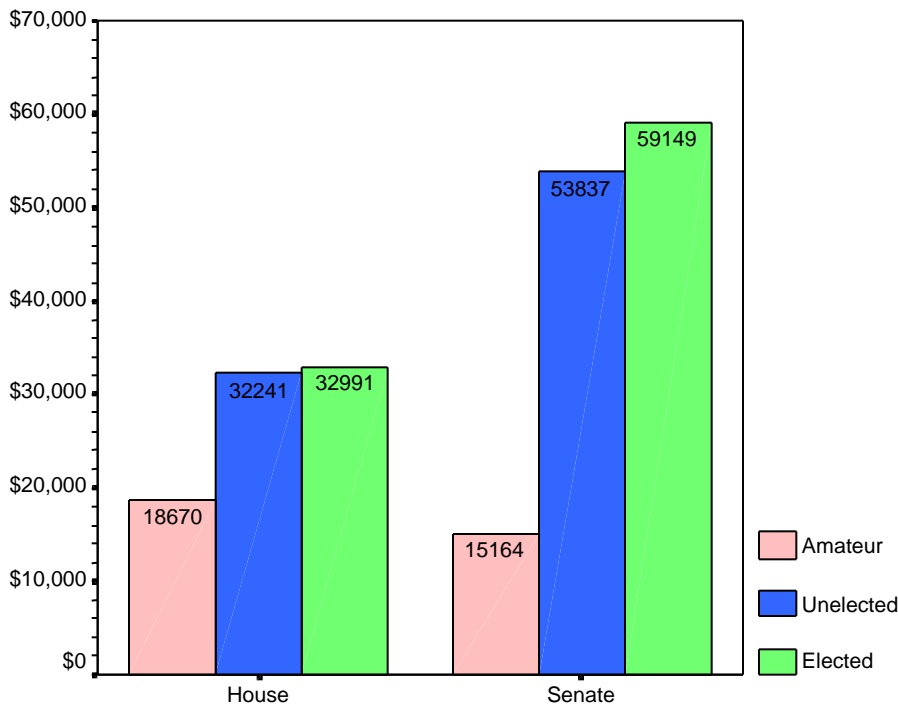
	House		Senate	
	Early Contributions	Percent of Total Raised	Early Contributions	Percent of Total Raised
Incumbents	\$3,100,585	50%	\$2,710,955	59%
Challengers	\$353,712	15%	\$105,800	11%
Open seats	\$46,705	9%	\$89,428	31%
Primary losers	\$193,179	15%	\$243,975	46%
Total	\$3,694,181	36%	\$3,150,158	49%

Political Experience and Fundraising by Nonincumbents. Challengers and open-seat candidates generally do not have access to as many contributors as do incumbents, but some nonincumbents are more successful fundraisers than are others. Nonincumbents who at some

time have held elective office and those who can be labeled unelected politicians (comprising individuals who have served as party officials, political aides to elected officials, or political appointees) typically have more political contacts and familiarity with the fundraising process. These candidates have a substantial advantage over political amateurs, who have little-to-no political experience.

Unelected politicians and elected politicians who ran for the House of Delegates in 1998 raised on average about \$32,000, almost twice as much as amateur politicians (see Figure 4). Unelected politicians and elected politicians who ran for the Senate raised \$53,837 and \$59,149 respectively, almost four times as much as amateurs.

Figure 4. Nonincumbent's Political Experience and Fundraising in the 1998 General Election

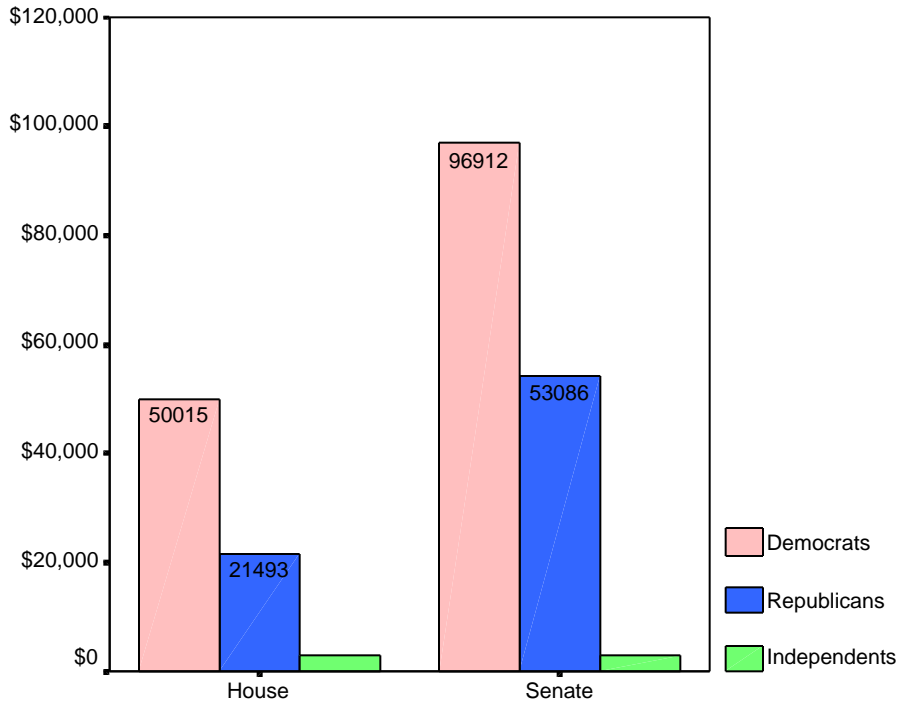


II. Party Affiliation and Fundraising

The majority party typically has a distinct fundraising advantage because they have greater control over the legislative process. In Maryland the Democrats have substantial majorities in both chambers of the legislature and, not surprisingly, Democratic candidates enjoy a strong financial advantage over Republican candidates. Democratic House candidates raised an average of \$50,015, more than twice the amount that Republican House candidates raised (see Figure 5). Democratic Senate candidates raised \$96,912, nearly twice the amount that Republican Senate candidates raised. Independent or third party candidates have severe fundraising disadvantages. They have no established network of contributors, no officeholders in the legislature to offer

influence over legislation, and little prospect of victory. Independent candidates for both the House and Senate raised an average of less than \$3,000.

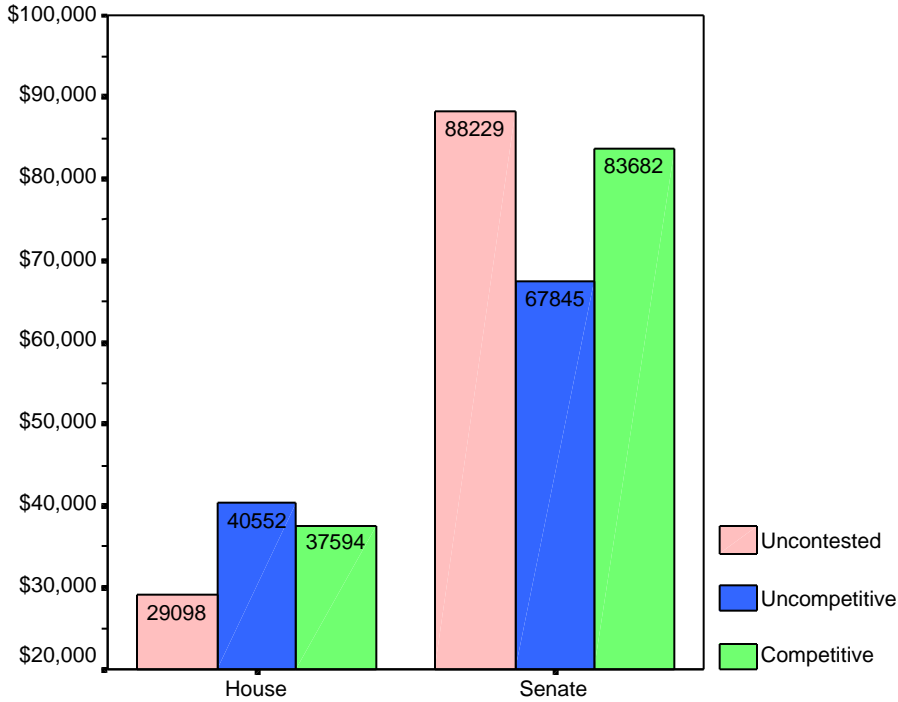
Figure 5. Party Affiliation and Fundraising in the 1998 General Election



III. Electoral Competition and Fundraising

Candidates need adequate funding to wage competitive campaigns. However, as is frequently the case in legislative elections, 1998 candidates for the Maryland General Assembly involved in uncontested races or who faced no serious competition raised more funds than did candidates in competitive contests. Candidates for the Maryland House of Delegates in uncompetitive races (defined as those decided by a margin of 20 points or more for single member districts) raised an average of \$40,552, a larger sum than candidates in competitive races (defined as those decided by less than a 20 point vote margin for single member districts) (see Figure 6). In the Senate, candidates in uncontested races raised an average of \$88,229, which is more than the average for candidates in competitive races.

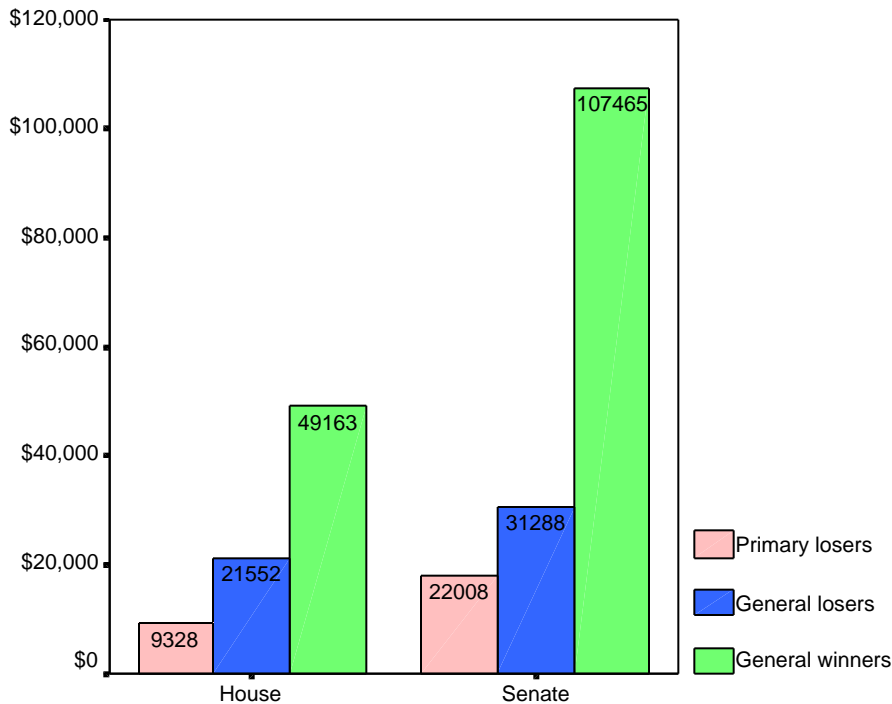
Figure 6. Electoral Competition and Candidate Fundraising in the 1998 General Election



IV. Fundraising and Election Outcomes

Election outcomes are closely connected to fundraising. Winners raise much more money than do losers. General election winners in the House raised an average of \$49,163, more than twice as much as general election losers and nearly five times as much as primary losers (see Figure 7). The fundraising gap between winners and losers is even larger in the Senate. General election winners in the Senate raised an average of \$107,465, nearly three times more than general election losers and nearly six times as much as primary losers.

Figure 7. Fundraising and Election Outcomes in the 1998 Election



The Study

Progressive Maryland collected the campaign finance data from the paper disclosure forms filed with the Maryland State Board of Elections. The National Institute on Money in State Politics digitized the data and coded the contributors based on their economic political interests. For more information about the coding system, please refer to their web site at <http://www.followthemoney.org/database/about/coding.phtml>. We enriched the campaign finance data by adding information, such as election results, incumbents' committee assignments and leadership positions.

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Copies of this report can be found at <http://www.capc.umd.edu/rpts/MDGA98.FR.pdf>

Related Studies by the Center for American Politics and Citizenship Available OnLine

- Contributions to Maryland General Assembly Candidates in the 1998 Elections (<http://www.capc.umd.edu/rpts/MDGA98.CONT.pdf>)
- Candidates Devote Substantial Time and Effort to Fundraising (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/reporttime.html>)
- State Legislative Candidates Support Campaign Reform (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/report.html>)
- See How They Run: State Legislative Candidates (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/art2.html>)
- Individual Congressional Campaign Contributors: Wealthy, Conservative, and Reform-Minded (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/indiv.html>)
- Women Big Donors Mobilized in Congressional Elections (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/indiv.html>)
- Outside Looking In: Views of Third Party and Independent Candidates (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/art3.html>)
- The Big Metamorphosis: How Campaigns Change Candidates (<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/herrnson/art4.html>)

About the Center for American Politics and Citizenship

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

Appendix

Top Fundraisers among 1998 Candidates for the Maryland House of Delegates

Candidate	Party ^a	Incumbency ^b	Outcome ^c	Receipts
1. Taylor Jr, Casper R	D	I	W	\$989,104
2. Shriver, Mark K	D	I	W	\$211,338
3. Busch, Michael E	D	I	W	\$196,911
4. Wood Jr, John F	D	I	W	\$123,971
5. Malone Jr, James E	D	I	W	\$122,204
6. Morhaim, Dan K	D	I	W	\$120,547
7. James, Mary Dulany	D	O	W	\$111,210
8. Klausmeier, Katherine Ann	D	I	W	\$107,598
9. Frank, Robert	D	I	PL	\$101,603
10. Mitchell, Van T	D	I	W	\$100,473
11. Gordon, Michael R	D	I	W	\$96,093
12. Hecht, C Sue	D	I	W	\$93,763
13. Rawlings, Howard Peters	D	I	W	\$90,803
14. Bissett, Phillip	R	O	L	\$90,545
15. Gorman, Pat	D	C	PL	\$89,355

Notes:

^a D=Democrat, R=Republican

^b I=incumbent, C=challenger, O=open-seat candidate

^c W=general election winner, L=general election loser, PL=primary election loser

Top Fundraisers among 1998 Candidates for the Maryland Senate

Candidate	Party	Incumbency	Outcome	Receipts
1. Bromwell, Thomas L	D	I	W	\$513,164
2. Miller Jr, Thomas V Mike	D	I	W	\$480,270
3. Sfikas, Perry	D	I	W	\$238,726
4. Degrange Sr, James E	D	C	W	\$195,980
5. Madden, Martin G	R	I	W	\$187,726
6. Roesser, Jean W	R	I	W	\$166,403
7. Lawlah, Gloria	D	I	W	\$165,500
8. Preis, Mary Louise	D	O	L	\$153,630
9. Hollinger, Paula C	D	I	W	\$144,479
10. Jacobs, Nancy	R	O	W	\$138,656
11. Kelley, Delores G	D	I	W	\$138,575
12. Jimeno, Philip C	D	I	W	\$137,393
13. Fry, Donald C	D	I	L	\$137,209
14. Mooney, Alexander X	R	O	W	\$129,494
15. Boston Jr, Frank D	D	C	PL	\$126,535

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